

Queerology Episode 80 Transcript

2 Year Anniversary: Jennifer Knapp Interviews Matthias

Original Airdate: 5/28/2019

- Jennifer: [00:00](#) Hey friends, welcome to Queerology, a podcast on belief and being. I'm your host today Jennifer Knapp, sitting in for Matthias Roberts, welcome to episode 80.
- Matthias: [00:11](#) I'm seeing people get healthy and living fulfilling lives, and in some ways that feels way more satisfying than trying to convince all the straight people that we have a right to exist. We're here, we're existing.
- Jennifer: [00:22](#) This episode marks the two year anniversary of Queerology. Now, don't get too upset that Matthias isn't here, he's going to show up in a second. Actually, we thought I'd be really fun because the first episode ever I was a guest on the show, and I've always thought it would be really fun to get good listener, quiet patient inclined Matthias to sit in the hot seat and answer a few questions. He's actually a lovely man, has a lovely story, and I can't wait for you guys to hear a little bit more of it. So today I'm going to introduce to you, perhaps you've heard of him, his name is Matthias Roberts. He's a writer, therapist, host and creator of Queerology, a podcast on belief and being, he's also a pretty darn smart guy. He's got a master's in theology and culture, counseling psychology, and to top it all off, right now he's working on his first book. It's an exploration of sexual shame and sexual ethics, which is set to release on Fortress Press in 2020. So as he would say, okay, let's go ahead and dive in.
- Jennifer: [01:26](#) Matthias, you're in the hot seat.
- Matthias: [01:28](#) Yeah.
- Jennifer: [01:28](#) Welcome to Queerology. How does that feel?
- Matthias: [01:31](#) It feels so weird.
- Jennifer: [01:32](#) Well I am going to, I've dreamed of this moment for a good year now. I want to give you a little bit of dose of your medicine and start with the Queerology tradition of asking you, how do you identify and how has faith helped inform that identity?

Matthias: [01:47](#) Yeah, I knew this was coming.

Jennifer: [01:49](#) Yeah, no, there is not way you're getting out of it. Feel the bird, buddy, feel the bird.

Matthias: [01:54](#) Yeah, this is not an easy question to answer, and I was thinking about it, and really I was sitting on my couch this morning drinking coffee, and the answer that kind of came to me was in a way it was my faith that was my identity way before being queer, before I could even accept that part. My faith was my identity, and then I had to unlearn that or wrestle whether and figure out, because I started realizing that I was gay when I was 11. I think I had some ideas before then, but 11 was really when I first started kind of having that idea of like, "Wait a second, I'm attracted to dudes and it doesn't seem like the other dudes around me, they're feeling it for girls, something is off here."

Jennifer: [02:42](#) Right. Like that moment you kind of go, you're just living life because one lives life, and then you realize certain uniqueness perhaps compared to everyone else around you.

Matthias: [02:51](#) Totally.

Jennifer: [02:51](#) It's this like, oh, I'm unique in some way, I'm different.

Matthias: [02:55](#) Yeah, I thought it was awful because I grew up in such a conservative family, I knew somewhere deep in my gut that this wasn't okay. So I started, I think it was basically right when I first started realizing, I started begging god to be like, "Please, can you just make me normal? I don't want to live this way. I don't want to be gay. I don't want to go to hell." And my faith was so much a part of my identity that the first time that I said I'm gay to someone, I was 19 or 20, I was in college.

Jennifer: [03:33](#) At that point pretty much half your lifetime you spent trying to get to a point of making that confession.

Matthias: [03:39](#) Yeah, right.

Jennifer: [03:39](#) That's a big move, right?

Matthias: [03:40](#) Yeah, because I was so scared that when those words came out of my mouth, I expected lightning, or I expected Satan to pop up and be like, "I've got you now." All those things I thought to say, as my identity to say, "I am gay." As an identifier I thought it would mean that I would be selling my soul over to something other than god, and it took a lot of work to get over that.

Jennifer: [04:07](#) And that's kind of what I'm curious actually, is talking about today. I mean, I went back before we talked. I was so excited to be able to kind of have this opportunity, put you in the hot seat. I was really curious and love about, one of the things I love about Queerology and the celebration we have at this two year point of what it's become, is that you've somehow been in the middle of this kind of, what's very clear when you listen the history of Queerology to me as a listener, is the piecing together of stories. This kind of, none of us ever, if you listen any of these stories, not one single story says, "I know what my identity was from the beginning. It was all pieced together and there it was for me." It's always kind of this ongoing fluidity. So what I'm curious about, is when you talk about the growth of that identity, the origin stories of where that began, this particular manifestation of Queerology is a really great symbol of, that I am so fascinated that you are willing to share with us the insight into your own personal space.

Jennifer: [05:13](#) So that kind of ... You talked about starting with religion as this, your faith as being part of that identity growing up and having to undo it. Where, I mean, I guess it's really hard to pin point, but what did it feel like? Like pick an age or pick a moment, can you tell us a story about what that really kind of felt like, like a day or a moment that just made that kind of come to know that there was a work to be done there for you?

Matthias: [05:43](#) Yeah. I remember. I was probably 12 or 13. Went to this summer camp in rural Iowa, I grew up in Iowa.

Jennifer: [05:53](#) God bless the Midwest.

Matthias: [05:55](#) Right. It's a great place to grow up if you're straight.

Jennifer: [05:58](#) Right.

Matthias: [06:01](#) So I was at this summer camp, tiny little summer camp, rural Iowa. In chapel for some reason, someone in front of me had this Bible, and they opened it up and I was looking over their shoulder, and I saw these list of questions that were at the front of this bible, and one of them was, what does god think about homosexuality?

Jennifer: [06:21](#) You kidding?

Matthias: [06:22](#) Right?

Jennifer: [06:22](#) Like printed?

Matthias: [06:23](#) Like printed in the front of this Bible, and it was like this whole section of here are all of these questions of today's day and all of god's answers to them. So they had Bible verses listen. I saw that and I thought, "I have to get my hands on that Bible." Because I up to that point I had never, I had heard people talk about LGBT issues occasionally, but I had never seen what scripture actually said, or so I thought.

Matthias: [06:56](#) So I went home and I begged my parents to let me buy this Bible, and I come from a family that, we weren't poor, but we didn't have much money at all. My parents didn't have expendable income, so to buy like a \$15 Bible, it was something that I had then had to work for and save up for to buy this Bible. So I did that. I did chores, I saved up \$15 to buy the Extreme Teen Bible.

Jennifer: [07:21](#) What a good kid you were.

Matthias: [07:23](#) I know, and I got it, and I remember getting it in the mail, waiting for my parent to leave the house, opening it up, finding that question and opening the bible up to Leviticus.

Jennifer: [07:38](#) Good starting place, 12 year old you.

Matthias: [07:41](#) Uh-huh (affirmative), right. And seeing man who lie with men should be stoned and thrown into the pit of hell, or whatever it says. I shut the Bible and just was terrified, and remember thinking like, "Oh no, that's me, I don't want to be stoned, so I need to do something about this." So that was kind of the start of like, oh the Bible actually says this is horrible. I was terrified, I was terrified.

Jennifer: [08:11](#) I realize this is a massive leap forward in time, but can you point to a time where you began to initiate your own positive moves into that inquisition against that?

Matthias: [08:25](#) Yeah, I was an undergrad. Went to a small Christian college in Arkansas. I had just read the book Washed and Waiting by Wesley Hill, which is the side B, and for people who don't know what side B means, it is that movement that it says that the LGBTQ people need to stay celibate, and Wesley was kind of the leader of the movement, of that movement at the time, he still is to some point. But I read that book and I remember thinking, if I'm going to commit myself to staying celibate, because that was kind of my action plan at that point. I'd gotten to the point of accepting like okay, I'm gay, these feelings probably aren't going to go away, I shouldn't probably go to therapy to get rid

of these, I'm going to live with this, but I'm going to be celibate. So I read that book and then I thought, "If I'm going to make such a drastic choice, if I'm going to commit myself to a lifetime of celibacy, of singleness."

- Jennifer: [09:26](#) You're a monk now.
- Matthias: [09:27](#) Right. At 19 years old, or 20 years old, I don't remember how old I was, it felt like a missive decision, and I had heard that there was this other little group of people out in the world who believed that you could be queer and Christian. Actually that year was the year that you came out, so I thought that you had-
- Jennifer: [09:48](#) Oh, so long ago.
- Matthias: [09:49](#) Yeah.
- Jennifer: [09:50](#) Back in my day.
- Matthias: [09:54](#) But I had people sending me that article, and seeing like, "Oh Jennifer Knapp. I grew up listening to her and she's saying this is okay. There's this whole other world out there. I need to figure out what they're saying before I make this decision." And that was when I started really diving in to theology and scripture, and trying to parse out is there another way in here that I haven't been told about, and sure enough, there was.
- Jennifer: [10:29](#) It's interesting that you're this very, I don't mean this as an insult at all. You seem like a very cerebral person and methodical, methodical Matthias, but I mean, but at the same time it feels very spirit-driven. When I'm around you I never feel like you're trying to crack a problem or solve it with some script. There is a very spiritual part of that that comes out of your experience. I mean, at what point in your ... I mean, you've made a life of this, so I don't necessarily want to jump the gun or stereotype you into that, but I'm really curious. So you're doing this work for yourself personally, but this has transformed into something that's a life work for you. I mean, is that a tangent? What's the relationship between the fact that this is a work thing? This is something that you committed too to share in some sense, but is still, at least in the timeline that you're describing it, undergraduate, that's still an ongoing work for you.
- Matthias: [11:33](#) Yeah.

- Jennifer: [11:34](#) What is the relationship with that? I realize that's kind of an open-ended question, but I guess in undergrad if it takes a form of a question like, okay, what were you doing in undergrad? What was your career path? What did you imagine it to be, because is it the same way as it is now or?
- Matthias: [11:49](#) Oh, not at all. I did my undergraduate work in graphic design and photography, and had chosen the school that I went to for that, they had a really good design program. That was my plan. I was like, "I'm going to be a graphic designer." And I thought I was going to do that for the rest of my life. So when I started studying theology and really diving in, and I started realizing that I was enjoying it and then started considering the idea of maybe getting a master's in theological work, that caught me completely off guard because I didn't think.
- Jennifer: [12:23](#) Did that seem paradoxical at that times still? Kind of this conflict that we often kind of talk about with LGBTQ and commitment to doing faith work essentially. Did that seem like you were invading some space that you didn't have a right to? Was that a thing or was that something that you kind of took on rebelliously or none of the above?
- Matthias: [12:44](#) No, I think it was I kept my parents in the loop as I started kind of diving into scripture, because I think I thought at the time, if I find all these arguments and then present them to my parents in ways that make sense to me, they're going to change their mind just like I will. So I kept them in the loop and then started getting these 10 page long letters from my dad telling me how wrong I was, and I think that was kind of the thing of me realizing like, "Okay, wait. If I'm going to convince my parents, I need to know this way better than I currently do." So then I think it went on like, if I get a master's in this, then maybe my parents will change their minds. I've let go of that hope now.
- Jennifer: [13:34](#) Okay, so I didn't expect to go here, but yesterday I listened to one of my favorite podcasts called Conversations. It's out of Australia, I think it's ABC network. Famously hosted my Richard Fidler.
- Speaker 3: [13:49](#) And it kind of cost me a lot of myself.
- Jennifer: [13:50](#) Stop, stop, stop. I was trying to play it. I was trying to get call up, but it was a podcast of this woman, the title of it's called How To Change A Mind, and what I found fascinating about it, this is a young woman who grew up doing debate and was basically trying to make a profession or her whole self-worth kind of around this idea of the ability that we have with logic and

reason to change people's minds, and it does. It takes pages, like you were saying, it takes pages and pages, but at the end of the day, it's not really that of effective way of transforming people, and which is really the bread and butter, right? Of where we've been with LGBTQ stuff. I think the lesson Queerology shows in the long run that it's a narrative experience from the individual to the community. So you're having these kind of 10 page ... Like you were thinking the same ... Let's all the says you were thinking the same thing as your dad. If you make a compelling enough argument, you can get your father to believe in you, and if he can make it, and I'm sure on the other side of it he thought, "If I can make a compelling enough argument, my son will believe in me."

- Matthias: [14:56](#) Yeah, yeah.
- Jennifer: [14:56](#) Was there a point in there that you kind of found ... What was your solution to that, I guess in some way? Or are you working that out now?
- Matthias: [15:07](#) It's ongoing. I think initially I didn't want to have that fight with my parents, and so after kind of a summer of theological work, I tabled it. You know what? I am just going to be single, it's easier. Then I started having more conversations with my parents, they didn't even seem satisfied with the celibacy option. I realized my dad wanted me to be straight, and they tell me that this isn't true now, that they would've been perfectly fine with me being celibate, but those conversations at the time, there was an underlying sense of no, you need to marry a woman and have a family.
- Matthias: [15:49](#) After moments of that, it was a realization like no matter what I do, my parents aren't going to think I'm living the life that I should be, I need to figure this out for myself.
- Jennifer: [16:02](#) For what it's worth, I think that kind of always happens.
- Matthias: [16:06](#) Yeah.
- Jennifer: [16:08](#) I've kind of comforted with myself through the years, that there is a variety of ways I'm disappointing to others.
- Matthias: [16:12](#) Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Jennifer: [16:13](#) It's not just one. That is takes a certain amount of audacity and courage to kind of find the next step that's true and authentic to your own experience, that is somewhat always, I think it has at

least micro moments of rebellion and a sense of feeling like yeah, you have to, there's a weird thing about growing up I think somewhere in there that you have to take the risk to go, "I might not be what you imagined." And the particularity of that for LGBTQ people because it's so significant to our sense of being is, is you just can't side step.

- Matthias: [16:49](#) Right, yeah.
- Jennifer: [16:51](#) So okay. So you, I'm just using the timeline as a track really, but so you kind of doubled down. Embracing theology at some point, was it still at a place of rebellion for you or did it feel like an acceptance, of both?
- Matthias: [17:09](#) By the time I got to grad school it was more acceptance. It was more of a, I have all of these questions that I want to explore, and to explore for myself, and the only way I'm going to have the time and space to do that is give myself a couple years formally to explore those questions. So it was way less this kind of I need to convince people, because at that point I had already tried to convince so many people, not just my parents, but I had come out, I'd had my community from, like I was homeschooled growing up, so all of these people from former lives in Iowa are trying to convince me that I'm on this path of sin. I argued with them until my face was blue, and it didn't work.
- Jennifer: [17:59](#) I'm not knocking blue but you're pretty good with the color that you are.
- Matthias: [18:00](#) Thank you.
- Jennifer: [18:00](#) You're pretty cute that way.
- Matthias: [18:07](#) And I realized arguing didn't work, and so I was like, you know what? I need to figure this out. I said, "I need to figure this out for myself. I want to explore these things, I want to explore this idea of who I think god actually is and find a god who loves and accepts me." I'd seen glimpses of that god.
- Jennifer: [18:26](#) So this is a really personal question.
- Matthias: [18:28](#) Okay.
- Jennifer: [18:29](#) When did reaching out and getting help from others in a therapeutic environment become an option for you? When did that light bulb got, because it's a big move to say that one needs

help? Where did you get that idea from? What prompted that for you?

- Matthias: [18:47](#) Yeah. You know, it was ... There's kind of two answers to that question. One back when I was an undergrad, my freshman year, my mom had been talking about me going to therapy for most of my high school years, kind of gently pressuring me to start talking to someone with the goal of conversion therapy at that point.
- Jennifer: [19:13](#) I'm not laughing, it's just ... At anyone.
- Matthias: [19:17](#) Yeah.
- Jennifer: [19:17](#) It's just that kind of discomfort of going sometimes there are people outside of us that are encouraging us to do something holy and good for ourselves, but somewhat still have an imagination of who we'll be at the end of it.
- Matthias: [19:28](#) Right, yeah, exactly. Yeah. So my freshman year that's what I, I went to therapy and went in with the goal of, like I literally said, "I don't want to be this way anymore. I want you to help me overcome my same sex attractions and then I can be normal." Which meant straight. Thankfully the therapist that I went to, my first session was like, "That's not how this works."
- Jennifer: [19:54](#) Which is always a good sign of a therapist when you walk in and they say, "This is how this is. Yeah, that's not how this works, we don't make you into something."
- Matthias: [20:06](#) Right, right, yeah.
- Jennifer: [20:07](#) Ever.
- Matthias: [20:09](#) Ever. Yeah. So I spent a year with him. That was fine, I accepted myself more, I think he got me onto a better path, and then it didn't even cross my mind again until grad school. Honestly the thing that got me back into therapy was the requirement when I started my own master's program in counseling. The school that I went to requires everyone who wants to be a therapist to go into their own therapy while they're in the program.
- Jennifer: [20:38](#) Yay.
- Matthias: [20:40](#) Yeah, which I think is so important.
- Jennifer: [20:42](#) Was that terrifying to you or did you welcome it?

Matthias: [20:45](#) Yeah. No, I didn't want to. I mean, therapy is expensive, I didn't know what would come up, I didn't think I needed it, so it was forced. But I went in my first session and said to my therapist, "I don't know how to cry and I don't know how to be angry." Those two emotions don't exist in my life, sadness and anger, and we've been working on that ever since.

Jennifer: [21:12](#) Wow, I don't know that I've ever heard anyone say that. Like okay, I'm coming into this place, I don't know how to cry and I don't know how to be mad. I'm a big fan of therapy as well. I have written down and said many times like, "The secret to my resiliency is cognitive therapy and patience."

Matthias: [21:28](#) Yeah.

Jennifer: [21:29](#) There's just ... I was listening to your podcast with Candice Czubernat. One of the things you guys talked on is the value, that stuck out with me is the value of the personal investment in those moments. So didn't always kind of know, which is really interesting that you went through that. I found it interesting the first thing you think of, and it's always the first thing I think of as well, is I can't financially afford this.

Matthias: [21:54](#) Right.

Jennifer: [21:55](#) We kind of leverage something against the other, but yeah. There is a kind of a concept of trying to kind of engage a kind of self-care that says I am worth the effort and the time to be able, discover the person that I can be in its fruitfulness. At the same time it's really interesting to hear you say, "I still don't know how to do this thing."

Matthias: [22:22](#) I've gotten better. I now cry at a pin drop, so that means that, I mean, he's done his job I guess.

Jennifer: [22:27](#) Oh my gosh. I call that, I like to tell my friends not to worry if they see, I'd say that's leaking. I'm just leaking, don't be afraid. I'm just crying, I'm feely. It's good.

Matthias: [22:38](#) Yeah, every day when I'm on Instagram I see dogs and just start weeping.

Jennifer: [22:43](#) Oh my gosh. You're so kind and gentle, he cries at puppies.

Matthias: [22:50](#) Yeah.

Jennifer: [22:50](#) So when you sat down all, I know there's probably a lot that goes into the manifestation of Queerology, but I want to take you back, I want to hear what was in your mind before Queerology had a name, and you sat alone with yourself and said, started dreaming about something to be made or to be done. What was that conversation? As an example, I sit around and the things that I end up doing often times are because something doesn't exist and I think I have to make it.

Matthias: [23:18](#) Right.

Jennifer: [23:18](#) And I'm so arrogant to think that I can. Did you have that ... I'm just curious if you had that experience, and if you did, what were the voices in your head?

Matthias: [23:27](#) Yeah. So the podcast kind of birthed out of, I think as a lot of things to a really painful experience in my life, in that I went through my first true heartbreak kind of break up. That knocked me out. I was depressed, and I had been blogging on and off kind of up until that point, which is kind of what got me into this world, was my blog. But when this breakup happened, I stopped writing, I spent days in bed, I was depressed. As I started to come out of that depression, I started kind of thinking about do I want to go back to writing about this, or do I want to try something different. This idea of a podcast kind of started popping up all over the place. But my initial thoughts were, you know Kevin Garcia, right?

Jennifer: [24:24](#) Yes.

Matthias: [24:25](#) Yeah, Kevin, and Kevin is a very dear friend of mine. Kevin had started his podcast I don't know, probably a year, year and a half before I even thought about the podcasting world. My initial thoughts whenever the idea of a podcast came up was, well Kevin is already doing that. Kevin already has a podcast. I remember when Kevin started blogging, I was pissed at him for blogging in my space.

Jennifer: [24:48](#) Oh my gosh, as a creative, let me just tell you, you've already hit on two of the key things that always pop up that kill creativity. They're all the negative things that just go, oh somebody else is doing it. The ingenuity that we kind of want steals away from our joy, that uniqueness and it's a killer.

Matthias: [25:08](#) It is, yeah. I didn't want to encroach on Kevin's space, because this isn't, this queer faith Christianity world is not a big one, and I was like, "There's already one podcast out there. What could I

do differently?" So I actually remember sitting in The Edgewater Hotel, which is a hotel here in Seattle that's literally on one of the piers, so it's over the water looking out on the Olympic Mountains with a glass on wine, with a friend of mine who has her own podcast with an organization called The Allender Center, and she's one of my mentors, her name is Rachel. Rachel and I were talking about the fact that The Allender Center had just started their own podcast. She was going on and on about how hard it was, but also how neat it was to see all of these people that they didn't even really know engaging with their work, that was when it clicked for me. Oh, I kind of want to try that, and if Rachel can do it, I can do it. That was the day that I was, "I'm going to start a podcast with their [inaudible 00:26:16] water.

Jennifer: [26:16](#)

Just do it.

Matthias: [26:17](#)

Yeah. Just start it.

Jennifer: [26:20](#)

It's amazing to me. I love these little moments. I love picking them out and go see what happened there, see what happened there. These amazing moments of permission. They've never really people saying, "Yes, Matthias, go and do this, you have my permission and my authority to grant it to you." But those little moments of generosity, that if you're paying attention or even looking back and you go, "Oh wow." Somebody ... And then that moment of generosity unlocks something very kind and says, "Do it, say yes." And then the tricky part of that is, and I've been dying to ask you this question, where did you get the audacity to call me? And I mean that like kind of in a tongue in cheek way, but I didn't realize until well after Queerology was up and running, I'd say yes to do it, I was happy to talk to you, it wasn't until we kind of hooked up in real life later that you said, "Oh yeah, you were my first podcast." And I was like, "Wait, what?" And so it's lovely that you're sharing the vulnerability it takes to say yes to something like this, and then within the first, I mean there are quite a few.

Jennifer: [27:36](#)

Right off the bat, you were calling some pretty heavy hitters. The kinds of, like I imagine, because I do this, I meet other artists that mean something to me in my real life, in my regular life, and then when I've met them in real life I am a hot mess. I can't talk, I stammer and I stutter. It takes a lot of courage sometimes to meet the people who have been influential and we know carry something of import that we don't talk to.

Matthias: [28:01](#)

Yeah, yeah.

Jennifer: [28:02](#) And yet, here you've done it. You went from a place of going, having just somebody else exist in the world and doing this thing and challenging your own sense of uniqueness to bring to this conversation, and then getting people to say yes to your endeavor when you have no track record of doing this. Where did you get the gumption to do that next leap? I want to know, I really do want to know. I don't even know how to do that. That's not even a weighted question. I am mining this for courage right now, I'll have you know.

Matthias: [28:32](#) Yeah, oh gosh.

Jennifer: [28:33](#) So everything you say weights in the ballots.

Matthias: [28:35](#) So I mean, in some ways, I don't want to say like, "Oh, I've always been that way." But in some ways, I remember when I was 11 years old I wanted to make a movie. I thought I was going to be a movie director when I was, yeah around 11, 10 or 11. I was like, "I want to be a movie director." So I decided to make this movie with my friends. I remember calling up the nicest hotel in town, it was like this boutique hotel and I thought it would be a great set for one of the scenes in the movies. At 11 years old I called them, I asked to speak with the owner, manager of the hotel, and then pitched them on this idea. Then he asked me like, "Okay, so what production company are you for, are you with?"

Jennifer: [29:16](#) Oh, that's awesome.

Matthias: [29:18](#) And I was like, "Oh, I'm actually 11 years old."

Jennifer: [29:21](#) Oh my god. That you told him, that's even cooler.

Matthias: [29:26](#) Yeah.

Jennifer: [29:27](#) Let me tell you how awesome this is going to be dude, I'm 11.

Matthias: [29:30](#) I'm 11, yeah, and he said yes. I think those experiences of having, when I was very, very, very little, like the incredible kindness of all of these people to be like, to let an 11 year old walk in to make his little home movie and give me everything I asked of. That was so kind of them.

Jennifer: [29:51](#) That's so beautiful.

Matthias: [29:53](#) Right. I mean, it was small town Iowa too, so we weren't in a big city. It was middle of nowhere Iowa, but still. That I think kind of

gave me this idea that when you ask people, more often than not they say yes, and it doesn't hurt to ask, and then if they say no then I mean, so be it. So when I thought about this podcast, I knew I wanted to launch with someone who had some name recognition. I had someone people in mind, and you were kind of my long shot because I didn't have any connection to you at the time. I didn't know any of your people, I didn't know degrees of, I didn't know people who knew you. So I just, it was a cold contact, and you happened to be the first person to say yes, and I was thrilled.

- Jennifer: [30:46](#) So do you ... I mean, you talking about how there's more and more work out there, right? Where we're being able to see LGBTQ voices, particularly the kind of care that it takes to specifically engage faith as well. I mean, do you kind of see yourself as part of the movement now or? And if so, how would you talk about what that movement is to you? What do you imagine yourself a part of?
- Matthias: [31:13](#) Yeah.
- Jennifer: [31:14](#) There's no right or wrong. Do you know what I mean?
- Matthias: [31:17](#) Right, right, right.
- Jennifer: [31:18](#) I just, I sit back sometimes and I'm kind of going, "Wow, there's something going on here that I didn't plan on, and yet I'm knee deep in the middle of." I'm just curious how that rolls out for somebody, where you're at.
- Matthias: [31:32](#) I think my answer is yes and no. I think back to 2014, 2013, 2014, 2015, those years when kind of Matthew Vines had just written his book, Vicky Beeching had just come out, Justin Lee had just released a book. There was kind of all of this groundswell that felt like we are in the midst of something big, something is going to happen. We're right on the cusp of LGBTQ people being fully accepted in most faith spaces. I remember Vicky's keynote that year at the Gay Christian Network conference, or no, no, no, it was at The Reaffirmation Project, and her saying, "We have built this wave, and this wave is about to come crushing down in churches all over the world." And being so excited. We're going to do this. Now here we are in 2019, I mean, it's happened a little bit but not really. I think we've had a lot of setbacks, a lot more setbacks, and I think a lot of us are a lot wiser because of that.

Matthias: [32:41](#) So all that to say, it doesn't feel like maybe a movement as much as it felt back then. I think people are living their lives in ways, I think that some of what for me I've learned from doing this podcast is there are so many of us out there who are just living lives. We're doing cool things but we're not trying to build this massive movement necessarily anymore, but instead are just out there in the world living lives, we're normal people writing, talking. A lot of us are, all have our own blogs or podcasts, or whatever. We're reaching out and it's just normal.

Jennifer: [33:31](#) Which to me it seems rather pedestrian or mundane, right? To say that.

Matthias: [33:36](#) Right.

Jennifer: [33:36](#) But at the same time it's like, I have no extraordinary firework to light off here, and that in it of itself is actually extraordinary in its own way, and has a ... I don't know, I think it's a, for me it's a beautiful kind of rest in peace to not necessarily think that every time that grace appears it announce itself in a tidal wave of, a physicality that it's sometimes just a gentle lack of contest against our being, I think. I mean, does that surprise you in any sense? I mean, does that feel anticlimactic to you or does it feel peaceful?

Matthias: [34:17](#) Both. I think there's some grief in that year, that kind of year and a half when it felt like everything was about to take off. I don't feel that way anymore. I don't know, other people might, to this may just be a personal thing on my end. There's grief in that of like, we didn't do what we thought, or maybe not we didn't do it, things didn't change the way we thought things were going to change. I think it's similar to kind of like my parents. My parents didn't change the way I thought they were going to change. So the whole, the grief of that and kind of the beauty of, and we're still here. We're still doing this work. A lot of us are getting healthier by the day, we're doing our own work, and I think a lot of times when we're on the front end of kind of movement building, a lot of people get left behind in their own selves, if that makes sense, and I'm seeing people get healthy and living fulfilling lives, and in some ways that feels way more satisfying than trying to convince all the straight people that we have the right to exist, we're here, we're existing.

Jennifer: [35:24](#) I think that kind of leads me to a question I was really eager to ask you. It kind of touches, I think you touched on something a little bit of my sense sometimes of, I don't want to say frustration, but grief is a really good word of thinking that if I

just push hard enough and I break down enough that the world will be finished and I'll stop doing that, but the other side of it that I also know, that life is ongoing, and it's fruitful, and it's discipline, and the hard work of it's really a wonderful gift. And I hear a lot, like that's kind of tied up into this sense sometime I think for people who work and pay attention specifically to these intersections and do kind of activist and advocacy activities around LGBTQ affirmation in the faith communities. It's really exhausting.

- Matthias: [36:11](#) Yeah.
- Jennifer: [36:11](#) Sometimes the bar doesn't always move where you think it will with the amount of energy you put into it. What is the ... So I'm just always kind of curious what other people who, kind of in this space. What's the carrot? What's the hope that really does put more wind in your sails? What gets you up in the morning in the way that's refreshing and invigorating to you, and hope giving? Or what do you do to try and fan it into flame? For me, there's pretty good hours of Play Station's role in there.
- Matthias: [36:43](#) Totally. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Jennifer: [36:45](#) With brainless self-care. As I'm not kidding you. That is a thing.
- Matthias: [36:50](#) 100%.
- Jennifer: [36:51](#) But there's also wanting to get, getting re-energized and back to the things that actually got you here in the first place. What's the carrot these days for you?
- Matthias: [37:00](#) For me now, I feel like ... So I started doing this work wanting to build bridges and change people, that was my goal. Now that I've seen [inaudible 00:37:12] of watching queer people be able to hold their faith alongside them in abundance, and like I said, move into more healthy spaces. I mean, that's the carrot in some ways, because I've experienced that in my own life. The beauty of being able to live a content life, and that feels, I mean, that feels kind of cerebral and woo woo. But to watch it happen, I mean I think, I mean, that's my job, I'm a therapist. To watch it happen and see the life that comes out of that. I mean, that's kind of what this podcast is, it's to show that there's life, and it's not focused anymore on trying, like I said, trying to convince straight people that we have the right to exist. It's more reaching out to all of the other queer people out there who are still in Iowa.

Jennifer: [38:13](#) Yeah.

Matthias: [38:14](#) And reading their Bibles, and reading Leviticus and thinking, "Oh my god, I'm going to go to hell." Showing like no, there is life here. God is here. Does that answer your question? Is that what you were asking?

Jennifer: [38:27](#) There's no answer to it really.

Matthias: [38:28](#) Okay, okay.

Jennifer: [38:29](#) It's just part of that, I just appreciate hearing, just as a human being, I just appreciate being in a conversation with other. Here's what queer ... I'm going to make you listen to this for a second.

Matthias: [38:40](#) Okay.

Jennifer: [38:41](#) Here's what Queerology has done for me, and a host as any LGBTQ people who make the decision to just share a story. The kind of vulnerability that it takes to go, I'm here, this is what I think I know, I'm not finished yet, what the hell is everybody else doing. All the willingness, and vulnerability, and courage it takes for each one of us to be able to kind of, I don't want to say make public, but be willing to be vulnerable and share that, right? What Queerology helps facilitate is this long story, because I think that so many of us share the same kind of story that you shared where we live in our own little private lowas, you know? This kind of circles that we can only see so far in the place that we grew up, and not know that there are options out there, or not know that there are other people having that same experience, and for every single. You talk about that, I had that same experience as well, we're saying like, "Where are the resources, where are the other stories, where are the people like me in some sense?" And that seems so slim pickings, even a decade ago.

Jennifer: [39:54](#) What's happening is each of us have the courage to share our stories, is each of us are willing to invest in the facilitating of that and learning of that together, that it's not slim pickings anymore. I have this visual in my mind that the little boy from Iowa doesn't have to go out, but the little boy from Iowa just has to look up.

Matthias: [40:16](#) Yeah.

Jennifer: [40:16](#) That it's come to us in our place of where we need it. For me that's why I continue to love the story of Queerology, and I'm deeply proud of you for stepping into this space and being a part of it on a personal level and putting your story into that mix with us on Queerology today.

Matthias: [40:36](#) Thank you. Thank you. It's been a fun ride.

Matthias: [40:41](#) Yeah, it has been a fun ride. Wasn't that fun? Huge thank you to Jennifer for taking over the podcast today. When she had that idea last summer I was like, "We are doing this, we are doing this." And a big thank you to you. I just feel so grateful on this two year anniversary. We have hit almost 250,000 downloads of Queerology, and to everyone who supports the podcast through sharing it, through giving money on Patreon, if you're leaving reviews, if you're telling your friends about it, it is because of you that I am able to make this podcast, keep making it every week. I'm grateful, I'm grateful. So thank you, thank you for making Queerology what it is and here is to another two years, another four years, another 10 years. Yeah, okay. Until next week y'all. Bye.