

Sophie Heawood Episode Transcript

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We haven't all done kind of years of Buddhist training. We don't necessarily have the breathing exercises and the therapeutic sort of wisdom in our bodies. And when we say, okay, I'll just go gracefully with that. Are we just pushing it down and pushing it down and pushing it down? And one day we're just going to burst or we're going to get some physical bad health repercussion in our body. That is almost the build up of this tension, because I sometimes don't know if I genuinely am that gracious. Yeah. So interesting. The force within me waiting to smash down a wall. Yeah. 2s Welcome to Women Are Mad, where we invite women to bring their anger into everyday conversation. I'm Selima Saxton, I'm an actress and writer. I'm Jennifer Cox and I'm a psychotherapist. We notice that anger is the one emotion that women aren't allowed to open express. Meanwhile, everything around us is making us absolutely furious. We're all feeling it. Let's get together to work out what to do with it. 3s Salma, what's made you mad this week? 1s Um. Uh, well, my dad died, uh, 36 hours ago. I seem to be counting it by hour at the moment. Um, and I was estranged from my dad, so it's a really weird feeling because I'm currently quite furious. 1s Uh, that he wasn't the dad that I thought he might turn into, even in his 80s. Really pathetic hope there. Um, so, uh, it's a surreal kind of. 1s Feeling at the moment, but there are lots of angry threads to it because I have lots of. I have lots of tricky memories. I have lots of quite sweet memories, and I'm also doubting my own ability to remember. I'm kind of angry at myself for wondering if I should have just sorted it all out before he died, and kind of put a bow on it. Uh, and I'm angry at what he wasn't, mainly. And I'm angry that I spent so many years in therapy sorting this all out, and I imagined the day that he died, I would very calmly process it. And obviously, that's not how it's happened, because I'm counting his death in hours. Uh, so that's where I am. 2s Ah, that's quite a lot for an intro, isn't it? But I couldn't. The thing is, I was trying to think of jolly little madness stories, but I don't really have any. No. So that's who I am. And and also, it's, um. I've never mourned somebody. I've been fortunate enough not to have lost anybody particularly close to me as of yet at this grand old age. So, um. 2s Here. I feel like I'm floating in the sky at the moment. It's really odd. 3s I think there is so much shit out there in terms of how we're meant to mourn parents and what we're meant to feel. Yes. Agreed. It's I think it's so damaging that that exists that these expectations and like frameworks exist, when actually, if we're honest, so few people have experiences which fit within those templates, you know, forward um, 1s uh, uncomplicated um, experience of being parented like I, I get as a therapist is probably skewed because obviously what I spend every day really dealing with is, um, people's very complex relationships with parents, but equally. I. 1s I feel pretty convinced that that's an accurate representation of the the wide demographic that most people have, stuff that needs to be worked through. Mhm. Um, whether or not they have the means of taking themselves to therapy to do that is, you know. 1s Uh, debatable, but I feel. 2s I feel most people probably have an awful lot that is unresolved, and when that parent dies, they are then left with. Yeah, which is so unfair. You know, in a way. Um, yeah. Yes. I think parents give children far too much shit to carry. It makes me reflect on my own parenting. Breaking generational, um, behaviors. Yeah. How much work has gone into shifting patterns? The other thing, isn't it? If you are somebody that's put themselves forward to therapy, to take responsibility and to try and stop those, um, toxicities in their tracks, you know, prevent them from bleeding over into another generation. Bloody hell. You know, being the one in that family tree having to put the brakes on and go. It ends here. That is some undertaking. Yeah. Yeah. It really is bloody tiring, isn't it? Yeah, yeah. So there

we go. Okay. Um, okay. I'm going to intro our fantastic guest. Brilliant. Our guest today is a writer and journalist whose work runs the gamut from property porn to life as a single mother. 1s From her candid interviews to her book, *The Hungover Games*, her writing is relatable and extremely funny. Please welcome the brilliant Sophie Haywood. 2s Great. Well, let's just get let's get straight into it. Joey. Sophie, we're all ready. Okay. Brilliant. So, Sophie, what makes you angry? 2s Do you know, I don't usually have a policy as a single mother and as someone who's written a book about being a single mother. Yes, I have not. I mean, my book is not *Moni*, and I don't like to moan and I don't write pieces moaning about it. And even my private Facebook posts are not moans, but I'm 2s fed up by how much more work women do for kids. Yes, that's not *Moni*. That's not remotely moaning. Single parent thing. You know, it's a marriage thing. It's it's an everything thing. Um, it's sometimes it just, you know, sometimes you're going along and being like, oh, I'll just be so zen and calm about this. And then some days it just hits you that you're almost helping perpetuate this bullshit status quo. Yeah. I've been by not by not launching in and sort of saying your piece about it. 2s Well, you know. 2s I'm in a situation where I do the vast majority, the vast majority of the parenting. But, you know, my daughter does have a dad and he is now part of her life. And I think we had such a bumpy start that you become so grateful when you rebuild that friendship between the two parents, so grateful that over the years you sort of almost sublimate who you are. You know, I didn't used to be this person in you is like, I'll just do nearly everything. And, you know, you come when you're free. Um, it's pissing me off. Well, yes. Yeah, there's a one of. I mean, your book is brilliant. And I would say to anybody who hasn't obviously most most people have read it by now, but if they haven't read your book, go and buy it immediately. But one line I was rereading today, actually, and it's particularly particularly significant to me because my dad passed away on Saturday. And you, you. Thank you. Um, and you wrote about being a safe harbor for your daughter. I don't know if you remember the sentence two and two. I don't remember the exact wording, but I remember the feeling. Yeah. Yes. I wish I had taken it out, but but but not that not everybody gets one of those. Um, you also wrote about. And I just think being a single parent, it's good to be reminded of that in my *Angry Premenstrual*. 1s Yeah. It's a beautifully put harbor that brings its own reward. Yeah, yeah. And, um, my dad wasn't that, um, and, uh, I, you know, just from from reading, you know, of how you had your daughter and your wit in it, but you're absolutely horrifying honesty about it all as well. Um, I can only imagine what it takes to be that safe harbor sometimes. So it's a very windy way. I'm really cool. And thank you for that. I mean that you've hit the nail on the head. Um, it takes a lot to build a safe harbor and to keep it safe and when you are the harbor, it's not like boats aren't hitting you as well, you know, some good point. Protect a smaller person from some of the boats, although you're not really there in their classroom, at school and in their social life. But, um. You know when you're being buffeted too. I think that is the absolute essence of being a parent is can you be a rock when you don't necessarily feel like one? Yes. Yeah. And it takes real bravery, I think, real courage to be that harbor, especially when you feel as if there's actual attack coming from somebody that you would hope would be kind of with you in that endeavor to protect the child. Yeah, totally. I just read some good advice for arguing couples. I mean, it was more for, you know, marriage guidance, but it said, um, ideally, they weren't saying don't argue, but they were saying an argument in a couple should be the two of you trying to solve the thing, the problem. It's not the two of you trying to win over each other. Yeah, yeah. And, um, that's quite a goal, isn't it? Yeah. I mean, but that's a, that's quite a goal in for me in all as I'm a parent, um, in all aspects of my life, even friendship, I think sometimes to not to mute one's ego sufficiently. Yes. That you can lose and go, yeah, you're right and I'm right and I'm wrong and you're wrong. And this is a bit of a mess about this, haven't we as well the competition of tiredness that so many, especially couples, get into and you know, I guess Sophie as well, from where you were sitting, especially in those years of, of really, you know, being in a struggle with someone who, who didn't even want to be in that

competition with you. Yeah, that's, you know, that's a completely different sort of dynamic to have to navigate than a lot of people would be stuck in. So how do you do it and how have you done it? Is I've done it very graciously. You've got me on a, you know, a grumpy, well, happily grumpy day. Um, I do believe I've done it with good grace in the main, but, you know, we are all fallible. Um, Is I what I wonder about is when you practice like you've just said. Oh, okay, I'll lose this one. I'll. I'll be, I don't know, the bigger person or I'll check in with my humility. I won't try and beat my friends and things or my partner. Um. What? I wonder if what women do and what may be leads to this sort of epidemic of female suppressed rage is that we we haven't all done kind of years of Buddhist training. We don't necessarily have the breathing exercises and the therapeutic sort of wisdom in our bodies. And when we say, okay, I'll just go gracefully with that. Are we just pushing it down and pushing it down and pushing it down? And one day we're just going to burst or we're going to get some physical bad health repercussion in our body. That is almost the build up of this tension, because I sometimes don't know if I'm being the graceful, bigger person who's just glad she got to have an unexpected baby who's, you know, turned out, you know, thanks be to God to be this sort of glorious, healthy child. Um, I don't know if I genuinely am that gracious. Yeah. So interesting. The force within me waiting to smash down. Yeah, because I look, I come from a family of martyrs. Right? Not very gracious. Recognize that? I recognize sort of mothering. Yeah. So? So I have a South Asian background? Partly. Yeah. Um, and, uh, there is, uh, sublimation and sacrifice. Yes, yes. Um, so I have seen it in let's just call them elder members of that tribe. I have seen the physical health ramifications of that martyrdom. So obviously that's an extreme example of what you're saying. And you don't strike me as somebody who has martyr ish qualities, but, um, you're not. No, no. Good. Well, we're even speaking about it, aren't we? I think if one if one speaking about it, then I think one's relatively safe. Yeah. Um. But I think women, particularly of those generations, one above us, two above us, they didn't know what to do with it all. We are more able to know. I think you know, and it's not that I've got a really good point because, um, Sophie, you know, in the book you talk about as well, sadness and how sadness will sort of always have a home in your home. I think, yes. And I'm very big on that. Yeah. Right. Because actually our brains to be healthy brains, they need to have exposure to, you know, fluctuating emotions across time. So you have to be sad, happy, excited, angry. Um, you need that kind of spectrum so that a brain can flourish and feel as if it's getting everything it needs for a child to have a different experience of different feelings across time. You know, in a school day and a school, we can be able to bring them home and talk about them and you to be doing the same back in your household. I think obviously doing the way to a healthy life. Yeah. And so maybe you don't then get left with all this sort of more stuck in emotion, even if we're not quite sure for you yet where anger has been living, the fact that they see it, Is you know it's there. Come on. Yeah. And we want to talk about that. But there's at least been a sort of experience of, you know, different things coming and going. And that's that's really in terms of what we're looking for health wise. I think that's very positive. Is One thing I did notice when my daughter was very small and at that period I was. I mean, I'm very grateful to help from my own mum, actually, who did an awful lot, and my dad at that point, but they didn't live in London where I lived, and it was just me. I was absolutely the sole carer there in Yorkshire. One thing I noticed, because I went to an antenatal class and everyone else was in a heterosexual couple in that class, there were about ten families. One thing I noticed when I met up with the other moms who were on maternity leave, and we'd all sort of CIN breastfeed together, or a bunch of 3 or 4 of us would. Was that, as you say, that competition for tiredness, you know, you'd hear stories like, oh, I lay there last night. I just lay there thinking, can you not hear, you know, can you not hear the baby? Is he going to wake up? Is he going to wake up? You know, and I lay there until I couldn't bear it anymore. And I thought, gosh, that actually sounds more stressful than just me. Yeah, yeah. Any time. 2 a.m., 4 a.m., 6 a.m.. You know that baby cries. You just sit bolt upright like a rocket. You go and deal.

Sometimes it's a ten minute job. Sometimes it's awful. You know, it's hours. The morning has begun. But there was no other resentment. It was just like, oh, God, I wish I could say asleep. But, you know, if I came downstairs and the sink was full of washing up, it was my washing up that I hadn't expected or sort of silently seethed. Well, he could have done that last night. And actually, I think in a weird way, I had an easier time that first year. And what we settling into my marriage? I hadn't really known a marriage at that point. I hadn't, you know, I hadn't been in a long relationship with someone who walked off. It was it was deeply casual from the start, and I hadn't had a long relationship. That's kind of how it ended up where it ended up. So I actually think on some level it was just as hard for the married people because, um, the energy you put into sitting there thinking, is it going to do it? Is he going to notice the washing up? You know, that a passive aggressive sort of war of attrition where it all starts to kind of embed, I think that really passive style of, of holding this stuff. But whoa, whoa, whoa. Also sorry. When do I ever say whoa whoa whoa. When? Um, I haven't slept much last couple days. When? I call me, call me, um, aggressive. But I wonder when people don't boundary themselves within relationships, you know, like, I don't have a perfect marriage, obviously, but, um, I'm relatively clear about, uh, the division of certain tasks. Well, that's huge. Um, so why why are some of us not. Is my question. Yes, that's a question for Jenny. Yeah, yeah. Oh, yeah. So, like, we are not functioning well I know. Sorry. So variable headache. Like it's all your internalized rage. Yeah, exactly. No. Come on. Somebody somebody else. Someone else. Because I mean I mean, I mentioned let me try in a really in a really kind of hamfisted and through the fog of a kind of vague migraine. Let me, let me try and think about this. What what was the question? Oh yeah. Allocated task. Well, how some of us struggled and I definitely do. I mean I'm not someone with a huge experience of I have I have since then had a long relationship with a partner. But um, and how are you in that in terms of divisions and, and simmering? Could you strike me some pretty strident still not great at setting boundaries and, you know, feeling because of my mother and probably her mother sort of coming through. And as you say, that's when the martyrdom kicks in. But I read something very useful that said, in a very sort of blunt over generalized way, there's two kinds of families. There's the one where you expect people to be telepathic, and there's the one where you just say it. And I thought, oh my God, I come from this sort of telepathy. Oh, this is I, I've not heard this. This is so true. Great. And it doesn't work. I mean, I come from a pretty happy family. You know, my parents are great. I'm not suggesting there's any sort of dysfunction on a major scale, but there is very much. You should see how much I'm suffering. Why don't you see it? Well, you didn't tell us. Kind of. Yeah, yeah. Showing, showing, not telling. Okay, so. And I've moved from a family of telepathy to straight unmarried like, as Jen knows Mr. say as it is so. Mr.. But it is but you know, he listened to the point that, uh his a guy who works with him passed on his condolences about my dad, and my husband texted back, don't worry, he was a really mean blah blah. She's okay. So like and I was like, okay. I mean, he was like, you might not be okay. Even losing someone who you had a very difficult relationship. Exactly. And I haven't. Yeah. And I'm actually not okay. But but also just he's very able just to go. Yeah. But he was this whereas the there's no dance of. Yeah. You know spoken stuff. No I appreciate that because who who can we ask you. So back to your anger. Hey. Come on. Sophie. Um, when? When did you last get angry with someone or something? And what happened? 2s How angry are we talking? We're open to everything. I guess I recently got sent. Now, this is going to be like world's smallest violin coming out. Oh, the poor, impoverished single mother. I got sent to review a spa retreat. Oh, also, sorry for, you know, step into my not great beginning to a story, because 1s I just realized that, anyway, I had to go. 1s It's like women's sort of sexual health retreat, which wasn't okay. Yeah, that's what I thought. I got there and they. It was all quite medical. It was quite a posh, fancy place overseas. It wasn't sort of sitting in a circle and being touchy feely. It was quite doctors in white coats sort of look like a L'Oreal advert. Oh, and they got there and they way you mention you and tell you you're

too fat. And I said, oh no. Oh, God, this is homosexual. You know, confidence. It's going to dwindle to nothing. And then they went on and on with this sort of mix of sort of Western medicine and Chinese sort of nutrition, acupuncture, yin and yang based ideas. And they went between the two. So like in the morning I'd have a Chinese doctor saying I had low iron in the afternoon and have a Western doctor taken my blood and saying I had too much iron. ^{3s} But do you have does that mean you've got the right amount of iron? I know, I'm exhausted. I'm exhausted for you already. I mean, this is just tiring. All the way through, they kept saying things like with your cholesterol levels. And I was. And they were saying, you know, what you really should be eating is I don't think I do. I do this diet. I've got a friend who calls me lentils. I do eat this diet, the healthy diet that you're describing. You're just making assumptions because a lot of big tummy. And at the end of the week, they actually got the full lab test results back. And they looked at them and they said, oh, your cholesterol is actually really good. And I was like, right, you've just been assuming all week and what's in it. ^{1s} And then they went through all this stuff and they said, you know, but in the Chinese, um, what they didn't say in the Chinese system, they said, obviously, you know, because your age or you, you're 47 or where are you in sort of the seven year cycles? And I said, you know, this seven year cycle thing, who says, who says we go instead? Why not six? Why not, why not ten? Who says? And this woman could not cope. And she was like, this is for you. And anyway. And I just I think I'd reached my limit. I would not back down. I kept saying, who invented it? When was the metric? And this one was like, I mean, she wasn't, but her thinks of thunder. And I kept saying, I'm a journalist. I'm I need to know. Yes. Seven. I'm not against it. I've actually had very good experience in Chinese medicine. But I need you to tell me why my body is going to change every seven years, if that's what you're. And, um, honestly, the whole thing made me erupt in China was. Yes, it would made me a up to. Well, you know what happened? I came home, I spent the whole week saying to them, you've made an assumption that I should be losing weight. That is an assumption. Nobody asked me. Nobody checked in. Could have had an eating disorder in the past. You don't be doing with this stuff anyway. I moaned at them all week for doing that. And then I came home and weighed myself and I'd lost half a stone and I've been really hahahahaha! Wow. Do you think it was the opportunity to vent all that rage you lost? Oh, I'm a ^{2s} vain person. Oh, that would so be me. Exactly. I think it's great. Now I'm telling everyone. ^{3s} Oh, I love this. I got that that's like a snapshot into my life. Yes. ^{1s} I really relate to this. I've been doing all these private Instagram stories, going, oh my God, now they're doing this to me. I never would be like, so if I could airlift you out of there, this is insane. So then when I wanted to send my text, I was like, oh no. Oh, hang on a minute. My dress looks. Oh, yeah, I know. So, um. But also, maybe I lost half a stone of rage. Yes. I'm thinking yes, that's very plausible retention. Maybe I just needed somebody I'll never see again. To say what? Because I actually said one of these guys, I said to him, I'm going to leave the room now, because what you're saying to me is nonsense. Are you on him? Maybe I just needed to. What was that? What was their reaction? I mean, I know they had these phases of thunder, but was there anything. Um. Kind of, because we're interested in how women really aren't allowed to express their. Yeah. You're not. So finally they got in touch with me and said, like, we hear that things, you know, we hear some things. And I say, and because I had some genuine, legitimate complaints. They said, okay, the manager is going to meet you tonight to speak to you. And when I got there, the manager had. They had a fancy boutique that I hadn't been in at this spot, like a really expensive gift shop with sort of, you know, thousand pound necklaces and things. So he walked up to me with a big grin and a bag, a gift bag from the boutique that I hadn't gone in, and I was a bit like, oh, amazing. Like they're going to give me, like a silk scarf to say, yeah, sorry for calling me. Yeah. ^{1s} And I get there and he's like, open it, open it. So I, you know, man gives woman gift bag a woman gratefully opens it. And it was a recipe book of all their weight loss. No frosting. Terrible gift. Might as well have been a Hoover. Oh, it's almost like they kind of had your number. Yeah. Oh, one of the

things I'd been complaining about was the food. And it was their house. Oh, God. But, you know, you know, what's interesting about this story is that all I can think, though, I'm constantly thinking. But she did lose half a stone. Oh, that's all that's always going around in my silly little monkey brain. Worked. It worked, but it worked. And I didn't know you could lose that in a week. So, I mean, amazing. Oh, God. So you you strike me as someone who's very good at expressing anger and delivering and delivering. It's funny, this thing was aimed at, I think, a sort of perimenopausal, maybe late 40s, 5060s menopause, you know, post-menopausal, that kind of age group. And I thought, actually, we are the age group. They should we are the demographic they should not be messing with, because my truth serum is like pouring out of me now. I'm like, I'm not prepared to listen. Yeah, but no, but this is the wondrous thing, isn't it, about being in one's mid-forties onwards? Yeah. Is that I, uh. Or Jen? Jen has witnessed my transformation from, you know, obsessive people pleaser to, like a butterfly. Yeah. To truth speaker. Um, and it's. Yeah, it's gorgeous. Yeah. Yes. You do shed a few people, though. You do a lot. You shed a few pounds. Yeah. Um, I think what really helps across these ages is that we start to lose the outer circle. I don't think I have an outer circle now. No, there's only. It's only the real ones. Yeah, that's. Yeah, I think mine. Mine has disintegrated into kind of dust as well. Yes it was. The inner ones are just bloody glorious now. And you can't make an old friend is something I've learned. Yes, lately. Where's the shorthand, isn't it? You know, I've known Jenny since I was 18. At university. Yeah. So, like, it's the shorthand. And just knowing that. I have a friend called Chandra who is just the most loyal friend, and I hope I am for her, too. She just. You know, we've known each other for over 20 years and been through a lot together and used to share a flat before she was married. And, um, I just think it's funny because there's friends I have, you know, she doesn't work in media. She's not a journalist. We don't read the same books. There's friends who have more similar careers to me. So I can have all these conversations with that I don't have with people outside the media. Um, and there's people who I'm similar to in other ways. You know, I used to go out and get sort of drunk and overdo it and party and, but you just get to a point in your life where you think, well, none of that matters because I trust you. Yes. For you so deeply I can phone you Sobbing. Yeah. Saying anything and like, my God, how lucky to have a friend like that. And also, you know, it's it's the friends that I, I now those few people that I can be a total I can behave atrociously. That's okay because they still love me or I can, I can be, I can just be me. But they still love Selima for being Cancelable. Yes, yes. No. Especially in the fragile age we live in. It's knowing that there are people to whom you are on Cancelable. Yes, that's so perfectly put. That's exactly it. Yeah. It's just amazing knowing you can be sort of that much of a mess. Yes. Speaking of mold, you speaking of mess and getting back to anger. Um, so we worked out that you're very good at expressing it and that you're not afraid to say it. No, I simmer and I simmer, and when I build up, I scream. And I was in a relationship with some of the past few years and, um. I did sit on things and sit on things, and then when I brought them up, I'd be shouting and he'd say, I can't deal with you. You're screaming at me, and he'd walk out of the room. So, um, no, we didn't have a we had. I always think the relationship is kind of two halves. It's how do you cope with the good times, but do also need coping with? And how do you cope with the bad times? And we were brilliant at good times. We got on like a house on fire. We were such such fun and intellectual fun and, you know, shared. I mean, we could talk all night, but I think neither of us knew how to sort of model for doing conflict well. So I don't think I am good at expressing it. Actually, I think I've, you know, I've learnt not having had that kind of mini marriage that um, because you can go along for years as a single person thinking, well, I'd be great in relationships, look at these people with their husbands, not even telling them the truth about what's going on with them. They live with the deceit. And then you get into it and you're like, oh, I'm just like, I really 2s love that. There's also, you know, as someone who. I had a child of my own having, you know, it wasn't like I'd had two divorces and thought, oh, sorry, I'll go to a sperm donor. It wasn't that kind of lonely parenting at all.

I really just hadn't built a marriage at all. So to then get through sort of the first eight years of that, you can hilariously, you can build a very high opinion of yourself, like what your marriage would be like. You can become, I think, just as without the child. I think as a long term single person can actually become, you know, people think it's just there's some sort of pity attached to long term single, but you can be quite conceited. I so yeah. So, so because I'm the, I'm the absolute ying to your yang. If I may be so bold because I've been, um, uh, I've been attached forever, um, and sort of serial monogamy or the same relationship. There's the same relationship. But he kind of became my family early on for reasons earlier. Yeah. Very significant. Um, and I think there's a conceit attached to any path that we, we, you know, it's the idea of, I imagine myself in other lives and I imagine how well I would have done them in quite a conceited way had that been my path. So I wonder if we're all prone to a little of that, you know, wherever, wherever we are, I, I think there's a lot, you know, there's an awful lot of compromise in keeping a relationship, a two person relationship together. And I think massively when you're not. I mean, even as a single mum, there were some things, you know, we were also weaning our babies roughly at the same time. And I was like, oh, I read that book on baby led weaning that someone recommended and that's it. It's convinced me I'm doing it. Case closed. Seems to make my life easier. Didn't really have a blender to any pure aim with anyway, so that was just my sort of 24 hour snap decision. And other people in the group were like, oh, I wanted to do that. I read that book too, but my partner wasn't interested. And again, I'd be thinking, like, you're boring lives. Having to consider someone else's is you. So, you know, you can become quite sort of. is Hard to live with. Maybe because I remember thinking like I do. I do remember thinking about like, God. Like, what's it to him, you know? You know, so I hadn't really made a relationship work at this point. Um, yeah. I was, you know, I'm used to doing things my way. I do think there might be something in, um, this idea of of somebody else putting their point of view, even if it's a load of rubbish, but just putting it for the sake of it or bringing in their tiredness levels and, you know, maintaining that they're much worse than yours and all of that, which I do think is, you know, at the, at the root of so many women's fury. Totally. And I think what I had over the years of single parenting was you do carry a burden, you know, the labour burden and the emotional burden. And you are lonely. You know, once your kid, you know, most parents are desperate for their kid to go off to sleep at night. And I would very much want her to go off to sleep and get that done. But then I would sort of not go down to the living room. I'd kind of sit on my bed scrolling on my phone because sort of 8:09 p.m. living room on your own. And I didn't like it. I didn't like it. So there was a definite loneliness. But the point I want to make about that was that there was a certain purity to all of it. You know, my loneliness was quite pure and my tiredness was quite pure. It wasn't like, oh, I'll take the bins out, tiredness. And, um, I do think if I'd also been fighting that someone else in this that you're talking about, like I do, I do see that as a whole other stressor on people. Yeah. Um, I just wanted to ask you about, in terms of your own anger, though, and what it's driven you towards. Like, do you feel as if it's been useful as a sort of fuel at times, like if you're not having to waste it on, on a man, essentially, um, or on these feelings towards yourself, or is it more available? Can you use it to, to kind of, um, greater good? And have you done anything that you feel is incredible with it? Oh well, great question. I love your idea of not wasting my anger on a man by which we don't mean, you know, not wasting your emotions on a man. We know that there is anger which we can plough into a different field. Totally. It's energy. Yes. I mean, it's funny because these things, eventually you can sort of run on adrenaline for years. And then there comes a point where you're just kind of, I think I definitely had a thing where my career sort of took off when my child was tiny, because I was just running on pure sort of, uh, adrenaline, I think. And then I think it got to about I think it was about five or so, and I did just sort of have to, like, take to my bed. I think I just. What was that, Sophie? Was it just that you felt you okay? I've got to achieve, achieve, achieve now I have a child. Or was it, was it some kind of switch? Because yeah, you're within about a year of becoming a

parent, which was a single parent, which was, you know, I've only got one child. So that's my whole thing. You know, people have so many worries about you having a baby on your own. And also my career had been like it was quite rock and roll. It was like going on tour with a band, interviewing the band, going to LA to interview act as it was all very exciting. And you can't do that with a newborn. Or maybe you can, but I didn't think I could and I just thought, God, I'm going to have to really. ^{1s} Like, I've like, I've lost my. I've lost my career, I can't, there's nothing I'm gonna. Who am I suppose I'm gonna have to write about this, because then I get to stay at home with the baby. If I can find a way to write about staying at home with the baby, but be sort of funny and compelling, and maybe even hope that, like, even some men would read it, not just women. Which did happen. Um, I just thought, I'm not track track. You know, I was very glad to have a baby, but you are a bit trapped in the house. I thought, I'm going to have to write from. From my entrapment. Yeah, but I did, and I was quite inspired. And I think, again, maybe it's the hormones, but there was a bit of that truth serum that I was talking about with hormonal menopausal women. I mean, I was 35 at this point. So different stage, but obviously full of hormones and, um. ^{1s} I tripled my income within. ^{1s} 18 months of having the baby. Oh, wow. And I love that you're saying this out loud on the podcast because we so rarely hear this journey. Well, I've been having babies at some unrealistic target for my mom, who sat at home just feeling absolutely shy. Like, I don't want to be that annoying person, but. But for you, this. That's what happened. Yeah, yeah. And I would actually know. You've made me think about that. I probably, you know, one of the fuels I was running on probably was anger. Yeah, right. I remember it had to stop at one point. It couldn't go on because I remember someone would say, oh, can you write this piece for this, this this week? And I'd think, oh God, I've got loads on this week. Every day in my diary looks pretty hectic, but let me see. And I remember after a couple of months of this, I've always trying to say yes to everyone for everything in because it's, you know, it's another few hundred quid. I remember. This dawning on me. This was new information that had not occurred to me, that the midnight till 4 a.m. slot in my diary was not available for work, and I shouldn't be filling it in as a time to do writing. And I had. Oh, ^{1s} I remember when it dawned on me that maybe. Maybe that was wrong. Oh, no, so I see. Yeah. So there's a fuel there which was going to run out somehow. You know, when I say to myself, oh, I'll do that, like at 9:00 after dinner and everything's out of the way. Forget about it. Any piece of work, I tell myself I'm starting at 9 p.m. now. I'm just, I just it my brain's gone. My brain's gone. Unless I have to, like, watch a documentary for work. I can't write anything. Yeah, but I was ten years younger. Yeah, I still don't really understand it. Well, I do wonder if, like you're saying, there was so much going on at the time that in a way needed an outlet. Like, you know, these feelings that were clearly generating a force inside of you, you you angled it around so that they could sort of best serve you. Yeah. And clever. I mean, like, huge kudos to you because I wonder where they might it it might have gone otherwise. Yeah. It really could have. It definitely could have swung round. Interesting to think where it could have gone. Well I think it would have come in on the self potentially like other like happens with other women. You know, that sort of female martyr thing that you're talking about in your sort of history like I do, I do see it in mine as well. And I'm just like, no. Yeah, same. I would rather I be anything else. Anybody else? I'd rather be selfish. I would rather be selfish. But. Well, they would say selfish. Well, it's funny because that's the two option. Yeah, yeah. Not a martyr yourself. Maybe you're just self. Oh my God. Yes. Um, Sophie, we like to invite women into our virtual rage room to to wrap things up, um, we're handing you a baseball bat razor. And the first thing, the current news item that's making you seethe. Well, we are in the middle of a very, very intense war, which I think is almost too much to, you know, to put into soundbites and sort of would be disrespectful to try. Um, there's another news item making me annoyed. There's a woman who was killed, I think it was in Ilford called Zara Aleena. There was a guy on the streets looking, looking for a woman to attack. He's on lots of CCTV. He'd followed a woman around a supermarket. He tried someone else and

stayed away from him. He was ^{1s} a violent man. And finally he got his victim and took her and sexually assaulted her and killed her. He's just been. He's won his appeal. Oh, I heard and he's had his sentence reduced. So you're just, you know, you're allowed. We're not allowed. He is still in jail, but not for as long as I'd like. He. You're allowed to roam the streets at night, trying women off to women until you find one you can kill. This is what I'm. The family actually came through and said, didn't they? That this. What message does this send women? Yeah. I mean, where's her right to appeal? You know, she changed her mind about being dead. Um, um, that made me really, really angry. Yeah. Okay. Um, aspect of modern life making you fume. I think the social media companies. And that's kind of my second home where I live, the internet. Um, I really think it's a cliché now, but it's true that they have fuelled this binary. And we have become. I just noticed this morning that someone had unfollowed me for something political. I'd said, and I thought, but you know. ^{1s} What the news is teaching me at the moment is that building peace with people we disagree with is huge. You know, I keep looking at the Middle East and thinking of the Good Friday Agreement in. ^{2s} Northern Ireland. And, you know, people that are saying we thought it was impossible. We never, ever thought this day could come. Political solutions like that only come from being willing to sit with people you deeply disagree with, and probably hate, with every bone of your body. Yes, there's no peace without it. So the way the algorithm has set us up side against side, and the way we unfollow someone because we don't want our timeline to have a different opinion. Um, ^{1s} it's really it's there's not peace at the end of that. ^{2s} And I think social media has really bled into our real lives, our real, everyday, tangible physical lives of that not being able to sit with anybody who is different or says something at a dinner party you don't agree with. Debate has become so difficult. I love, I love disagreeing hugely with people, you know, but also I enjoy the friendships I've developed over the years where we probably vote very differently, have different ideas. I'm glad I agree that you vote differently from me. Me too. Me too. Is that young? Sort of juvenile? Delete me if you vote this. And yes, if, as I do, you live in a country where most elections don't go your way, that means there's an awful lot of people in this country whose opinions I'd be as a journalist, ceasing to hear lives. I'd be ceasing to know. Understand? Um. What good would I be as a writer? Yeah, if I didn't engage with all these other people. Yeah. Um, and and also hold their own personal history as a value. Understand where their ideas have come from. Aren't people just interested and curious in the lack of. Where's that going? Yes. It's so boring. It's so boring. Okay, another question. Another question. Behavior of others which gets on your wick. Yeah. I've just I've just been championing peace and tolerance. Really. But these people. ^{2s} I guess it's more relevant to what I just said. But there's a lot of bossiness isn't that people are very in what sense? So. So if you like what like what kind of bosses do you do this you have to say this and um, yeah, I don't I've never responded very well to Bossiness. No. Me either. ^{2s} I think it's really good to lead by example. One thing that annoys me is that. There's the people I see politically, actually going out there and helping people, like the people I know who go and work in women's refuges and some of whom have got, you know, very successful businesses on the side. But they do it. And then there's the people who shout the loudest about various isms online, and those are not the same people. In my experience, yes. That's so true. I think there's doing I mean, I say this is, you know, I have not spent this morning volunteering in a women's refuge. So who the hell am I to talk? But, um. ^{2s} You know, my dad is I mean, he's 91. He's too old to be having rails on Twitter, but he is a political activist as well. He he probably think that was too grandiose a term, but he's always campaigned for things he believes, and whether that's something big to do with a war or something small, such as the woman who works in his local co-op where he shops, has always had a chair, and he's had a chat with her while she's sitting on her chair at the till. And, you know, one day he went in there and she didn't have a chair anymore. She was standing. And this is a woman who's maybe 50, 60. And he said, where's your chair gone? And she said, oh, new management, John. You know, they've said, you

know, they've said where to be more we'd be more productive if we stood, you know, all day, sort of whatever, 8 to 10 hour shift. And, um, you know, my dad's an educated white man who can make his voice heard. And he was just outraged for the women in the shop whose chairs had been taken. And he wrote letters to head office, and he campaigned, and they got their chairs back. Lovely. John. He's amazing. So, you know, I have a lot of time for that kind of things. Yes, a lot of time for that angriest moment on public transport. Oh, do you know, actually this is a moment of shame. I did nothing, but I did feel the woman dealing with it. This is a race incident. Oh, there were two white women getting on a bus who wanted to sit. I mean, I can understand when you sit with your friend on an aeroplane, on a London bus where he's on it longer than, what, 24? Half an hour max. She had grown women. These were wanted to sit together. We're talking middle aged women. And there was, um, a woman with brown skin and a veil who was carrying herself in a very modest way. And it became apparent when they started talking to her that she maybe didn't speak much English, and they were asking her if she could move out of the seat she was on, on the bus so she could go to a different place so they could have tea. And actually a black woman stepped in and said, are you doing what I think you're doing? You're asking a woman of colour to get off her seat on the bus. And, I mean, it was just ^{1s} it was shocking. And they were they were just Chatty Cathy, you know? Um, and of course, then the woman who'd been asked to move was very embarrassed, and she wouldn't, you know, she was trying to do what they wanted, and she didn't want that. She couldn't bear the fuss and she was embarrassed. But, um. God, this other woman. Stood her ground and I. I just thought, wow. To have so little awareness even to do it, but to not think about the history of a white person moving a person of color on it to not have any sense of what that means. Um, I was completely. My jaw was just on the floor. Sophie, thank you so much for bringing yourself today. Thank you. You showed up with all of your emotions. Yes. It's been brilliant. Yeah. It's been such a pleasure. Thank you. A wonderful podcast. ^{3s} So once this conversation brought up for us. Okay, so I just thought it was so interesting to hear Sophie talking about how there wasn't the you know, obviously, this is not to take away at all from the experience of being a single mother, doing it all on your own, but how she wasn't having to deal with that kind of constant competitive or negotiation even, or just different negotiation. Yeah. That input from from a partner. Yeah. Being in in situ I did think that is interesting isn't it. Thinking about like the kinds of things that build that build rage up in a woman in that way that isn't easily expressed because it's that thing of like when someone comes in, if they've been at work all day and says, what have you been up to? How do you possibly begin to start cataloging? There was this and then this, and then this, and then it's like, it's so boring, you can't even bear to hear yourself say it, but it is your entire world and a notion that the other person doesn't really give a shit as well and is only asking out of politeness. And maybe when you're saying it, you're saying it with incredible force and feeling because you're feeling pretty riled up about a day doing it. Yeah. But also, look, even if you are in a relationship that works and that is pretty coherent and you divide the labor and everything, I was interested to hear about her absolute laser focus that when you're pushed into a situation, into a situation sometimes, not always, sometimes a claustrophobic, small situation can really allow you to absolutely flourish, which is extraordinary how she's managed to do that with her career. ^{2s} Thank you for listening and sharing in our anger. Tune in next time. ^{1s} And remember, you're not mad to feel mad.