

Interviewee: **Vic [Vic] and Steven [Steven]; Stacie [ST]**

Interviewer: **Andy Horning [AH]**

Transcription:

Speaker	Dialogue
Steven	I think a very important part of a relationship is that you never have one foot out the door that you are there for the good, the bad and the ugly.
Vic	I agree with that, Steven, but I also think we respect one another on a daily basis.
Harrison	I don't require anything of her and she doesn't require anything of me. The only thing that we do require of each other is to be honest and truthful with each other. And I think as long as we do that, we'll have a loving relationship.
ST	I will say after it aired and after listening to it, I enjoyed it but something was not really sitting well with me...After listening to the words that were coming out of mouth, I was like, "That's not Stacie." Like, "That doesn't sound like me.
AH	So, it didn't feel authentic?
ST	No, it didn't.
AH	<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 36! Today, we bring you some more conversations from the road this summer, as well as an update to episode 13, from season one.</p> <p>Our first two conversations were recorded on the road in a senior center in Fayetteville, Arkansas this past summer by our producer, Lisa Gray.</p>
Vic	I'm 71 years old. My name is Vic.
Steven	I'm 80 and I'm Steven. We're here at the Fayetteville Senior Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas.
Vic	Steven and I have been together for 35 years. We've disputed it off and on like we forget when we got married. You know, you got to look at your wedding license and check it out, and we've had to do that, but 35 is a good number.
Steven	We met back in actually 1978 at a bowling alley and I took one look at her and said, "Oh, I'm in trouble." No, she was bowling with a women's team and I happen to stumble into the bowling alley and I knew a friend that she was bowling with.
Vic	Well, you know, I thought the same thing. I want this dude. He's good, but we had a slight problem. I had a slight problem. I was married and I saw it

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as a very slight problem, so I could get rid of that guy and I did. Steven had been calling me on and on and on because he had filed for a divorce and he was wanting to know when I was going to get divorced. And so we lived together for three years in sin. And after that, we decided ... I told him I would marry him, but he proposed to me every day for three years, "Let's get married. Let's get married." And I kept saying, "No. no. No." And one day, I said yes and he didn't waste any time. He had the church ready, he had the pastor ready, and we are married the next day.

Steven For me, she's always been my best friend and we have total trust in each other and we enjoy each other's company.

Vic I agree with that, Steven, but I also think we respect one another on a daily basis. In other words, what Steven likes to do I may not like it, but I'll say that's fine and I'll waste my time doing what he likes to do and he'll do the same thing for me. Give and take.

Steven She came with a friend to my home and the friend played the piano. She wanted Vic to hear her play the piano and we started dancing and I asked her if she'd run away with me that night and I was still married, but I had been in counseling for a year to get out of the marriage, unbeknown to me Vic had also been in counseling for almost a year to get out of her marriage. And I guess I was the first one to make the move. It was country.

Vic Yeah. We like country, we like waltzes, and we like all kinds of dancing. It's fun. No. We live in Kansas and Kansas doesn't have bands and they don't have music that I know of not in the area where we live.

Steven In reality, when we both got our divorce, we only dated twice and went separate ways for three years and did not see each other.

Vic And we got together and we went to college. I was 40. He was 50 when we started. So don't ever you're too old because you're not. Wichita State was the first one where I graduated and he graduated. So then we went to New Mexico State because I wanted a master's degree in criminal justice because I admire inmates and I want to work in a prison. That's my passion. So then I got that master's and Steven told me I needed to get a job because he knew I wasn't going to quit going to school so then we move from New Mexico to Las Vegas, Nevada. And he enrolled in school and then he said to me, "Honey, do you want to enroll?" I said, "Yes, I do." So I enrolled in social work and he and I both did social work classes and we both graduated from UNLV.

Steven The reason she went back to school for her master's was we've been in Las Vegas that week when Nevada put a freeze on hiring in criminal justice and that freeze lasted three years. So there was no work to be had in her field. So she went into the social work. I worked for the division of aging in Nevada and she worked in hospitals and nursing homes. And in our last five years there in Vegas, in addition to that, we ran domestic violence class for the perpetrators of domestic violence.

Vic Both male and female.

Steven Both male and female classes. And she ran DUI classes as well.

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Vic Yeah. I worked in Nevada at a prison in Nevada and it was just a lot of fun, but I work there and I work there and then I wanted to do something, run a group, and I had to talk to the warden. So I went to find the warden and I walked in, introduced myself, and he didn't even know who I was. But I asked for a telephone. I said, "You know, if there's a riot or a problem, I have no way of getting help. Can I have my own phone?" And he said, "No."

So he and I didn't get along all that well, but I went and talked to one of the inmates about a phone and he said, "Miss Vic, you don't have to worry about it." He said, "The inmates respect you and they like you and they'll have to go through 75 inmates to get to you. You're safe." He said, "But you may get some warnings you may pay attention to." And one of the warnings they gave me was I come to work and I go in and they'd say, "You don't look good. Are you sure you feel all right? I think you probably ought to go home. I don't think you feel good." And I kept thinking about that and I said, "I'm feeling fine." They said, "No. You don't look good." And I got to thinking, "I better get out of here. Something is going on." So I got out of there and they shut the prison down, a riot.

Vic So they let me know and I got out and so didn't they have to...

Vic They just put them in lockdowns.

Steven I had been on a farm most of my life and then after my divorce, I moved to Wichita and I worked in an aircraft plant for a while and then I was draftsman for an oil company until the oil bust and the company went out of business and she and I painted houses for a while and then decided to go to school after I was robbed in a convenient store.

Vic At gunpoint.

Steven Yes. And the guy said, "I'm going to take you to the restroom and kill you," and we got two steps from the restroom door and his buddy had car on the drive and he broke and ran rather than pull the trigger. And I ran home and I said, because she was working in a convenient store at night also, and I said, "You're going to college."

Vic And I said, "I'm going to college? I'm going to support your sorry, you know what. I'm not going to do that." So I started college and I had to con him in the going which I did and he enrolled and he just really did well. He didn't think he would do well, but he did. So we went to college together.

Steven So she has two masters and I have one.

Steven We love to travel. And if we can keep our health together, we will do more traveling. We were doing some traveling, but health issues came up and now we're... I just had a stent put in my heart, one on my heart arteries, and she's having test for her heart here in a couple of weeks.

Vic Well, I think what I love about it is we can always laugh and whenever lost, we call it scenic tour when we're off track, but we're not lost and we just keep going and we laugh then eventually Steven will say, "It's time to stop and get a room," because I'll drive for hours on end. I drove from here to Wyoming.

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- Vic That's a long way. Yeah. It was a long drive.
- Steven And only when I said that's enough.
- Vic That's enough. Let's get a room. And I said, "Oh, you think it is? We've been on the road here for a few hours." So I'm trying to be a little more flexible with my driving and he... let's stop and that type of thing.
- Steven I think we both enjoy just seeing new places and doing new things and visiting old friends and then family.
- Vic Yeah. We went to the 50-Year Selma Alabama Celebration. We went down there to Selma.
- Steven It was celebrating the 50th anniversary of the march and that was an awesome experience.
- Vic That was the most awesome. We were standing in a place and they're playing really loud music all over and we had a good song and we said, "Let's line dance." So we got out and there were thousands of thousands of people. So we got out and started line dancing. When we got down, we had several that we're trying to learn it with us and they were dancing with us and it was so fun. It was really fun. I don't know that we're learning. I'm not learning anything new about Steven.
- Steven I think we just did a deeper appreciation of each other. We recognize how important it is each moment of each day and to enjoy each other's company that we've always enjoyed each other's company.
- Steven I think a very important part of a relationship is that you never have one foot out the door that you are there for the good, the bad and the ugly. And I think Vic and I has learned a lot of trust in each other because no matter what the problem was or what came up, both of us was there for each other and that's the big important part is you're always there and that other person knows you're always there. I think I had a foot out the door all the way down the aisle and I was married for 25 years before I ended that marriage but never was unfaithful or anything like that until I met Vic and then all rules went out the door.
- Vic All my fault, right?
- Steven Yeah.
- Vic I think I agree with Steven on that. Couples who fight have serious arguments. One or the other is threatening to leave and I think that's a real crippling thing with relationship because you need to be able to trust that the other person no matter what you say the other person is going to hang out for a while and I think we need to just keep our feet in the house.
- Harrison My name is Harrison Horne. I am 74 years old. I have been with Margaret going on two years in Farmington, Arkansas, but we're at Fayetteville right now. I'm sitting on an exercise machine. I don't know what you call it.

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- Margaret Margaret Moore. And he answered all those questions.
- Margaret I'm 71.
- Margaret Yes, I am. I am. We take all the chances we can get and we're not too tired. We met at the Farmington Senior Center and he was out on the floor dancing and I noticed that pretty gray hair and I just thought he was a very handsome man.
- Harrison You know how I met her? I walked into the Senior Center, went over and sit down, and I saw this fantastic looking little lady out on a dance floor. And she had some moves that I want to get to know. So eventually, I asked her for her phone number and then I asked her out for dinner and we've been together ever since.
- Harrison Oh, yeah.
- Margaret I taught him how to waltz and he's really good at it too. You don't have enough time for that. We enjoy being together. We dance a lot and we watch a lot of movies at home and we go out to eat, just fun stuff. What did I tell you that time that I like about you? He's a lot of fun and he's a genuine person. He keeps his word. You know there are a lot of things. I can't name all of it. He's good to me, very good to me.
- Harrison I am more attracted to Margaret because of her beliefs and her family ties, how much she loves her family, and wants to take care of her family, how much she love Jesus Christ, and how she sticks to those beliefs without any question, and she's a sincere lady that I've never known her to lie, and I don't think she ever will, and I love her dearly for that. We've done a little bit of traveling but not that much. We went to Eureka Springs. We've been over there. And we love to take walks and hikes and we both love nature and she has a little dog just kind of weird at times but I love the little guy. She takes care of him. We found out we enjoy now sitting in her house, I'll play the guitar and sing and she sings and we sit down, we'll pick and sing for two or three hours. We have a wonderful time together.
- Harrison Country, gospel. Yeah. We love country and gospel.
- Margaret Wow! He seems to be more genuine than anybody I've ever known and honest and he has a good heart and he also loves Jesus Christ and he's just all-around a good person. Well, you know the old thing about them going out with other women and stealing money out of the bank and gamble it. I don't know. Just bad stuff that I couldn't live with.
- Harrison I was with my first wife for 30 years and we just split apart and not anyone else involved in it. We just grew apart. But with Margaret, I feel completely at ease. I don't require anything of her and she doesn't require anything of me. The only thing that we do require of each other is to be honest and truthful with each other. And I think as long as we do that, we'll have a loving relationship.
- Margaret I think we do genuinely love each other. We've expressed it to each other a lot and I have no doubt that he loves me and I hope he doesn't doubt that I

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love him. So we get along pretty well.

Harrison No doubt. No doubt.

AH

Hearing these couples talk reminds me of the simplicity of relationship. The fundamental ingredients of any successful relationship really are honesty, kindness, and respect.

Vic and Steven share that in their 35-year marriage.

And, Harrison and Margaret value that most in their new relationship...and, new at age 71...I find this also so heartwarming.

Humans are wired for relationship...no matter the age.

Speaker	Dialogue
AH	<p>And, now we change gears to bring you an update on episode 13. After this episode aired last season we received several emails from listeners with strong reactions to the conversation.</p> <p>If you didn't hear the episode, it was a conversation between Stacie and Kenyon about their two year relationship. Kenyon had two children from a prior marriage. Stacie did not have biological children of her own.</p> <p>Kenyon was clear he did not want any more children.</p> <p>In the conversation, Stacie shared her struggle with this decision but said she was content to be in the relationship knowing this door was closed to her.</p> <p>Because of the listener interest in this story, we wanted to follow up with Stacie about her decision. Here's my follow-up conversation with Stacie.</p>
AH	<p>Wow! So good to have you back in our studio. Thank you for taking the time. I'm just kind of curious with you and Kenyon sitting down here, what were your memories of that experience sitting down to do an Elephant Talk recording?</p>
ST	<p>So, we actually both really enjoyed the experience of sitting down and recording. There's not a lot of time that you can just sit and look at each other and be with each other and really have a conversation without distraction. So that was really great to be able to sit down and do that. After leaving, we both thought we knew more about each other and about the relationship. I will say after it aired and after listening to it, I enjoyed it but something was not really sitting well with me.</p>
AH	<p>Interesting.</p>

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ST	After listening to the words that were coming out of mouth, I was like, "That's not Stacie." Like, "That doesn't sound like me."
AH	So it didn't feel authentic?
ST	No, it didn't.
ST	And I hated it because I was like, "No, what does this mean?"
AH	It sounds like that was a little unnerving and what did you learn from it?
ST	So, I dug a lot deeper, and what I realized is that this question of, "Is it okay or is it not okay that you're not going to have children in this relationship" was something that was really driving a wedge between us because every single day I was asking myself, "Is it okay or is it not okay?" And most days, I would be like, "Yeah, it's fine." But then there were other days where I'm like, "No, it's not okay. I don't feel right about this." And for two whole years I had to sit with that. And then after hearing myself speak and say, "Oh no, I'm good. I can be good with this the rest of my life." It hit me to my core and I'm like, "No, I don't think I can."
AH	What did that mean for your relationship?
ST	So I think, first it was internal and I really struggled with it because it's like we had this great life and this great relationship and everything that I thought that I ever wanted. So it's like, "Why? Am I making this wrong?" And so, I struggled with it for a while, which of course comes out in the relationship when you're struggling with something and you're not talking about it. And so then, it really came to... it had a couple of months later and so we opened it up and we started the conversation of, "Is this what we both want long-term and is this going to status by both of us long-term?" And what it came down to is if I'm not happy or if I'm unsure, then how am I ever going to be sure? And if this is like something the Stacie before Kenyon, if she would have said, "Oh yeah, I absolutely want kids someday," which is what I had said and then all of a sudden I shifted it to be a part of this new and other life, then why did I changed my mind in that?
AH	So, that was Kenyon's question, "Why did you change your mind"?
ST	No. It was more my question. I was like, "Wait, why did I decide this in the first place? Was it for him or was it for me? Is it because I want to keep this relationship together? Is it because I don't want conflict?" There are a lot of deeper things there, like, "Why am I just saying this is okay?"
AH	So you really went deep about how you got here in the first place.
ST	Totally. I went to personal development courses. I got a coach, therapist, and my friends. I was just like, "I need to figure this out."
AH	Did it ever get put on the table about the possibility of having kids again for Kenyon? Because I have to be honest here. We had some mail about that issue of listeners who felt like in the conversation, "Why was that not put on the

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	table again?”.
ST	The door was completely closed for him. It was never on the table. And I think that was the hardest thing for me is because it's like I just wanted the door to be cracked and the conversation to be open. And so then, all of a sudden, I felt like I was a making a big sacrifice and that this whole thing was resting on my shoulders, which is a really heavy burden to bear when you're in relationship with someone, because then it all relied on me, in my decision. And so, eventually, the conversation just evolved into... he would say to me, "It's up to you. I will let you go lovingly. We'll be friends. I support you. I want you to be happy and do what you want in your life," which is also another big thing. What relationship can break up with that little drama and not much love?
AH	When I hear you say that, I'm thinking, "Wow, what a gift to let you go if it's that important for you to have children."
ST	And he had said it from the very beginning, too. Like, "If you ever decide that, I'll let you go." Which is also interesting because then it's like, "Was that a piece of what was going on too?" The questioning but then also like, "It's okay, I'll let you go." Like, "Really?"
AH	He's a higher level being to love and let go that quickly.
ST	Definitely. And I think just the whole breakup and how smooth that went and how lovingly it was, it just shows it's a testament to how much work we've done and how much we do care about each other. We want each other to be happy. We want each other to go on and be in other relationships and succeed in this life.
AH	So are you friends now, can I ask?
ST	We are, yeah. Yeah, we are.
ST	And actually, our breakup conversation, I laugh about it now because it was just so simple. We had worked through so many things and talked and talked and talked. And literally one day, I was just like, "I..."
AH	Where were you?
ST	We were in the kitchen of our house and I was like, "Listen, I love you and I also need to take a stand for what I want in my life." And he literally just looked at me and he goes, "I'm so proud of you." And we hugged, and that was our breakup conversation.
AH	Wow! Simple beauty.
ST	And then I started packing.
AH	Really?
ST	Yeah. It was crazy. Yeah, it was crazy. But I think it's just... if there's something not working for both parties, then why stay in it? If you're going to have a conversation about it and be honest and truthful, then it's just like, "It's

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	<p>not working, let's just go our separate ways and we'll be happier and better off." And I have no doubt that we're going to be friends for forever. We raised two kids, we combined our families, all those things. It was just a two short years but it was intense. And so, we went through a lot together and there's no doubt that we'll be friends.</p>
AH	<p>You know, Stacie, I have to say this as a therapist working with couples. I have worked with my fair share of couple who have ran from relationship, ran from intimacy, broken up when they shouldn't have. But I, as I listen to you now, would you say, it sounds like that is not you guys. You hanged in there, you worked it, you talked it, you felt it, and the breakup was a natural outcome of that, and some people aren't meant to be together for those very reasons but you didn't bail too early, which like high-five for because too many people run when it's a struggle.</p>
ST	<p>Or, on the flipside, they stay in it because a fear or loss of power, lack of power. There are so many things that people would stay in it longer, it's like, "It's easy, it's simple because we had a nice life, a really nice life. And it would have been very easy to just forget about my feelings and push them down and keep going." But to be able to actively powerfully choose your life and choose your decision... the day I moved in to my own place again, I felt liberated because I was like, "I just a 100% chose my life." And that's really empowering. And now, I can go out and do whatever I want. And there's a place and time for relationships that we've timing as everything sometimes and it was an incredible relationship and something that helped us both grow.</p>
AH	<p>Yes. So there's an aspect of not having any regret about those years.</p>
ST	<p>Totally, no regret.</p>
AH	<p>And instead gratitude.</p>
ST	<p>Yes.</p>
AH	<p>Is there something in there about being a woman and what that means for you? Will you speak to that for a second?</p>
ST	<p>Yeah, definitely. So, for me, as a woman, I'm nurturer, I'm a giver, I'm a lover, and for me, so often, I step in to roles because I care and I want to make a change or I want to help someone in a situation or I just want to love people, but then I end up giving a lot of myself. And so, I am now really trying to powerfully choose everything in my life, my business, my relationships, my friendships, everything.</p> <p>Thinking about what I want out of this. And it's not selfish. It's just if you powerfully choose what you want, then it's going to get you where you want to go in your life. And as a woman, being able to stand and hold on my life in my hands and be like, "This is what I want," and especially with the whole kid thing, who knows what's going to happen in my life. I'm not actively trying to have children right now, but I just want the door open. That's all that I want.</p>
AH	<p>You have that possibility.</p>

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ST	I have the possibility. Anything is possible. And when you're able to look through that lens and it's like, "Okay, I can make these decisions now instead of being stuck in something."
AH	Yeah, beautiful.
ST	And also just being able to have my own business and my own home and to create all of the things around me, yeah, it's a great place to be.
AH	You know, I have to say, there's a great irony here in what you're saying as you talk about the selfish piece, because one of the things I know to be true from this work that I've been doing for over 20 years now, is that those people who are healthy selfish who put their needs first in a way can in fact are the best kindest givers, most loving people out there. And the irony is that those who often put other people first, end up being more selfish because their needs aren't being taken care of and they're using every interaction of "giving" to get something. But once you can get your basic core needs met through healthy selfishness, then you're the most loving, kind, open, giving person out there. It's the irony that people don't always get.
ST	Well, I'm really working on and realizing that if I can pull out my own inner-resourcing, like love myself, take care of myself, be a little bit selfish, like you're saying, then I show up for people in a lot more positive way.
AH	Wow!
ST	And I show up for my clients and my friends and family and everybody way better.
AH	Have you had people reflect that to you, like, "Wow, Stacie"?
ST	Definitely, yes.
ST	And they also just note how much more vibrant I am.
AH	Yeah. There's that numbing like that, "This as good as it gets." And pretending, kind of hustling, and aliveness says, "No, wait a minute, there's this whole another level of living life that we don't often live from."
ST	And you have to be willing to explore it and do some hard things and take some risks. Whether it's getting out of a relationship that's not serving you or getting out of a job that's not serving you or whatever it is, you have to be willing to take some risks sometimes because there's whole another world out there. I feel like I completely transformed. You know, I'm salsa dancing again, or not again. I'm salsa dancing. I'm dancing again. I stopped for so many years. And that's not a product of the relationship or anyone else around me, it's just I chose other things and other people over some things that I really wanted to do and that I needed.
AH	And I'm imagining dancing is important to you.
ST	Totally! I feel completely self-expressed and embodied and alive. We're in our

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	heads all day. I'm actually in my body when I dance.
AH	Stacie, thanks for coming in, I really appreciate it.
ST	Yeah, thank you for having me.
AH	<p>THANK YOU TO VIC AND STEVEN, HARRISON AND MARGARET, AND TO STACIE VEE FOR SHARING THEIR STORIES WITH US TODAY.</p> <p>FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON THIS EPISODE, FIND OUR SHOW NOTES AT ELEPHANTTALK.ORG.</p> <p>THIS EPISODE OF ELEPHANT TALK WAS PRODUCED BY LISA GRAY AND KIM POLETTI.</p> <p>OUR THEME MUSIC IS BY ROB BURGER.</p> <p>AUDIO PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY LESLIE GASTON-BIRD AND JOSH KERN.</p> <p>PLEASE REVIEW THE SHOW IN ITUNES - YOUR FEEDBACK IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.</p> <p>THANK YOU FOR LISTENING. I'M YOUR HOST ANDY HORNING. THIS IS REAL LOVE. THIS IS ELEPHANT TALK.</p>
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