

E1: Sarah McCollum

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SPEAKERS

Sophie Warrick, Music/Sound Design, Sarah McCollum



Music/Sound Design 00:23

[Audio collage fades in and out]



Sophie Warrick 00:38

Hey beautiful people! Welcome to Queer Backroads, a podcast that focuses on queerness and rural Minnesota. I'm your host, Sophie Warrick, and my pronouns are she/her/hers. I'm a fat queer, curious creative, currently located in the Twin Cities. But I grew up in Bemidji, a small town in northern Minnesota. My art practice focuses on a lot of different topics and mediums, but most importantly, it focuses on love and asking questions. According to the Movement Advancement Project, an estimated 2.9 to 3.8 million queer people live in rural communities across the United States. And they're a part of the fabric of rural American life -- and this podcast aims to tell their stories. There is some explicit language in this podcast. So consider this your warning. You can visit my linktree at linktr.ee/SophieWarrick to learn more about this podcast project, find organizations to uplift and show notes and transcripts of each episode. That's L-I-N-K-T-R DOT E-E SLASH S-O-P-H-I-E-W-A-R-R-I-C-K. My guest today is someone that has been my best friend since I was in high school. She's my ride or die, and we do absolutely everything together. We even ended up the same college and everything. And yeah, she's probably one of the smartest people I know...and I like to think that I know a lot of people. She's wonderful. She always knows that I'm thinking, is so so kind and is never afraid to speak her mind. That rhymed! (Sophie laughs) Without further introduction, I'm going to pass this to a conversation between

Sarah and myself.



Sarah McCollum 02:28

So, like you said, my name is Sarah, use she/her/hers pronouns. I'm a senior at Hamline University. I am a full time student. I have a couple of jobs right now. I'm a grant writing intern, which has been really exciting. One of my favorite things to do is, I love to ask people like, what are three things that I should know about you? I like to think that I'm fun at parties. (Sarah laughs) Because I'll ask people this at parties. Um, I can go first because like, just you know, to give a little example, um, I think that three things that people should know about me is that I can recite all of the US presidents and the number of terms that they have served. I feel like that says a lot about me. Um, my freshman year of college, I had a podcast or a radio show podcast type thing called "Why Am I Single?", which also says a lot about me. And I love ice cream a lot. And those are three things that everyone should know about me. What other things that we should know about you? First of all I think those are three very important things. (Sophie laughs) So three things about me. I'm an Aries, but I don't know how I feel about astrology.



Sophie Warrick 03:47

Oooo.



Sarah McCollum 03:47

I think that kind of that's a really loud thing about me. (Sophie laughs) I learned how to say the alphabet backwards. And I was in second grade. Because I wanted attention. I can still do it, but not as good. And I am I'm the youngest of six, I have five siblings.



Sophie Warrick 04:12

There you go. Three important things.



Sarah McCollum 04:15

Yeah.



Sophie Warrick 04:16

I don't know how you do that -- being the youngest of six. I guess it doesn't really matter. Like you don't really have a choice. But still!



Sarah McCollum 04:21

No, no, no. And I feel like the stereotype of like, the youngest is that they were super spoiled, like etc, etc. And like, yes, but also, I think I just had a lot of freedom to do what I wanted. Because my parents were old by the time that I was, I was doing anything.



Sophie Warrick 04:41

They were like, what's the worst that can happen? She's the last one...



Music/Sound Design 04:43

[Ambient birds fade in]



Sophie Warrick 04:44

(Voiceover) The 36 Questions That Lead to Love are a set of questions developed in the 1990s by psychologists and other researchers to see if two strangers can develop an intimate connection just from asking each other a series of increasingly personal questions. To be honest, I don't really understand the science behind it. But I really do love the idea of asking someone intimate questions in order to get to know them quickly. I asked a few to each guest every episode.



Music/Sound Design 05:13

[Ambient birds fade out]



Sophie Warrick 05:13

Finish this sentence, I wish that I had someone with whom I could share "blank".



Sarah McCollum 05:22

I wish I had someone with whom I could share my accomplishments with.



Sophie Warrick 05:29

Ooo, that's a good one.



Sarah McCollum 05:31

Thank you.



Sophie Warrick 05:32

You can always share them with me.



Sarah McCollum 05:34

Thank you. I do!



Sophie Warrick 05:38

And then my last question is what do you wish the world had more of?



Sarah McCollum 05:46

I wish the world had more good days.



Sophie Warrick 05:49

Mmmm. Mmhhh. Mmhhh. My next question is just Where do you live? And you can talk about where you currently live, as well as maybe talk about where you were born and raised. If you're comfortable sharing that?



Sarah McCollum 06:04

Yeah, so I currently live in St. Paul, Minnesota. I moved here almost almost three years ago for college and I lived here permanently since. Before that, I was born in Bemidji, Minnesota, which is, if you haven't heard of it, it's a semi small town in northern Minnesota. But I lived about half an hour away in a actually small town called Becida. My fun fact about that town is it has a cemetery, a bar and a church. And that's it.



Sophie Warrick 06:45

The three things you need.



Sarah McCollum 06:46

Yeah.



Sophie Warrick 06:50

Um, where do you think you would say that you grew up? Do you think you grew up in Becida? Or Bemidji? Both of them?



Sarah McCollum 06:58

Yeah, I think when people like when I'm asked, like, where are you from, where did you grow up? I always kind of default to saying Bemidji. That's where I went to high school and middle school elementary school, like everything that I did all of my friends. All of that was in Bemidji. But like I physically lived in Becida so... It's a lot easier people in Minnesota tend to know Bemidji is like a landmark are like a point they know what it is. But people don't know what Becida is.



Sophie Warrick 07:29

Real. Real cuz it's only got a bar, a cemetery and church.



Sarah McCollum 07:33

Yeah. (Both laugh)



Sophie Warrick 07:34

So how would you describe, like, what it's like to live in Bemidji and Becida, um, and just maybe the differences between the two? What it's like when you were growing up? Just share with us a little bit more about that?



Sarah McCollum 07:49

Yeah, I think I'm living in Becida being away from like being 30 minutes from like the

grocery store, like any store, anything like that being, most of my friends I lived half an hour to an hour away from them was very difficult. So I didn't have a lot of like, oh, I just need to get out of the house. I just need to get away for a minute. That wasn't an easy task. And I commuted to school. Or I think I think people would count it as a commute. It was it was almost half an hour every day. Which wasn't always ideal having classes at 8am. I think, I'd said that it was difficult. It was rough. Yeah.



Sophie Warrick 08:50

Yeah. I totally hear that. I remember that. I think this is the point in this episode, where I will say Sarah and I are best friends and that we grew up together. And I lived in Bemidji, but any we rarely, I think I've been to your house maybe --



Sarah McCollum 09:06

Once or twice.



Sophie Warrick 09:07

-- Once or twice if that even. I was there very little just because you live so far away. And I was like, ugh.



Sarah McCollum 09:16

Yeah, it was also difficult because all of my friends had their driver's license before me. I was I have a spring birthday. You know, like I said, I'm an Aries. So everybody else had their birthdays before me or they were like grades above me. So they had it before me. So I was always like that friend that had to like find a ride. But you know, no one really wants to give you a ride when you live half an hour away.



Sophie Warrick 09:48

You were the one that was dishing out rides.



Sarah McCollum 09:50

Yeah, there was that there was the point though, when I did have my license, and other people didn't and I was givin' them to everyone.



Sophie Warrick 10:00

Everyone loved you for it.



Sarah McCollum 10:02

Yes.



Sophie Warrick 10:05

I want us to go back to something that you said earlier about Bemidji being like more of a landmark. And right, I think for like this is a Minnesota podcast, Minnesota-based podcast. And so I assume that some folks know that like, right Bemidji is home to Paul and Babe, famous statues, right, or the fact that it's the first city on the Mississippi. Um, what else do you think that like Bemidji might be known for? Or when you talk about Bemidji like, what do you talk about?



Sarah McCollum 10:35

I feel like recently, probably after like this summer, I was asked a lot about like the Trump rally that happened in Bemidji. It was it was sometime like this last summer. So it was during the pandemic. Maybe July?



Sophie Warrick 10:56

Uh huh.



Sarah McCollum 10:57

I remember that being a conversation and like, Bemidji was trending on Twitter, and which is never a good thing.



Sophie Warrick 11:09

Yeah, I remember seeing Facebook posts from people that were like, that was something along the lines of, "yeah, he's a horrible president. But like, we finally made national news! We've never made national news!" And I was like, y'all, this is not what we want to be known for. But --



Sarah McCollum 11:27

Exactly.



Sophie Warrick 11:28

-- It's so it's so odd sometimes to think about how excited people will get just about that sort of fame. That's not even really fame, right? Like just like fame by association of your hometown. But it's for something horrible. Right? Like...



Sarah McCollum 11:46

Yeah.



Sophie Warrick 11:48

Oh go ahead.



Sarah McCollum 11:51

It almost it almost makes me want to try and defend it. Even if you wouldn't defend it in like other situations. But you want to you almost want to be like, "yeah, but like not everybody there is like that! Not everybody."



Sophie Warrick 12:06

Well, and right, it's so hard when...yes, not everybody is like that, but a hell of a lot of people are.



Sarah McCollum 12:15

Exactly.



Sophie Warrick 12:16

Um, yeah. When yeah. Oh, red county. Because you did you ever take the bus to like school at all?



Sarah McCollum 12:26

I did. Yeah. I in elementary school, and a lot of middle school. I got on the bus sometime between like, 6:40am and seven o'clock.



Sophie Warrick 12:36

And then what time would school start?



Sarah McCollum 12:38

In middle school? I think it started. I don't know what like 8:30am. Maybe?



Sophie Warrick 12:44

Yeah.



Sarah McCollum 12:45

So I'd have like an hour, hour and a half bus ride.



Sophie Warrick 12:51

On those country roads, and then you know, it's snowing and then that adds 20 minutes.



Sarah McCollum 12:56

Yeah.



Sophie Warrick 12:59

But God bless the bus drivers. They really are the heroes of the Northwoods.



Sarah McCollum 13:03

Shout out out out of my bus driver the entire time I rode the bus.



Sophie Warrick 13:09

My bus driver Bob loved him, he was great. Bus number 42. Why do I remember that? But yeah, I think I also wanted to ask you just where do you feel most at home? Or like where do you feel compelled to call home?



Sarah McCollum 13:29

I feel like that's something that like the like, what's home? Like? Where do you feel at home? Has always been like a strange question to me. Cuz I always I refer to St. Paul as home. Like, if I'm visiting family. I like I sometimes catch myself before saying like, oh, I'm going home on this day. And, like Bemidji/Becida, it's always like on visiting family, going to my parents for a few days or like things like that. But I think I think I'm still like finding what home is for me. For sure. Yeah, I don't think it's gonna I don't think I'm going to end in St. Paul.



Music/Sound Design 14:25

[Ambident birds and mandolin fade in]



Sophie Warrick 14:26

(Voiceover) Rural queer youth that are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity can often find it particularly challenging because they have fewer queer supportive resources available or need to travel long distances in order to find them. If we address overall needs and challenges facing queer youth as well as encourage making meaningful and long lasting relationships in these rural areas, quality of life for both queer and non queer residents will improve immensely.



Music/Sound Design 14:55

[Ambient birds and mandolin fade out]



Sophie Warrick 14:59

But I'm I'm curious to know more about like what your high school experience was growing up? Like, did you feel a strong connection to your high school? Did you...I don't know, feel welcomed at your high school or just like at home? I guess I did some air quotes, but you can't see them. So yeah.



Sarah McCollum 15:19

I think it took me a really long time to feel like comfortable in my high school, I think I it's not a it's not a very welcoming space, in my opinion. Like, there are people who are very welcoming and very loving and very caring, but as a whole. I think being like a queer student, who wanted to be out, but really couldn't. Because it was either like a stereotype of then you're just like this really weird kid, or get, like, extremely but bullied and harassed.



Sophie Warrick 16:05

Mm hmm.



Sarah McCollum 16:05

It wasn't always the best option. So I think I like now now that I'm like, away from it, I'm able to like, look back at the really positive memories and have a lot of like, fond thoughts of that. And I met a lot of amazing people. And I met you there and you're one of my best friends.



Sophie Warrick 16:25

I love you!



Sarah McCollum 16:25

But it wasn't an easy time.



Sophie Warrick 16:28

Yeah. No, I resonated a lot with that. Because especially that part that you said, with knowing that there's a lot of welcoming people there a lot of really loving people in Bemidji in general as well. But just I also remember, like thinking I was queer, not totally sure, like, how comfortable I was with my identity, but not really having any room to like, process that there.



Sarah McCollum 16:57

Yeah, cuz you couldn't, like you didn't know who you could talk to? Who was like safe to talk to you? Like I like it was those like warm, welcoming people who outed me to people I

wasn't ready to be out to.



Sophie Warrick 17:09

Yep. Yeah. I remember that.



Sarah McCollum 17:13

So it wasn't. It was very, I think, at times lonely. Yeah. That also, I feel like there was also this pressure of one someone did come out, they were kind of watched as, like they now spoke for the community, because there were so few people who are out like they they became the community. They were very, I think, tokenized in a way. I didn't want I also like having that pressure. And that view is kind of intimidating.



Sophie Warrick 17:49

For sure. Well, it's interesting to think about, because I don't really know how to exactly explain this in a succinct way. But like, right, there's, it's one thing that I assume that any queer kid in any school anywhere, no matter, rural, urban, suburb, whatever, like, it is always going to feel a little bit like you're isolated or that you're alone, or you don't have a super well-known community of folks that you can like come out to, but it's another thing. At least for me, it was another thing to live in Bemidji and know that if I were to come out at school, everyone at my church was gonna know because they're the same people. Or if I came out to like the people in orchestra, like the people in my fourth hour English class, we're also going to know because it's the same people.



Sarah McCollum 18:43

Right.



Sophie Warrick 18:44

And so there was really no, everything's just so together in a way. I don't know if that makes sense. But...



Sarah McCollum 18:53

Yeah, like you couldn't you can really choose your circle very well.



Sophie Warrick 18:57

Yeah, yeah, that's exactly how I want to explain it.



Sarah McCollum 19:00

Yeah. And I think I definitely feel that because my senior year I didn't, like "come out, come out", but like people knew. And I would be asked by people that always kind of hint at asking me, like, oh, like, are you not straight? (Sophie laughs) But they would never say it. They never say like, Oh, you like you like girls or like you like women or don't like guys, but they would always be like, oh, so like, you seem really close with this person, with other like women. How, what's that about?



Sophie Warrick 19:40

Oh, that's so interesting. Interesting is not a good thing to say. One of my friends has always said that interesting is the Minnesota code word for garbage. So...



Sarah McCollum 19:49

Yeah. (Both laugh) Yeah, my heart drops just a little bit when people say like, when I say something like oh, that's interesting.



Sophie Warrick 20:00

Yeah, no, thank you for sharing that I was also thinking about, just all of this is like coming back to me just talking to you about it. But like, I don't know if you felt this way, so please feel free to be like, Oh, I had a totally different viewpoint of that. But um, right, our school had a GSA, a gay straight Alliance, it had a teacher that was the advisor for it, and everyone was welcomed. And I kind of remember there being like, five people in it. Like, I remember, there was not that many people in it out of our school of like, how many people went to our school like 1,500 People?



Sarah McCollum 20:41

Yeah, something like that.



Sophie Warrick 20:42

And I remember, um, our English teacher, that was the advisor for it, I don't really want to say their name, because I don't have their permission. Um, but I remember wanting to go to a meeting, but was scared of what other people would think if I went to that meeting. But I just remember having a such an odd feeling that I can't really explain well, when I thought about going to those meetings, I'm curious to know what you thought of our high schools, Gay Straight Alliance or your experience with it, and those sorts of things.



Sarah McCollum 21:21

Yeah, I feel like I thought about going, but had a very similar like, mindset of like, what will what will people think there are so so few people that go to it? They're also already friends, they all know each other. So like, I can't even fit in there either. So yeah, I think there was an attempt, I think, at showing that, like the Bemidji community, or like the high school community could be like accepting and having something like that. But it really wasn't. It was intimidating, I think. I feel the same way.



Music/Sound Design 22:10

[Ambient birds and mandolin fade in]



Sophie Warrick 22:13

(Voiceover) For queer students in rural areas, challenges in schools are often amplified in a few different ways. First, resource and teacher shortages mean that rural students in general are at a disadvantage, and queer students in rural areas also face a more hostile school climate on average than their suburban or urban peers. The National School Climate Survey with a sample of over 20,000 queer youth, found that queer students in rural areas reported the most hostile school climates, and that they were more likely to have negative and dangerous experiences at school that can make attending school, let alone succeeding at school more difficult. [Ambient birds and mandolin fade out] We already talked about you moving and like to St. Paul and planning on moving potentially away again, out of Minnesota, maybe. But have you ever thought about moving back to Bemidji/Becida area? And what that might mean to you?



Sarah McCollum 23:14

I have not, I think. So I think when I left, I was very, like, in my mind decided that as soon as I left, the Bemidji area, like everything would be okay. To all of my all of my problems, they'd be gone. And I'd be able to just grow and reflect and be myself and etc. etc. And

while it helps you still if you have to, like weave in one location doesn't fix everything.



Sophie Warrick 23:47

Yeah, for sure.



Sarah McCollum 23:49

At this point, moving back isn't really like something I've considered at all.



Sophie Warrick 23:59

Do you have any reason why you don't want to move back?



Sarah McCollum 24:03

I think my reason is a lot of I have a lot of like bad memories and a lot of bad associations with it that like, even even like when I go home and visit, it feels strange. And kind of it's a difficult thing. Like I never I never go back. And like visit family and stuff without having somebody else go with me. Just as like a comfort.



Sophie Warrick 24:30

Yeah.



Sarah McCollum 24:32

I think I've also realized that I really do enjoy living in a city. I really like having access to like a grocery store.



Sophie Warrick 24:42

For sure.



Sarah McCollum 24:42

Without having to drive to it so far. And it's also just not like, like the career that I'm interested in and the path that I want to take, those opportunities don't exist there.



Sophie Warrick 24:58

Yeah.



Sarah McCollum 25:01

Even beyond like personal feeling, it just won't. It doesn't work out for me.



Sophie Warrick 25:10

I resonate a lot with that, too. And I remember, I had a, my favorite librarian at our University, she would always ask me if I ever thought about moving back. And I, that was never even on my mind. Like it was almost never even an option in my head to go back because I was like, I finally left. I finally got out like, I don't want to go back.



Sarah McCollum 25:34

Yeah exactly.



Sophie Warrick 25:35

And I think I'm, I don't know, maybe this is me again, assuming too much. I tend to do that a lot. And I'm trying really hard not to. But I feel like a lot of people, a lot of young people that were born and/or raised in Bemidji tend to stay there forever, or they leave for college and they never come back. I just think that's a very weird binary of students. Like if they were to leave for college, you know, there's a whole other population of people that don't ever go to college, but do other things and leave.



Sarah McCollum 26:17

I think I kind of noticed that too. It's kind of like once you once you do leave, for like any reason. Not a lot of people come back. And it's very telling.



Sophie Warrick 26:28

Yeah.



Sarah McCollum 26:28

And it's also graduating this semester. So many people have the question of what are you? What are you doing after graduation? Where are you going? Are you staying in St. Paul? Are you moving back at home? I mean, are you moving back to Bemidji? And every single time I get that question, like the thought of moving back, it just isn't there for me.



Sophie Warrick 26:50

Mhmm. Is there anything that you wish that you had growing up? Either related to queerness or otherwise, maybe even a grocery store a little closer?



Sarah McCollum 27:02

Yeah, I think I wish I had someone I knew...and this is this is like me thinking of like, middle school through high school. I wish I had someone I knew I was, like, fully safe in confiding in. Cuz I knew I had I had great friends. I had people I was very close with. But I feel like from that very difficult time that is middle school.



Sophie Warrick 27:40

Yeah



Sarah McCollum 27:41

I didn't really feel like, all the time, I had someone that was very safe. And confiding in someone that I could just give, like, all of my thoughts and everything to. And I think, for me, in like the queer side of it all made kind of accepting myself and accepting my identity very difficult. because there wasn't a lot of people to like, look to and see, like, in Bemidji, within the communities that were queer, and were like, happy?



Sophie Warrick 28:23

Yeah.



Sarah McCollum 28:24

Or like successful. It just didn't exist a lot. So I had a lot of like, well doesn't, like what's wrong with me? You know?



Sophie Warrick 28:37

I would love for you to share if you want to, or can think of someone but I was thinking about who was like the first person that the first queer person I saw in media, like in movies or TV shows, you know, or friggin books, like whatever. And I think the first person I was ever like, acquainted with was Ellen DeGeneres of all people.



Sarah McCollum 29:00

Ooo.



Sophie Warrick 29:00

And just, again, learning my queerness through Ellen DeGeneres, and then learning how almost uncomfortable I am with her as a queer icon now.



Sarah McCollum 29:13

Yeah.



Sophie Warrick 29:16

I don't know sitting with that too. And so if you have someone that you can think of, I'd be really curious to know who the first queer person you saw in media might be.



Sarah McCollum 29:25

I, here's the thing. I really don't know their name, or what show they were on. But my mom used to watch I don't know if it was like a home renovation, home decoration or like, just a makeover show. Like where they're like redo someone's whole outfit and life. But one of the shows there was a gay man in it. And I think that was like the first media I saw and yeah, that like, I don't know. I remember being very young in seeing that I and everyone hated him so...They said he was too mean.



Sophie Warrick 30:10

And that's the media. That's what they're putting in your little brain as a kid. Wow. Thank you for sharing that. I think it's that's such an interesting question. And it's something that I want to ask all queer people. It's just like, what was your first introduction? But...I guess

kind of related to that, I'm wondering why you might think it's important to talk about queerness, either, like we're doing right now, in this podcast format, or even you kind of mentioned having someone safe to talk to while you were growing up, and just why you think that's important to you? Or just to queer folks in general?

 Sarah McCollum 30:47

I think I think it's incredibly important. I think it's a huge thing. I think, even even if it's not necessarily talked about in a very formal setting, or, like talked about in the way we're like, oh, gay is okay. But just kind of casually.

 Sophie Warrick 31:11

Yeah.

 Sarah McCollum 31:12

Said. Like, like, as if it doesn't have to be super terrifying, life altering thing. Because everybody you know, I don't want to make a huge generalization, okay? But people have sexuality, like they, how they identify whether you're a form of queer or straight, like you have a sexual identity. And I think it's just like, important to be talked about like that. You know, like, it just exists.

 Sophie Warrick 31:59

Yeah. Queerness just talked about informally, I think that's such a huge part of it, and that it doesn't need to be, we're always fighting for like queer rights, and we're always fighting and we're always fighting, we're always fighting like queer joy exists, you know, like queer day to day living exists.

 Sarah McCollum 32:16

Like, it doesn't always have to be, like, tragic or triumphant. It can just be mundane.

 Sophie Warrick 32:27

Exactly. And like, I don't know about you. But I don't know if I've said this yet. But I wasn't really out in high school, I was uncomfortable with my identity. In high school, I wasn't

really comfortable with anything until I came to college. But I think just knowing that would have just changed my entire journey of like, being "out". And I again, I use air quotes, but you can't see them. Because, you know, we could talk about what being "out" actually means. But I kind of lost my train of thought there. But, I like what you said.

 Sarah McCollum 33:04
Thank you.

 Sophie Warrick 33:06
And then do you have any advice for I don't know, queer youth that might be struggling with their identity? And if you do, is there anything you'd like to say to queer youth? Like that might be in Bemidji, or in Becida, or in those areas?

 Sarah McCollum 33:25
Yeah, I think a couple things, probably. I thought about this question for a while, you know, and then there's always like that immediate, like, oh, it gets better! It's not always going to be a struggle. But I think even bigger than that, it's okay for it to be a struggle. And it's okay, to not have like a strict identity. It's okay. If you don't want to come out, like as a celebration as like a triumphant, like, look at me and my identity. You don't need to do that for other people. You don't need to perform your queerness for someone else. It's like, I don't know, in general, like, just it's okay for it not to be easy. But that doesn't mean that for yourself and like your, your personal thoughts. It doesn't have to be the hardest thing in the world. Because ultimately, and this may be super cliché to say but ultimately, like, it should only really matter to you how you identify.

 Sophie Warrick 34:54
That's very beautiful. Thank you for sharing that. Made me tear up a little bit. And then I'm just wondering if there's anything that you'd like to say to queer folks that might feel isolated at this time, just because we still are in a pandemic. And yeah, that's the end of that sentence.

 Sarah McCollum 35:19
I think. Honestly, I'm a queer person feeling isolated right now. (Both laugh)



Sophie Warrick 35:28

What would you say to yourself?



Sarah McCollum 35:30

I think one thought that I've been having a lot recently that's been helping is you don't always have to be positive. And think a lot of people are really focused on, even though all of these really bad things are happening. And even though this is like being in a pandemic, is really hard and being in a pandemic, and like you may not be in a space where you feel safe is incredibly hard to stay positive. And you don't need to be positive, you can be upset, and frustrated and sad. And if you need to let that out, don't let anyone say like, "Oh, well, we're all in a pandemic. We're all going through it." We all are and like, we're not all having a good time.



Sophie Warrick 36:17

Yeah.



Sarah McCollum 36:18

You get to express that.



Sophie Warrick 36:19

We're all going through it and it's all fucked up, so...



Sarah McCollum 36:22

Yeah, like, I think a big part of emotional maturity. And this is something like what if someone I work with at Hamline talked about a lot when we had training was like a big part of emotional maturity is just . And I think like hearing her say, that was like a, like a lightbulb. For me. I was like, Oh, yeah, like that makes sense.



Music/Sound Design 36:32

[Ambient birds and mandolin fade in and out]



Sophie Warrick 37:06

I'm just also wondering if you have any work or any upcoming projects, virtual events, etc., that you want to shout out or give some any time and space to, or just anything that you're excited about in your life that you want to share?



Sarah McCollum 37:23

If you know anyone hiring is soon to be graduate in Economics and Business Analytics and History. I'm here.



Sophie Warrick 37:34

If people are interested in contacting you at all, where can they find you?



Sarah McCollum 37:40

They can find me on Instagram @Maccsizzle. LinkedIn! Y'all connect with me on LinkedIn. My Twitter's private due to trying to get a job row. If you want to follow me on there, it's the same as my Instagram.



Sophie Warrick 38:00

Same across the board except on LinkedIn. That's your full name.



Sarah McCollum 38:04

That's my real name, yeah!



Music/Sound Design 38:07

[Ambient birds fade in]



Sophie Warrick 38:11

You just listened to a conversation between Sarah McCollum and myself. Sophie Warrick, thank you so much to Sarah for joining me on this episode of Queer Backroads. I'm so thankful for your friendship, your voice and everything that you bring to the world. I hope that everyone has someone like Sarah in their lives. To all my rural queers: I know you're

out there. I hope you're listening and I hope that you're finding your community. If you're interested in shownotes and transcriptions of each episode, you can visit my linktree at linktr.ee/SophieWarrick. You can also learn more about this podcast project and various ways to contact me if you're interested. I hope your day is filled with light and love and I challenge you to try something new today. At the end of each episode, I ask a question for you to ponder for as long as you like. How do you feel most celebrated and how do you feel most seen? Thanks for listening. [Mandolin fades in] [Ambient birds and mandolin fade out]