

Transcription:

Speaker	Dialogue
	BEGIN CLIP: Elephant Talk_Katie and Talyn_20170607_mixdown
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T	<i>I think, yes. It's probably hard to hear, but I think yes in the sense that I still do plan on having my own. You know what I mean? Our own. So in that sense, yes, there is this, the stepchild. I mean, they don't put that word in there for nothing. If it comes out of your body or you helped create it that is connection that you can't transplant.</i>
K	<i>But I did notice that recently...you have stopped referring to them as my kids. And you've actually corrected yourself a few times and you've said, "Our kids are our family." And I just have to say that that really hits me. I know that it takes a lot for you to... that's an intentional decision on your part to say that and I just want you to know that.</i>
T	<i>...in this relationship because I know I feel like this, we fight every day for what we have and how we live and it's always a struggle, but we are present every day to make this work.</i>
HOST	<p>MY NAME IS ANDY HORNING, AND THIS IS ELEPHANT TALK. IT'S ABOUT ALL THINGS RELATIONSHIP - THE SOULFUL, THE SILLY AND THE SEXY.</p> <p>Welcome to episode 27. Today, we'll hear what it takes to blend two families and how two very different couples are finding their way as they embrace the other.</p> <p>Let's dive right into the beautiful conversation with bi-racial couple, Katie and Talyn, married for seven years.</p>
T	So our first meeting was on your birthday.
T	And I was at a gay bar. Me and my best friend went to hand out flyers for our band. I went to go get a drink and I looked over and there was this really beautiful woman, you caught my attention immediately because there were no other beautiful women at the bar.
K	Yeah, it was pretty much dead.
T	I was like, "Well, here, take a card. This is our music. We make queer pop music." And you're like, "Okay." And that was it for a little bit for like an hour or so. Then I came back and asked you to dance and we danced. We were the only ones on the dance floor. It was kind of horrendous, the dancing.
T	But at the end of the night, for some reason, I was like, "You know what? Let me get her number." So I did. And then the rest is history as they say.
K	It was my birthday. It was also my first experience at a gay club. My friends wanted to go out and because it was my birthday, they said, "You know, you're always like the best wingman and you're always so good to come out with us. We're going to take you to a gay bar." I had come out to my family, my parents like probably 10 months before

	then and so this was like a really big deal for me. I was not there to pick up anybody.
T	So we both weren't there to pick up anybody.
K	It was funny because I was immediately attracted to you.
K	I just remember you had like this big Cheshire cat smile and I think that's what really got me and I still love your...
T	Cheshire cat smile?
K	Yeah.
K	And even though that was such an awkward dance and such a horrible song, Anytime like your body touched mine, it was like electricity going through my body was really crazy. And when you asked me for my number, I just was like, "Wow! Is this going to be the beginning of something or is this going to be my first hook up?"
T	The beginning and the end.
T	Two weeks later I was making a music video called, "Up Against The Wall". So you can imagine what kind of content there was, but I needed a co-star. So I called you and you were like, "Oh, let me think about it."
K	I talked to my friend. Because I had a lot of reservations about it. She just told me to stop being a pussy and basically put myself out there and what did I have to lose. So do you remember what you asked me to wear?
K	In the car you're like, "So this video is going to be like very sensual."
K	And I was like, "Oh my God! What is she going to ask me to do?" And you're like, "So are you going to be comfortable with a kiss?" I didn't say this out loud but I was like, "Yes, I've been waiting for forever." Like, "Are you fucking kidding me?" "Yes, yes, yes." When we finally rolled up outside the location, I was like, "Holy crap! I don't think that I want our first kiss to be on video, like that's kind of tacky." So we kissed in the car and it was really awkward. I mean, it wasn't awful. It just was kind of...
T	It wasn't confidence inspiring.
T	So we went through a couple of scenes. And then towards the end of the night, we moved to the bedroom and
T	I was on top of you and we were kissing with tongue and
K	I was just caught in the moment because there were a lot of things going through my mind other than... I mean, like you were the first woman that I had ever kissed. I had never been this close intimately with another woman and I had never been able to act out these feelings that I had carried around since I was little. So I had a lot going on in my head. And for me, it was an awakening.
T	A fulfillment.
K	But it was also very passionate because I was also intensely attracted to you, but it was

	so hilarious because there's your best friend with her camera.
T	Right. And she was like on top of us. She was like over to the side.
K	Like six inches from us and she's got this big smile on her face. And I feel like she kind of caught a little bit of the energy between us and she kind of got of what's happening.
T	It was giddy. She was like giddy because we're so excited.
K	Yeah.
T	I just remember that kiss being like, "Oh, I am so attracted to this person. This is nothing like the car. This is like the best feeling ever." Yeah. So from then on, we knew there were sparks, right?
K	I had a lot of fears of what you would think about me or how you would react once you found out my baggage. That was kind of terrifying.
K	But hey, you handled it.
T	I did. I'm still in the process of handling it I would say.
K	We've come a long way, yeah, I really did throw a lot at you.
T	Yes, you did.
K	Yeah, I did as far as...
K	So guess what, I am still legally married to a man.
T	I was like, "Oh!"
K	And I have two children, both under the age of four.
T	When I found that out like the numbers went through my head, like, "Okay. So if she has a kid that's two, that means that they had sex like..." you know, "I don't date women who are straight or bisexual because I've gotten burned too many times with that and especially at that time, coming out of a woman's college, I was like, "I want men to be very much at the periphery of my experience." And then just the fact that you do co-parent with him and so you see him every week, every four days, which I've grown a lot, since the first time I found that out. But it was a lot to process for me at that time.
K	It was very important to me to just be like, "Hey, this is who I am. This is where I'm trying to go," and just kind of leave that with you.
T	It wasn't like a deal breaker for me just because there wasn't a deal yet, you know. The only thing that was going through my mind was, "Okay, she's deeply connected with this white man, which I was struggling with and I guess that was the only problem that I had with that. When I think about our first kiss and our first real intimate time, I think that was just the best. That was really felt... it felt good. It was easy.
K	Yeah, It was easy.

T	There was no thinking about it, really.
MUSIC BREAK	
T	We work a lot. We have the kids for half of the week. So when we do have the kids, our household is kid-focused.
T	We have to make it very structured, which takes a lot of kind of joy out of living.
K	So even like moments that we have together, I almost feel like it has to fit into the structures, like we have to plan it. We actually talk about like, “Do you think we can have sex tonight?”
T	We’ll do something spontaneous like...
T	We’ll go to a friend’s house on a Wednesday night.
T	And then on the way home, you’re like, “Oh, I think we should have sex tonight.” And then you get home and you’re like, you don’t even remember hitting the bed. It’s just you’re out.
T	I was struggling maybe in year two through to five. With the idea that I am fitting into somebody else’s puzzle, not we are making this puzzle together. It’s like I’m a piece in somebody’s puzzle.
K	Yeah, that was really hard for you.
T	It led me to question, “Okay, I’m living somebody else’s life. I can’t create something on my own or with somebody else because you have already lived the whole life.” Especially, being so young, and I’m already co-parenting these kids that aren’t mine...
K	Do you still feel like they’re not yours?
T	I think, yes. It’s probably hard to hear, but I think yes in the sense that I still do plan on having my own. You know what I mean? Our own. So in that sense, yes, there is this, the stepchild. I mean, they don’t put that word in there for nothing. If it comes out of your body or you helped create it that is connection that you can’t transplant. But I do take a large part in making sure that they are taken care of and happy and that’s important to me.
K	Yeah, you do a lot.
K	We talk about this a lot. I feel like probably a few years ago, hearing that would have brought me to tears but I feel like I’ve had a lot of time to process what that means. And it’s not about me, it’s about you and it’s really forced me to kind of step out of myself and really kind of look at things through your eyes and your perspective. I’m just like surprised that you’re still here with me, because my life was a huge thing for you to take on.
T	Right.

K I know that there are very heavy things that you have had to give up in order to... your vision has changed basically in order to be with me and I feel like that takes a person with strong character and integrity, yeah, high five, which is part of why I adore you and I'm in love with you and you're like you're my person...

T Because I stuck around.

K I mean there's been times where I had seriously thought about leaving you because I love you and I care about you and what happens in your life and I don't want to hold you back from possibly something better. I don't know if it's an insecurity or what.

T I mean that seems like love. That seems like you always want the best for the other person.

K With my boys, I don't want to put them in a situation where they feel like they had like a thing about Cinderella and the scary stepmother.

T I think about that too.

K And I know that you're not like that at all.

T Maybe sometimes.

K But I also want them to feel that love from you as well because I love you and I know what it feels like to be loved by you and I just really desire that for them.

But I did notice that recently. I don't know if it's like since we got married, but you have stopped referring to them as my kids. And you've actually corrected yourself a few times and you've said, "Our kids are our family." And I just have to say that that really hits me. I know that it takes a lot for you to... that's an intentional decision on your part to say that and I just want you to know that.

T Right. You're welcome.

K Thank you.

MUSIC BREAK

T Going to an all women's college was extremely empowering for me and I developed an idea of what's wrong with the world. After I got out of college, I tried so hard to be a part of a community that represented what I thought was right with the world and what empowered me, but I was always attracted to white women. So especially in the early years when I was watching these kids throw tantrums and be disrespectful to their mother and then you would tell me about your ex being not so nice, even though we're all not so nice at times, it just kind of really dug under my skin.

So that was hard because I was like, "Okay, why am I choosing to be around all these people that just innately are against what I stand for?" It was hard because it wasn't you. It was things that were attached to you. That was just really difficult.

For the kids, I think it was obviously hard for them when you are going through a divorce and so they would act out and I was like afraid to go out in public with them because I knew it would just be this big scene.

T	But as I've grown, I have taken a bigger role in trying to shape them, which has also shaped me, I think.
T	<p>The oldest one, he is pretty cool. When I have sensed him, incorporating me in his life in a way that he seems to enjoy, it softens me. It does. It makes me relate to him a lot easier.</p> <p>The younger one is a work in progress. He's tough. I'm not the most touchy-feely person. I don't really hug other people that I don't know. All of my emotions happen inside. I was cooking dinner one day and...</p>
T	He came into the house and he stood next to me and he put his hand on my arm, which is like... it's a very small thing, but I don't think before that we had ever like physically touched.
T	And I was like.
T	"Oh, we have a relationship and it can be positive."
K	I remember seeing him walk up to you and just start rubbing your arm.
T	His question is always, "What's for dinner?"
T	And so he did it and then he just like stopped and walked away. And I was like, "That was a good amount of time." It didn't make me feel uncomfortable. It was welcomed. I was like, "We'll try to make this work."
K	<p>We had been dating for maybe a year. And I had the boys with me and we went out to dinner and we went to this like large family restaurant. And I was like, "Oh, this kind of feels this is like a little family outing." I was kind of excited about it.</p> <p>They called the number and I was like, "Oh, well, I'll go up and get our pizza." You were sitting there at the boys and they were still really little.</p> <p>I kind of turned around and I saw there was like an older couple probably in their 70s that were sitting at the table next to us and they were talking to you and you kind of had sort of this smile on your face.</p>
T	A glassy-eyed stare?
K	I thought, "Oh, she's just kind of indulging them or whatever."
K	And they were just kind of looking over. And it seemed like they were trying to figure out our situation.
T	The woman gets up and she comes over and she's like, "So, are you the babysitter?" And I'm like, "Oh no, I'm just a friend." But that one sentence was like enough to humiliate me. It was racist. At that time, it was like our first family outing.
K	A first try.
T	That made me feel like, "Oh, we are kind of like a circus, a walking circus," because I look very young and I'm black and I'm a woman. And you, you're walking around with two kids who look like you, so people's first assumption is that, "Oh, the husband is somewhere around but is not with them right now." I guess that is a natural jump to

make. And I think that stays with me a lot. I don't like to go places with the whole family often because it feels to me like a walking circus.

K That's pretty harsh.

T It is harsh. I'm somebody who likes to kind of walk on the sidelines and be outside looking in. I don't want to be like the center of attention. So when we are all together, people look and people are curious about what's going on.

K That's definitely opened my eyes to acknowledging my white privilege not ever really... being in a situation where I have been discriminated against for my age or for being Caucasian.

I don't even know how to articulate how it feels to be in love with you and witness these things happen. I can't even imagine how that affects you in so many different ways. It's this continual thing that happens.

So I'm trying to learn how to be there for you when there are these microaggressions, how to react, when to say something, when not to say something, how to check in with you. I know that I'm actually not very good at that.

K I need to learn what to say because also like in moments where I feel like I can't articulate myself right or appropriately, I just get like angry and I like lash out and I also don't want to embarrass you.

T I do get embarrassed easily.

T So we're still working around how to be supportive or I would say we're still working with you on how to be supportive to me in these situations that you don't experience.

MUSIC BREAK

T Being gay, being women, being black, being in an interracial relationship, we have navigated all of that and we are still here and we are still strong and we are still together and we still love each other.

And we still have a community that props us up and gives us a lot of the advice that we need or strength that we need.

K Oftentimes, I am the only white person in the room.

K There are moments when you guys are talking about microaggressions and just sharing experiences and.

I don't know how to articulate it, but it's almost like I'm intruding in that space because it's such a sacred space. I mean there have been times when I've cried later because like I just become like overwhelmed with... I don't know, just like the heaviness of what you guys go through at times.

T Yeah.

K And yet, you guys let me in your space.

T I will say like you are very privileged to be invited and so that should make you feel great. That is a testament to your personality and your heart because we don't choose

	incorrectly. We just don't.
T	In this relationship because I know I feel like this, we fight every day for what we have and how we live and it's always a struggle, but we are present every day to make this work.
K	So one thing that I've learned from you and your friends is this rich culture that you have, it's almost like there's the subculture behind black women that they create together, which is just the most amazing spiritual... I don't know. It's really fucking incredible.
T	In my world, women carry a lot because women are...
K	Yeah. Well, there's nothing more moving honestly than having a room full of... being in a room full of creative black women collaborating with one another, it becomes this very powerful, magical experience.
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Speaker	Dialogue
HOST	<p>What a beautiful conversation. I'm struck by their honesty around tense topics and their clear commitment to continue talking about their differences.</p> <p>Katie's desire to own her white privilege... and how that affects their relationship and family... is as inspiring as Talyn's willingness to let Katie into her circle of black women friends... sharing with her their spiritual strength.</p>
PA	<i>I do get that you've had to pull back what you would normally say or what you would normally do if these were your biological children.</i>
RI	<i>Biologically they're not my children and so it's just a different... I mean I can't act the same way no matter how much I try. It's impossible. So that's been a difficult process... just what I can and cannot do.</i>
HOST	<p>Richard and Parie on the surface, may seem different from Katie and Talyn, ...but they struggle with the same issues of combining families and beliefs.</p> <p>They found their way back to each other after 30 years.</p>
PA	You know what I remember first was looking at you and going, "That's the kind of guy I really am attracted to," I want that guy right over there.
RI	So you wanted me?
PA	Absolutely. Yes, babe.
RI	I saw the ponytail, the blonde ponytail, the long blonde hair. That's the first thing I remember.

RI	It was the first day of college. We were at a kind of a rush or our fraternities and sororities, and they made us to walk back, which is probably two miles, but it seem like twenty miles back then.
RI	We just hooked up and walked together the whole time.
PA	Yeah, the rest is history. Here we are. Thirty-five? How many years? How many years, Richard?
RI	That's 36 years.
PA	Okay. So we've been at this, 36 years. We just took a break.
RI	Yeah, 30-year break.
PA	Thirty-year break in between, yeah.
PA	We definitely started seeing each other pretty immediately. So you had a girlfriend.
RI	Right. She was in high school.
PA	Do you remember the night that she came over to your house and we're there just watching TV you answered the door? And I think you turned around and you said, "Hey, it's her," which I knew who that was. What did I say to you?
RI	You said, "Don't worry. I got this." And you got up, answer the door, and said, "Come on. We need to have a talk." And you took her back in the bedroom. I don't know if it was two minutes or thirty minutes, But you came out and she left and you said, "Oh my God! She's mean!"
PA	Yeah. I thought I was such a cool cat, college, and she kind of put me in my place, I do remember that. That was funny. But she was upset because you had broken up with her to be with me.
RI	So we kept dating, but we don't know how long.
PA	Do you remember how we broke up?
RI	I don't think we did breakup.
PA	I don't think it was a breakup. I think it just kind of...
RI	Faded.
PA	No, we saw each other before that our ten year reunion, high school reunion.
PA	So that was 1991
PA	Another 20 years before I really heard about you.
RI	The next time was February 13, 2013. I called you to order flowers for mom for Mother's Day or for Valentine's Day.

PA	This business is busy and I'm not answering the phone calls on Valentine's Day because I'm making flowers, so I make everybody else answer the phone. So I think there was a little bit of divine intervention that I answered the phone. And I remember saying, "Parie Designs, this is Parie." And this is exactly what you said. Do you remember?
RI	I remember exactly what I said. "Hi Parie."
PA	"Well, hello, Parie. This is Richard Donaldson." I think I just stopped, my mouth dropped because I had just said your name and I hadn't said your name in a dozen or more years. I'm listening to you but my heart was kind of pounding already, like I was already like I thought, "No one is ever going to date me. I've just gotten a divorce. I'm 51 years old and I have teenagers." I'm not going to be dating for a long time. You're telling me all this stuff and I have no idea what's going on in your life and you're telling me about Nishi and the baby and everybody living with you.
RI	You said what part of empty nest did you and Toni not get?
PA	Right.
RI	That's when I said, "Well, we're getting divorced."
PA	Yeah. And I said, "Oh wow! I'm right there with you." Yeah.
RI	February 5th, I went to a Thai restaurant and got a fortune that said, "You'll make a new relationship within a month." So I took a picture of it on my phone and put it on my desk and I sent you that like a week after we talked.
RI	We talked to the phone. I think I went down at the bar, ordered a beer, ordered dinner and talk to you the whole time which I absolutely despise people that do that. I ordered another beer and took it up to my room and we talked till what one or two in the morning, told you all my deep dark secrets that I didn't tell anybody else in the first night, the very first night.
PA	We were done. Call it good.
RI	One night.
PA	Because we were meant to be.
PA	I've always heard people talk about and you're told that your spouse should be your best friend and I never understood that until you and I. I didn't understand that that's what it was supposed to be and it's so easy.
PA	The first part of relationship you were in Dallas and I was here in Amarillo and you know we had two lives and two businesses and it was very difficult and we're trying to get away and see each other on every other weekend, but gosh, that was hard. So when we finally decided that you needed to move here and that was hard. I know it was hard for you to leave your job. And, the girls were still in Dallas at the time.
RI	That was the hardest part is leaving.
PA	Remember how much we fretted about how...? First, we told your girls. We told them first, they were adults pretty much, what was going on and how serious we were and that we were going to be progressing forward. My kids, Max and Molly were younger. So that was a little dicey and I

	remember as really fretting and really worrying.
PA	Then we got married six months later. March 1st of 2014, Fortunate 2014. That's how I always I remember it.
PA	I've been married twice. You've been married twice and this is our, we hate to say it but, third time is a charm.
RI	Right.
PA	It's so weird to me. I know when I say that out loud sometimes to somebody when I'm telling the story, it does seem like sleazy or like, "Oh my gosh! You're married two times."
RI	Yeah, I never thought I'd be married three times.
PA	Well, me either, but I know you and I have talked many times about, wouldn't it have been great if we just gotten this over in the very beginning and be together all this time?" But you wouldn't have Nishi and Sinclair and I wouldn't have Max and Molly and everything happens I believe for a reason that brought us to the place that we're at now.
RI	Even though we weren't together for 30 something years, but we just... it's just comfortable. We're very easy.
PA	I've always attributed that we grew up in the same hometown. We had this same set of friends. There's something about a hometown no matter how big or small. I mean you just know some of the same people. You knew my mom which was that was huge for me and I didn't know your dad. He died before I even met you the first time, but I knew your mom and there's something about that that it gave us a comfort zone. Don't you think? That's maybe a way to talk about it.
RI	I think that's part of it, but the other part of it is just we're just alike. It's just easy.
RI	I guess because maybe our point of reference is how hard it was at the end of our last relationships is a constant struggle.
PA	I think that might be it.
RI	And now we're like, "This is so easy."
PA	I think we're so grateful that it's so... yeah.
RI	Yeah.
PA	I specifically remember where I was standing one night talking to you I think I was almost in tears because I was so frustrated that I had no idea for 50 some odd years that this was how relationships were supposed to be or could be. It was so visceral a feeling for me that I was so perplexed in like how did I not know. How did I not know that it could be this easy?
PA	But, my parents were divorced when I was five. I didn't really have a father in the picture. So I had nothing. I didn't have anything to base it on. Do you feel like you did...
RI	I don't think my parents were huge influence in my relationship. I just thought you went to school, you went to college, you graduated in four years and you got married right after college and I don't

	know where that came from, definitely wasn't from my parents because neither one of them even went to high school. So that was just my thought that this is how it's supposed to be and that's what I did and it worked out horribly wrong. It wasn't horrible. I don't know if I'd say I thought it was a test. I thought it was the right thing, but it wasn't.
PA	Yeah.
PA	We have relatively good relationships with our exes. I mean it's not horrible. There have been times of horribleness obviously, but we're at a place where we don't have to be that way anymore and we just try to all get along and I think there's something to be said about that too that that kind of speaks to who you are and who I am that we can... who cares what happen before? It doesn't matter. It's like I don't want to expend energy on the negatives of the past. I just want to keep going forward.
RI	I think that Nishi and Sinclair saw the good and the bad with me and their mom. We're married for 20 something years.
RI	It started off bad because I was still an immature idiot, but it ended up bad because... it just ended up badly. But the 10 or 15 years, we were pretty positive. We're very involved.
PA	You guys were really involved in their lives.
RI	Yeah, we were both involved and we did a lot of stuff with them and they saw the good parts, but they also saw the horrible parts, the huge fights and stuff.
PA	I think that's the difference between your kids and mine is your kids were a little older when the bad was happening. My kids were pretty young so I was trying to shield them a lot. I'm sure they saw it. I'm not being naïve but a little bit of a difference probably. This is what I hope for my kids for me I want Max and Molly to hope to have this pattern, you and me as a pattern for what a good relationship looks like.
RI	I think they do.
PA	I think they do too. I mean that's my biggest. I want to give them that gift.
RI	I think Nishi and Sinclair saw enough good and they've seen bad. And with Nishi and Sinclair, the group that we grew up with, all the parents were best friends. We all hang out together.
PA	That's a totally unique experience and actually not to just where you were from but I just think that's a completely different kind of experience in my kids. Your kids were very used to being around adults and couples and stuff and my kids, I think our relationship is probably dysfunctional for so long that we weren't very social or anything.
PA	I got asked the other day. I won't go into details, but I got asked from one of the older daughters some advice that she honestly felt was... that you couldn't help her with and that her mom couldn't help her with that I had a unique perspective as the stepmom if somebody goes a little far removed but she trusted me enough to ask me, which was actually was really good. It made me feel good that she felt comfortable enough to ask me.
RI	Oh, that's sweet.
PA	You know, we do this. We can see in others what we can't necessarily see on ourselves, right? I

	mean so we can in their relationship things that we hope they work on or deal with. But I also think they've grown so dramatically in the last... since I've known them as their relationships have grown. I never look at them anymore and think, "I wish they wouldn't do that or I hope they work on that." And I hope they continue down that path. I hope maybe that's something we are doing for them. Maybe we're modeling something that's a little easier.
PA	You have a unique relationship with your daughters that whereas you would typically see daughters go to their moms that I've seen your girls come to you on, that's not normal. It's a good thing to be not normal in this instance. But I think that that's unusual.
RI	Yeah. I still have a guilt when they were babies and I was out partying with my buddies all the time and
PA	I hope you take it on that you should be proud of what you've done because those girls are amazing and boy did we get lucky with those boys they married because they are such... they've got their own little family unit on their own but I think that comes from you, you know, and Tony too.
MUSIC BREAK	
PA	We have several couples that we spend a lot of time with. Do you remember making a very conscious choice at one point? Because there were a few people that maybe we were kind of hanging out with couples, but it became very a cognizant choice on our part to not hang out with any couple that we thought were abusive to each other, who were dysfunctional that we didn't want to be in that classic group of friends who the girls get together and start bitching about their husbands and the guys get together and start bitching about their wives. That is not the kind of dynamic we wanted to be involved in. So that was very important to you and me, don't you think?
RI	Because we talked about that because I remember some of my friends in Dallas after I got divorced, they came up to me and said, "Man, it was really hard to go out with you and your wife because you were just so uncomfortable, because y'all just griped and griped and griped." It wasn't a gripe yelling at each other, it was just little...
PA	Picking at each other's...
RI	Snide remarks that you want everybody else to agree with you, like saying something about or relate because she had to do this and do that and just to make her look bad.
PA	It's that passive-aggressive way of...
RI	Passive-aggressive, that's what we were and we tell each other we would never do that to each other.
PA	Yeah.
RI	I said now I know how my friends felt because it's just very uncomfortable.
PA	We only want to be around couples who absolutely celebrate each other and do not tear each other down.
PA	I want to say to you how much I love you and that one of the greatest things about becoming older, and about how we've learned to temper everything, like everything is seen from a different

	perspective now that we're older. So the hardest thing I think for you and me and it's not even that big of a deal, like I'm saying this, I'm going, "This is so stupid. Who really cares?" But the hardest thing for us is our difference in political opinions. Would you agree?
RI	Yes, I would agree.
PA	When did we finally probably make the big connection that we were different politically?
PA	It was several months before it even came up, so that was 2013. So we were several years away from the next election, but I do remember you joking that you probably have to get a hotel room or something during the next election.
RI	I knew I think we discussed it because I think I saw that picture of you and George and Laura Bush and said something about that and then you said, "Oh, but I went to the Obama rally," or something.
PA	I went to the Obama rally in Pueblo, Colorado. You were not impressed. It's like, "What do you mean? How can you not be impressed? What?" Yeah. That was hard. I mean it is hard.
RI	A lot of things, I mean the whole Trump deal has exacerbated this whole situation because...
PA	I would prefer not to speak his name because 20 years from now I would like to thank that he did not really affect my life at all. I mean I just think that really all of it, politics is off the table for us. Here's our one thing that we do where we try to at least together, like we have our ritual of Sunday morning where we watch Fox News Sunday with Chris Wallace and Meet the Press with Chuck Todd.
RI	Right. We drink our coffee.
PA	We drink our coffee and bite our tongues the whole way through, but we're there together listening to the two different programs, at least trying to catch up on different opinions and stuff.
PA	But we don't talk about it through it because we've tried it and it's not worked.
PA	We're both, we're so opposite there and we're both opinionated on the opposite side. It's just not good. We just know that there's no reason to go there. There's no reason to. All we're going to do is end up saying something we regret. Because in the long run, it does not affect our love and our marriage.
RI	Well, it does affect it but we're not going to be... us arguing about it is not going to change the new tax laws or the health care laws.
PA	But I will. I mean that was one small argument that we got into because obviously this year with the cancer and this whole craziness, I mean this is the first time I've had health insurance in years because I'm a small business owner and I have rarely had health insurance. I had health insurance when my kids were born and then I basically didn't have it till then. So when Obamacare, the Affordable Health Care Act came out, I finally saw the ability to get something that I could afford.
PA	I would say that that's part of the political spectrum that affects us and especially now is the health care.
RI	We both want to get Affordable Health Care. We just have different opinion on how it's going to get there.

PA	Okay.
RI	Well, I'll give you one. Like I think abortion and the Planned Parenthood deal, because she was on the board, right? And so we have very different opinions on that.
PA	Yes, so this is a hot topic for us because...
PA	Everybody spouts and uses the words Planned Parenthood and makes it a negative, so this is where we'll have a problem. So this is a problem that we've decided not to discuss.
RI	That's why we don't talk about it.
PA	I still believe in their cause and getting health care for women and children and underserved. But yeah. Yeah, I mean we have some fundamental differences.
RI	Yeah.
RI	We think what we think and that we believe what we believe. And if it's different, it's different, but we're not going to change each other's minds so we just leave it alone. (Laughter) It might be a little tense tonight...
MUSIC BREAK	
RI	I was talking about being a stepfather, very difficult being a stepfather. You are a stepmom but you're not.
PA	It's different. I have a different dynamic because your girls are grown up.
PA	And I know and I don't...
PA	I know. I mean it's not like I recognize that you're doing a lot but I do get that you've had to pull back what you would normally say or what you would normally do if these were your biological children.
RI	It's not just it's I'm not their dad factor. Like do I have the right to tell them to do this? Just different things. That's a different dynamic that I was not expecting.
PA	I think what's hard for me is that I hear you say that and all I want to say to you is, but you do have the right because you're taking care of them and they absolutely accept you, but I hear you.
RI	Biologically they're not my children and so it's just a different... I mean I can't act the same way no matter how much I try. It's impossible. So that's been a difficult process...just what I can and cannot do.
RI	No. It's just that it's different. It's difficult for what I can and cannot do. If I say that to them, they're going to look at me and say, "You're not my dad."
PA	But they've never said that to you.
RI	No. I've gotten lip from them before like that.

PA	You have?
RI	Because you remember when we first started dating, remember I was their buddy. “Hey, let’s go do this.” And they just thought I was the guy that took them out to eat and we went and did this. I was a buddy. I remember the first time I told them to do something like clean the room, they’re both looked at me like, “Who the heck are you to tell me what to do?”
PA	Oh, yeah.
RI	It’s not that way anymore.
RI	No. But the first time I tell them to do something.
PA	The first time. Yeah.
RI	They’re like, “You got to be kidding me.”
PA	Right.
RI	Okay. That’s it.
PA	I don’t get it because the girls have never been in our home. So it is different for me and I think I’ll probably take that for granted. Yeah. Well, I’ll tell you this, you’re a much better stepparent that I am. I know this. And I’m being honest. I’m not like searching for... I’m not fishing for a compliment. I absolutely know that you’re a much better stepparent that I am or would be. I feel like I’ve been given a break because the girls are older and I’m not having to be put in the situation that you are because I’m not sure I would deal with it as well as you are.
RI	Well, thank you. I will try, but it’s difficult.
PA	Okay.
HOST	<p>There’s a real acknowledgement in both of these conversations around the different world view each person brings to the relationship.</p> <p>And yet, there’s an even stronger desire to bridge those differences and put the love and commitment above all the rest.</p> <p>I hear a willingness to look beyond what divides... in order to reach the larger love that binds these couples.</p> <p>THANK YOU TO KATIE AND TALYN...AND RICHARD AND PARIE FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THIS EPISODE.</p>
HOST	<p>TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE TOPICS DISCUSSED TODAY, PLEASE VISIT THE SHOW NOTES ON OUR WEBSITE, ELEPHANTTALK.ORG, FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES.</p> <p>IF YOU’D LIKE TO SHARE YOUR STORY SEND US COMMENTS, OR BECOME A</p>

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