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**Speaker 1** [00:00:00] Casper, I was just having a conversation with one of our beloved, Stephanie Paulsell, who we think at the end of every episode. We were talking about self-care, we were talking about self-care and she was like, do you know what's so annoying about meditation, Vanessa? And I was like, I know a lot of things that are annoying about meditation. And she was like, well, the thing that's most annoying about it, is that it works. Every time.

**Speaker 2** [00:00:27] I've had exactly that with taking deep breaths or like having a glass of water, and you're like, oh, is that really all it would take for me to not be a little pissy and just be compassionate for a moment? I just needed to stretch and take a deep breath. Yeah.

**Speaker 1** [00:00:41] NO, it was the injustice of the world. It wasn't that I needed oxygen. It's so insulting. But who we have on the podcast today is Sophie, who is an exceptional journaler. And as someone who seems to have already cracked the code on some of these self-care routines that as immature people are like, no!

**Speaker 2** [00:01:03] We'll be talking about break-ups, making new rituals, a fabulous song that I totally love that Sophie introduced us to, and a little bit of Jane Eyre, so I hope you enjoy this conversation. I'm Casper ter Kuile,

**Speaker 1** [00:01:16] and I'm Vanessa Zoltan.

**Speaker 2** [00:01:18] And this is The Real Question. Today, we're joined by Sophie Clark. Sophie is a musician and farmer living in Guelph in Ontario, Canada, and has recently been through a big break up. And we're going to talk about it a little bit. So, Sophie, thank you so much for joining us today.

**Speaker 3** [00:01:49] Thank you.

**Speaker 1** [00:01:51] So Sophie, can you just tell us what your question is and a little context? What led you to asking this question that you're bringing?

**Speaker 3** [00:01:59] So, when I was a teenager, just shy of my 16th birthday, I started a young love, young romance with a teen boyfriend, teen partner. And we went through high school together. We were briefly. Well, I guess I was maybe like even a year. We were broken up when I first went to university, and then we reunited and started like a distinctly more like adult relationship than our teenage antics. And this went on for a bit over a decade, close to 11 years. And then this past fall, in October of 2021, I decided to leave the relationship. It was sort of a long time coming in some ways, but it still felt like a pretty huge, massive change and shocking upset to my, my world and my life. Quite soon afterwards, I actually moved out. We also had been living together for the better part of, I think, the last seven years. And, so, I was calling a lot of friends. A lot of my friends live far away and talking to my sister and hanging out with my dog and trying to, like, take care of basic needs. And I really felt like I wanted to do something to mark that time was passing. I'm a person who journals a lot, so I did a journal-based, I decided to create a journal-based ritual of some sort to check in with myself and create like an intentional check-in with this process. So, the very first week I actually had these three candles that I'd been saving and I didn't know what I was saving them for, and I decided this was it. They're three little bear shaped candles that a really good friend, the friend who got me listening to The Harry Potter and the Sacred Text podcast years ago. She had given me these candles when I saw her in the summer. So, I let the three bears. I set them up as a little council of friends, and I asked myself, what did I choose when I chose to leave? Hmm. And then, I also would write a blessing. And the blessing usually very much applies to me, like it's for me. And I submitted this question just after Christmas. I actually took myself on a solo vacation because with COVID here and the breakup, I was really worried that Christmas was going to just pull me under. And I was actually, I don't know if I should say this, I was actually like butt naked in a sauna when I sent in the original question.

**Speaker 1** [00:04:28] Oh my God, you're an inspiration to us all. Was the council of bears there, too?

**Speaker 3** [00:04:34] No, the bears were there, but it was a wood fired sauna on this like farm.

**Speaker 1** [00:04:40] Do you mind if I pretend that the bears were there? Sure, the bears were there. The bears were there. It’s a wood, fire-soaked sauna. OK, I'm getting the vibe…

**Speaker 3** [00:04:52] and I think I had just listened to the announcement that you were trying a new format and that listeners could submit questions. So, the question I have is, so I explained this ritual that I built that first week that I've repeated ever since, and I really want to shift it. I want to change it a little bit and reimagine it in some way. The part I want to change is the first question, the question about what did I choose when I chose to leave? I think it was actually a really good question to ask myself for the first many weeks, and I’d kind of like to do something else. Hmm. But I really don't want to get rid of the ritual yet. I still think that the value of checking in every week and reminding myself that time is passing and like very specifically attending to that grief process matters like, obviously, it's on my mind still all the time. But having a specific moment where I'm focusing on it feels really valuable to me. So, let's revamp my ritual. Something tells me that the two of you may have some experience with rituals, may have written a published book on it. You may have thought, so.

**Speaker 2** [00:06:04] Well, Sophie, thank you so much for sharing that and bringing us this question, and I can't wait to be inspired by the three bears and the sauna and everything else. But I mean, before we dig into that, I just, I'm so impressed with you at creating this ritual that you had in the first place. And also, it's so clear that you, you know, we're not going to talk too much about your ex-partner because this is about your life and your question. But just really how much you love this person and how important this relationship was for you, even if you did decide that that it needed to end, so I just want to affirm how beautiful it is that you've been so intentional, both in the relationship itself and then also in this period immediately after it. So, like snaps to you. I wish I had been this like inventive and dedicated after relationships at had ended. And disciplined. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, it's incredible.

**Speaker 3** [00:06:58] It's amazing.

**Speaker 1** [00:06:59] So Sophie, where would you say you now are in this grief process? Because it seems like, I mean, not to be too typical Kubler-Ross about it, but it sounds like you were trying to get yourself through almost the denial stage, right? Like continually writing this list of like: this is why this is why I left, this is why I'm excited for the next stage right. And you were really confronting, this is real and it happened and it happened for good reasons. And you wrote a prompt that addressed that feeling. And I'm hearing you that you are still in the midst of grief. But where is that grief located, right? I'm curious where you are in that process?

**Speaker 3** [00:07:47] Yeah, I'm curious, too. It's a shifty process. Yeah. I'll have like weeks or couple days where I feel like really great, where I feel like super hot shit and I'm just like, Oh yeah, like this was the thing to do. And then I'll definitely judge myself a little bit for feeling good and try to, like, remind myself that maybe I should feel bad. And then sure enough, I feel really bad for like a week or two after that. So, what I do have those higher moments, I'm trying to let them be what they are and enjoy them a bit more. But it's a lot of back and forth, I would say. Like this ex-partner and I, we still live in the same neighborhood. We have shared people in our lives. We have pretty solid boundaries about not really contacting or interacting with each other unless it's like a logistical necessity or some kind of emergency, which I really appreciate us both respecting. But there are moments where his existence like intrudes into my day or my life, and it'll just upend everything. Hmm. Which is tricky. I mean, I'm still very thrilled that this person exists in the world, but being reminded that they exist sometimes is like awful. Um, so, I definitely still think about them a lot. I'm still reminded of them a lot just because our relationship was integral to my entire teenage and young adulthood. So even though we're not together anymore, like their existence and presence is very much woven into who I am. So a lot of things do remind me of them, a lot of which I'm grateful for, but it's paired with definitely like still a lot of pain.

**Speaker 1** [00:09:29] So you feel good for a few days, and then it sounds like self-judgment flips a switch and then you said you feel sad for several days after. Do you know what that sadness is?

**Speaker 3** [00:09:43] I think the sadness is around a lot of the loss. Yeah. Like, I've actually been pretty stunned that I really haven't wanted to change my mind. Like I did feel, and I continue to feel really, strong about my choice to leave. So it's not as much being pulled into regret or self-doubt around the choice, but I think it's more around the loss like this person was, you know, my best friend and the person I lived with, I was really close with their family. So, there's the loss of that entire total community. And then it's also like a shifting idea of what my future might look like. Yeah, because you know, the way you thought things might look is gone. And by choice, like I chose for it to be gone. But the future is like much less comfortable looking for me now. And I think that's maybe a bit of the sadness or ickiness that I feel sometimes. Like sometimes it's exciting that my life looks really open in front of me, but it's not always nice.

**Speaker 2** [00:10:52] Sophie, I want to turn to the journal prompt that you have been using. Mm-Hmm. So you've answered this question. What did I choose when I chose to leave? And, and I'm wondering, could you give us maybe just one or two of the themes that came up in response to that question that as you look back, you’re like, huh, these are really the core reasons of what I chose when I chose to leave.

**Speaker 3** [00:11:14] Yeah, I think one of the ones that I wrote down week one that definitely continued to feel really important every week was around choosing myself and trusting my gut. It can be tricky as someone with like family history around divorce and trauma around that to, like, trust yourself to choose to leave a relationship when you may be sort of predisposed to, like leaning away at times or like going cold. And, so, I had been talking myself out of leaving this relationship for, like, probably longer than I'd like to admit before I actually left. And, so, it felt like I was finally aligning something for myself in terms of like my own internal integrity. And so, the idea around, like I chose myself, I chose to trust my gut. That definitely became a theme, I would say. And something actually, that I also affirmed to myself, I don't know if it was from the first week, but something that did come up a lot and ties in actually to one of the previous things I said about the future being like, really open, was also that I chose the unknown. Like, for better or worse, I don't know what'll happen… at all. I mean, you never do, but it feels like I know less now. And so, yeah, for better or worse, I chose the unknown option in the unfamiliar future. And so that, I would say, has also been a theme.

**Speaker 2** [00:12:55] Hmm. Sophie, I heard from a friend recently, something that really stuck with me, which is that people don't get divorced because they don't like the person that they're married to, but they don't like the person they are when they're married to that person. And that's something that really struck me that you just said in terms of what you were choosing. And you said, I'm choosing myself and I'm wondering, can you give us any insight into the, the you that you’re choosing that you couldn't be in the relationship? Because as we start to think about the texts and what this ritual might look like, I think there's something about the newness and the unknown and the you who is becoming that might find life in this ritual, so I'd love to learn a little bit more about who is the Sophie that couldn't be in the relationship and who you think she might be as who you are discovering her.

**Speaker 3** [00:13:49] Yeah, that's a good question. I think part of what I've noticed with being out of this relationship and feeling like, more like, I'm trusting myself and what feels right for me. I think in some ways I just feel like my joy is kind of like easier and simpler to experience. And it's sort of a tricky thing because like to this ex-partner’s credit like they never told me not to do stuff, they just weren't into some of the things that I'm really into and, you know, sometimes in relationships, you like, you join each other in your passions and sometimes you're like, that's your thing, and I'm going to watch you be great at it. And so, I think sometimes I would know try to involve them in things that I'm into. Like I, I really just like being like an outdoors active person and going swimming and skating and camping and walking and running. And then I would invite them to come with me sometimes, and they usually didn't want to. And I think sometimes that just eventually over time and over years, like, maybe affected my enjoyment of those things a little bit. And s,o I still don't love doing all those things alone all the time. But now when I want to do, those things like there is no option to even feel the slightest bit rejected because I'm just going to go and I'm going to do them. And it's just simple. That's kind of easier. Yeah, in a way. I mean, that is paired with like having lost like my closest, longest friend, which sucks. Yeah. But, they're both true. Yeah.

**Speaker 1** [00:15:23] Well, Sophie, why don't you tell us about this first text that you brought? I have heard of it.

**Speaker 3** [00:15:30] Yeah, not only is my question about rituals, but my first text is from Jane Eyre, so.

**Speaker 1** [00:15:34] I's a very good book, very good book

**Speaker 3** [00:15:39] So the text is I felt glad as the road shortened before me, so glad that I stopped to ask myself what that joy meant. Hmm. And the context in the book is that Jane is noticing that she's feeling excited as she's approaching Thorn Field, where Mr. Rochester lives. And she's really into Mr. Rochester at this point, but has not disclosed this information to him. Nothing has happened yet between them and she's been away for. I think about a month because her Aunt Reid was dying and has died and she's been gone for a while and she's returning and she's noticing that she feels pumped.

**Speaker 2** [00:16:29] Apart from knowing, that we will have lots of ideas about this text, Sophie. What was the reason that you chose this specific sentence? Like, what resonated for you?

**Speaker 3** [00:16:40] I think we picked this one because as I already have described a little bit. Sometimes I really feel like the grief I'm in recedes and I feel like really good sometimes. And I noticed that. And as I mentioned, sometimes I really catch myself judging that. Yeah, the first part of the sentence about the road shortening before me, I'm not so sure about it. I feel like the road in front of me is like a very big, very long, lots of winding turns. But sometimes I do feel joy, and so maybe that's worth exploring more. Mm-Hmm. Even though I feel kind of resistant about it. Mm-Hmm.

**Speaker 1** [00:17:21] Mm-Hmm. One of my favorite things about this section of Jane Eyre is that she says at one point, I'm going to tell you everything about my cousins and the burial of my aunt, right, which we can use as a metaphor for your breakup because I'm never going to talk about it again. And so let me tell you everything, right? And then she moves us forward to this road shortening and joy. And like, obviously, she's constructing a narrative from 10 years in the future, right? So, we don't know how much grieving she did for Aunt Reid and, you know, with her anger and all of her mixed feelings about that childhood. But she does, at a certain point, say, look, this section of my life is done. This is what happened to Georgiana. This is what happened to Eliza. I’m out. And so, I'm wondering if there's part of you that wants to say, and these are the things that are done. And then I'm not going to talk about it anymore or I'm going to try to not think about it anymore, right? Like I'm going to try to not feel bad anymore. I'm done. That's a story that's over with. Is there something in this moment of transition as we try to come up with the next stage of your ritual, what are the feelings that you're like, I've had enough of those feelings. I've had enough of those thoughts, like, I'm going to try to get those off the table. Hmm.

**Speaker 3** [00:18:56] I'm not sure. I think I would worry about like setting myself up for failure with that just because I feel like grief is so, twisty and doubles back on itself. Like I worry about deciding, like, I'm not going to think about that anymore. Only to, you know, be bombarded with that thought or that feeling later. I'm not sure. I mean. I think part of me wanting to let go of the question about what did I choose when I left is me wanting to stop thinking about why I left. Like I've got my personal sense of integrity with myself, with why I did it. And I've got, however, many weeks, 10 plus weeks of answering the question in my journal so I can go back and read my thoughts if I need it. I think reflecting on like, very specifically, the breakup itself. Yes. Is kind of where I'm at.

**Speaker 1** [00:19:54] Yeah, yeah. It's like if someone were to ask you at this point why you left, I could imagine you being like lots of reasons. It's not worth talking about.

**Speaker 3** [00:20:03] Yeah, I mean, early on, I really wanted like everyone to understand, and I didn't even know how to really explain it. It was interesting, like if there was a defensiveness to it, I was like, you know, from the outside, a lot of people were really shocked and confused. Right? I so desperately wanted to, like, explain myself to his family, and I really had to work so hard to like, not do that because it's like what is achieved with that? Who is that for? Like, really, what, what is the point? And I just like wanted, you know, to retain some aspect of my reputation or them liking me or whatever. But like, they don't need to know, they don't need to understand, they don't need to agree. I know that he did not agree with me leaving, so I don't feel the need to defend it or explain it as much anymore. Yeah.

**Speaker 1** [00:20:49] Yeah, that's really helpful to note in order to think about how we want to transition. Yeah.

**Speaker 2** [00:20:56] Well, and as Jane is walking, she's not struck by a sad thing or a grief like she's struck by a joy. And she asks herself, well, what does it mean? And I'm curious, you know, here you are walking towards joy and outdoor adventures and an unknown. And you've stepped into this recording conversation and to ask what does it mean? And so, I want to ask you, Sophie, like, what does that joy mean?

**Speaker 3** [00:21:23] What's tricky is like this breakup was and continues to be probably the most difficult choice I've ever made. And like, very hard and very painful. But then at times I catch myself feeling like. It's not as bad as I thought it would be. And then at other times, I'm like, this is absolutely the worst thing ever. Yes, but there's, there's times where I'm like, I am surviving this and I'm working really hard to like, try to take care of myself and moments of joy are still possible and happening. So, I think I find it comforting in the scope of how unknown everything feels and how badly I feel at times. I think it does affirm my choice to me again. I guess that I'm having joy, that I'm finding these moments.

**Speaker 2** [00:22:22] I keep, I keep landing on this word, joy, sophie, that Jane is bringing us. And it feels like we've heard at least two different kinds of joy in what you've described. One is this kind of very practical, like embodied “outdoors activity” joy. And then there's another one which feels maybe more interior, or something about a consoling joy, that this was the right decision. And I'm, I'm tasting happiness, maybe, or something feels right. And then also a response to that which sometimes is judgmental, as you've described it, a sense of like, oh, should I be feeling that? Like, this is hard or I know someone else is suffering? Is it OK for me to feel this kind of joy? Yeah. And I'm wondering if you can talk a little bit more about that judgment voice. Like, is it not allowing you to feel joy? Is it making you feel guilty about causing someone else suffering? Tell us a little bit more about that.

**Speaker 3** [00:23:18] I think the refrain of the judgment voice is like, but I hurt him. You know, and just like reminding me that I caused someone so much pain. Yeah, like I think I've tried to be really accountable to myself for the fact that I, I chose to end things, and so I chose the pain that I'm in. And like I chose. I know if I chose the pain that they're in, but I chose the thing that caused the pain that they're in. And so, I do feel, I feel a sense of responsibility and obligation that's like very muddled because I know that, I know that my joy doesn't take anything from him. And I do think that it's something I try to remind myself. But I think the voice most often is just reminding me like, I hurt him. I don't, I don't actually think that I'm, that I owe him like a life of misery. I know that's not true theoretically, but it's, it's very mixed up for me, I think.

**Speaker 1** [00:24:24] You hurt him, but did you do anything wrong?

**Speaker 3** [00:24:29] I think we both did things wrong. I don't think inherently about leaving was wrong, right? I do, in retrospect, sometimes, like, wish that I had figured things out sooner and potentially left sooner. But that's not what I did. I went through the process I went through. I figured it out when I figured it out.

**Speaker 2** [00:24:52] And also, you've been extremely responsible the way you describe the navigation of boundaries, which he has also done very responsibly, the way you describe wanting kind of approval or understanding from his family, but knowing that that is futile to try and seek. Sophie, this is a grade A skill of navigating mature relationship ending like, honestly, I feel like your ability to pinpoint the conflicting feelings and then still try and find the right path forward is incredible. And you're right. Like, yes, your decision caused pain. But the alternative, you know, would have been more painful and therefore not the right one. And so, I really honor the skill with which you've navigated this really hard decision and the fallout that comes from it. Like I would, I wish I was that smart when I was 27.

**Speaker 3** [00:25:51] Well, thank you, I. I am definitely trying very hard.

**Speaker 1** [00:26:17] Well, Sophie, why don't we move on to your second text? Sure.

**Speaker 3** [00:26:25] So, the second text is just a small excerpt of the lyrics from a song that I am quite fond of. It's by William Prince, who's a Canadian indigenous, sort of folk-roots artist. He's really good. The song is called The Gun, and the part of the lyrics that I selected are as follows: “I can only say farewell, when I know there's nothing left. Till the next time, there ain't nothing left. It doesn't matter who you love, son, if you can't love yourself some. She could be the only one, and still not want to stay.

**Speaker 2** [00:27:07] It doesn't matter who you,

**Unidentified** [00:27:08] love, some. If you don't earn yourself some. She could be the only one,

**Speaker 2** [00:27:16] and still, no one in the stay. If you can’t get

**Speaker 1** [00:27:18] a hold on. Sophie, can you tell us what this text means to you, how you read this?

**Speaker 3** [00:27:26] Mm hmm. I think there's sort of two reasons why I was attracted to using this as a text. I think the first section about I can only say farewell when I know there's nothing left till the next time there ain’t nothing left. That idea sort of ties into a bit of what I said about how I wish sometimes that I, that I could have figured this out sooner so that there would have been somehow less pain involved. But I also struggle with it because I did feel like I had nothing left. Like I felt like the only sane option I had was to leave, but I don't even know that there was nothing left like. There, there was still so much good in that relationship. So, the idea of like, I can always say, farewell when there's nothing left till the next time, there's nothing left. Like, I feel like that speaks to the conversations I was having with myself, where I was trying to figure out a way to stay and then still feeling like I couldn't and then trying to find a way to stay. And I don't even think there was nothing left, but I did leave.

**Speaker 1** [00:28:31] And that's sort of a forgiveness, I hope that that lands for you is forgiveness. Like one of the things that you've said is that you've been really surprised that you haven't gone back and forth on this decision and going back and forth isn't just crazy making for you. It's really hard for the other person. And so actually, you waiting as long as you did, you could only say farewell when you could say farewell. And actually, it ended up being the kindest way because now you have all this clarity and all of these boundaries. And if you'd said goodbye before you were at that point, this would all be messier and I think more painful. I feel like, I hope that this first line is making you feel forgiven and like actually, you did it the first second you could.

**Speaker 3** [00:29:24] I feel that a little bit. Yeah. In the, the second part of the lyric, the “doesn't matter who you love, son, if you don't love yourself some, she could be the only one and still not want to stay.” I mean, narratively tracks onto what took place. I did and really do want them to take like loving care of themselves. And so, that piece also like hits really close for me in terms of more thinking about them, like wanting them to love themselves really well. I hadn't even really considered reading it about myself, but that's part of why I thought this selection of lyrics might have some options for us. I don't know how this would track onto altering my routine, or my ritual rather. Mm-Hmm. But it feels, feels like there's something in there. Hmm.

**Speaker 2** [00:30:24] As, as we, as we come towards the end, Sophie, I'm thinking about, you know, I'm just seeing you hopefully surrounded by beautiful plants as you sit down on a Tuesday and are looking for a new way to kind of structure this this ritual. And I'm also really remembering the practice that you've had of writing a blessing. Yeah. And I'm, I'm wondering if maybe the writing of the blessing in this next chapter is less of a blessing for you as you feel more solid in this decision. But maybe you now have a little more room in your heart or in your mind to kind of write blessings for your ex-partner. That is tender and maybe painful, but that might also be something really clear about it. You're not confused about whether you want to be back in this relationship, but you do want to express your well-wishes for him without texting him or meeting up or, you know, and I'm wondering if that might be a way in which to, to place those feelings. Yeah, just the fullness of what you still wish for him in one way or another. So, I'm just thinking about that as a potential edit or reframe in the practice that you already have that's been so helpful.

**Speaker 3** [00:31:40] I like that idea. I think it could be beautiful and interesting and like it, as you said, like it might be tender and hard. But part of me, you know, wants to pick the scab a little bit sometimes.

**Speaker 2** [00:31:51] I was going to say, you're not afraid of that. I can tell.

**Speaker 3** [00:31:55] Maybe that would be a good thing to do. Like these aren't things that would ever reach him, but. That’s right, just for my own sake to spend some time wishing good things for him. I think I'd be interested to try that.

**Speaker 1** [00:32:12] Hmm. I also wonder if part of that is writing blessings. You know, not to be too like gratitude journal.

**Speaker 3** [00:32:21] I love gratitudes. I have a whole separate routine for gratitudes that I also do every day. So, lay it on me. Right?

**Speaker 1** [00:32:29] But like a blessing for the river that is frozen right now and for your friends who are with you. And then, right, like noticing who gets blessings more often, and that might shorten the road to joy, right? Because if you're like, well, I'm always blessing Kathy for making me laugh, right? Yeah. So, I just wonder if there's a way for you to work your blessings and your gratitudes in together. I mean, what are you feeling compelled to write, right like? We don't have answers, but we've talked about this for a little while now. What do you feel like this next journal prompt should be?

**Speaker 3** [00:33:13] Well, I sort of wonder if I can explore what we talked about with both of the texts even because I think I could ask myself some kind of prompts around like, when did I notice joy this week or recently? And maybe try and explore a bit of what that what that means? And then I mean, I said, I want to keep doing blessings anyway, but I could try to branch out from the scope of who I've been blessing or the types of experiences that I've been trying to address with my blessings. I think that might feel like a good thing to try. Well, we'll see. I mean, the new candle that I bought burns for 100 hours and I bought it a few weeks ago and 100 hours is a long time. I've maybe burned it for 10 hours so far. But part of me is like, maybe if I haven't let go of the ritual by the time the candle burns out, *then* maybe I'll examine like if the ritual can be released. But I think I'm going to keep doing this for a long time, so I really appreciate having collaboration on like new things I can integrate into it.

**Speaker 2** [00:34:27] This is so random, but I'm also really inspired by the three bears because I'm thinking about the Goldilocks story. You know, the porridge is too cold, it's too hot, and then it's just right. The bed was too soft, too firm, and then just right. And I feel like what you're doing with this ritual is also trying to figure out what's, you know, what's just right in terms of not hiding this experience like it's 11 years of your life. This is a person who has been with you as you've become who you are. And it's finding the place in which that truth can sit in the future of your life, in the wholeness of it. And so not to put it too far away, but not to hold it too close, but finding the place where it's just right. And so, just that image of like, it's this middle path. I think that you're that you're looking for, and that means sometimes that the path is going to be too hot, right? Like, sometimes you're like, Oh, this doesn't feel right, but then you'll know which direction to move when you when you touch that boundary as it were. So I think the story of Goldilocks and the three bears, this is maybe one to think about, as well as your journaling.

**Speaker 3** [00:35:32] I had not made that connection.

**Speaker 2** [00:35:35] I'm, I'm just so grateful that you've shared this question with us, and I think it's one that I know we resonate with. And I think a lot of people will too, both in its content of navigating an ending of a relationship, but also in its creative element of how do I find a ritual? How do I change something that I've been doing that's been meaningful and find a new life for it so that it really feels full and alive? And so, I'm grateful for you, Sophie, for being with us.

**Speaker 3** [00:36:04] Yeah, this was interesting. I think I have. I think I have some ideas about what I can try to do a little differently for the next few weeks.

**Speaker 2** [00:36:13] Beautiful.

**Speaker 1** [00:36:17] Casper, I'm so grateful to Sophie for that really beautiful conversation, and I would like to add some of the wisdom that she brought. This comes from Hannah Hawkinson from Fort Wayne, Indiana, who says “blessed are the cheesemakers,” which is from Monty Python. And since Sophie is going to start offering blessings more generally, I thought, why not start with the cheesemakers?

**Speaker 2** [00:36:44] May it includes cheesemakers, indeed. You've been listening to The Real Question, please check out our Patreon at Petreon.com/realquestionpod. And if you love the show, please leave us a review on Apple Podcasts. And you can follow us on Instagram and Facebook at Real Question Pod or on Twitter at therealqpod and share us with your friends. We'd love to shout out BFF tier patrons: Amanda Schram, Etha Howe, Ashley Male, Eloise Faring, Mary Margaret, Stephanie Feddowish, Kristen Hall, and Becky Boo, and Ari. Thank you very, very much for supporting us.

**Speaker 1** [00:37:18] Our executive producers Ariana Nedelman. We are mixed by Erica Huang and our music is by Nick Bohl. We are distributed by Eight Cast. We, of course, want to offer a really big thanks to Sophie for bringing on this wonderful question and being such a gracious guest. Julia Argy, Nicki Zoltan, Lara Glass, AJ Euramus, Gaby Oarry and Stephanie Paulsell. As a little bonus from Sophie, we are going to be playing one of her songs called “If This Is It - Cottage Song” as our outro music and you can find her music under Sophia Clarke. Thanks everyone, and we'll talk to you in two weeks.

**Speaker 3** [00:38:17] The lake is smooth. The ice is thick. If I could choose, I would choose this.

**Speaker 3** [00:38:41] [song playing]

**Speaker 3** [00:38:56] The fires lit. The dog is sleeping.

**Speaker 3** [00:39:11] If this is it,

**Speaker 3** [00:39:17] then it's worth keeping.

**Speaker 3** [00:39:40] Somehow, there is peace here.

**Speaker 3** [00:39:46] We're kind to ourselves here.

**Speaker 3** [00:39:53] I don't want to go. I don’t want to yet.

**Speaker 3** [00:40:11] Take off your clothes.

**Speaker 3** [00:40:18] The land is bare.

**Speaker 3** [00:40:25] If you don't know, I feel you everywhere.