[00:00:00] **Ronni:** Welcome to, this is probably a really weird question. The podcast where a medical doctor

[00:00:16] **Rebecca:** and a doctor of history talk about sex history and the not at all weird questions we hear from patients, students, and colleagues about our bodies and our sexualities. I'm Dr. Ronnie Hyon. And I'm Professor Rebecca Davis.

[00:00:33] **Ronni:** Uh, wait a sec. Wait a sec. Hang on. Uh, Rebecca, what is happening right now? It is not the last Thursday of the month, and I am notorious for being late. So I know that I'm not just super on time to something. Ronnie,

[00:00:51] **Rebecca:** you aren't late or early. You're right on time for a bonus episode of, this is probably a really weird question.

[00:00:59] **Ronni:** Tell me more [00:01:00] about this fabulous new feature. Don't

[00:01:02] **Rebecca:** mind if I do. We are rolling out a series of conversations in which we talk with people who are spreading queer joy across the Internets and lifting us up as the world continues to be as they. Not great. We're talking with L G B T Q advocates, activists, comedians, and influencers about what they do, what they love, and whatever else is on their minds.

[00:01:27] **Ronni:** We are so thrilled to say that our first mini episode guest is. The

[00:01:34] **Rebecca:** one, the only mercury, stardust, the trans handyman.

[00:01:40] **Mercury:** I'm easily swayed too. I'm very easily swayed. Uh, if you're like, yeah, but there's one thing we make her your, um, your butt look big. I'm like, oh, I don't want that. You know, . Actually, I do want that.

[00:01:52] Any, Brian, if you know anything, but gimme my butt. Look good.

[00:01:54] **Ronni:** I'm gonna, I'm gonna go right to the literature to find out[00:02:00]

[00:02:05] So a couple of the questions that we were gonna start out with was just tell us about you, who you are, and what you do, and why you do it.

[00:02:14] **Mercury:** Well, I am Mercury, Stardust, the trans handy, ma'am. I teach Compassionate and d a y. I'm a good old tiki. And elsewhere, I should say elsewhere, because by the time you're listening to this, who knows if TikTok is gonna be banned?

[00:02:26] Uh, . Um, I'm on Instagram and YouTube and some other places, I'm sure. And I, my, the style of DIY education that I do, um, is very much from the perspective of you've never done this before and you need to do this, and maybe you've never done it before because someone told you that you were. You know what I mean?

[00:02:48] Like it's very mm-hmm. , it comes from a place of my own pain, my own trauma. So the way that I teach is like informed trauma, , you know what I mean? Like it's very much from that standpoint Yeah. [00:03:00] Of my dad telling me over and over again that I wasn't good enough. And therefore, when I talk about this stuff, it's coming from a place of like, I, I know you've probably been told some shitty stuff.

[00:03:11] Let me unpack that with you and remind you that you're worth the time it takes to learn new. And that's resonated with a lot of people. And now look, it's, it was wild. It's been two years almost. And it all started because of one video on the internet of me helping someone with a rat strap. And that started like I had a hundred followers.

[00:03:32] And then by the end of the night I had 20,000. Within two weeks I had 200,000, and within three months I had a million. Wow. Now, now I'm at 2.2 with a whole bunch of different platforms. Multiple sponsorships and it has been wild. It's just wild. What a weird ride this has been. I love your

[00:03:50] **Rebecca:** videos and I love that what you just said, that you say on the videos a lot, you're worth the time it takes to learn a new skill.

[00:03:57] It just makes me, I feel like I've just been [00:04:00] hugged when I hear you say that like it's gonna be okay.

[00:04:04] **Mercury:** I love it. So this is wild. I'm always asked about that. People are always so like, I love that quote. I gotta be honest, I thought of that quote randomly. I was like doing renovations in apartments as a maintenance technician and I was in an apartment alone and I had gotten done with a whole bunch of stuff and I had this edit that I was trying to finish and I was doing a video.

[00:04:25] I don't remember which one it was. I think of it might have been my, my Door Hinge video and I'm in there editing the video and I was like, oh shit, I need an. Oh, you know, uh, boy, this is a really long task cause I bet you no one knows how to do half these tasks. Oh, I'll just remind them that they're worth the time it takes to learn a skill.

[00:04:45] That's all. That's exactly where it came from. Just off the cuff. Yes. It was just like responding to that and I, I said it and I never thought twice about it. It was just try to make sure I was like giving them an extra boost that they needed [00:05:00] to get through the job. Um, and it hit people in, in the right way.

[00:05:05] And it's just, it's really interesting the relationship that you've developed with people. You know what I mean? That you can have through a 45 second to a 59 second video. My early days, I was known as a intersexual trans maintenance lady, which is the worst branding you could ever come up with in a known universe.

[00:05:26] And if I say now, it takes me 10 seconds to say. Yes, . I would say hate their, hi, my name is Mercury. I'm an intersexual feminist, trans maintenance lady, and half the video's gone already . I was really, I was generally really bad at my job, but the one thing I was really good at was making people feel good, and that's the only thing that carried me through for the first, like three or four months was I didn't know how to make TikTok.

[00:05:53] I had no idea how to do any of it. No idea how to do editing. Or how to make entertaining content. All [00:06:00] I knew is how to encourage people and um, that was a, that was it. And, and maintenance, that's all I knew. And some of my videos would go massively viral. 1, 2, 3, 10 million. And someone would be seen by, you know, uh, two people and five cats.

[00:06:16] You know what I mean? That's like , you know? So a really interesting experience. I really lucked out is what I'm trying to say. ,

[00:06:22] **Ronni:** you know, the thing I I love about your videos also is that it is, it really is this beautiful. Intersection of like queerness and like self-care because you're talking about like taking care of yourself and your space and self-worth and all, like, you're just affirming people in so many ways.

[00:06:42] Like the one that really struck me recently was the one that, um, you posted about the woman with the thermostat and it was just so powerful that the. Maintenance part was a small part of that video, and what you were really focusing on is you [00:07:00] deserve to be treated well and you deserve to be treated kindly and have relationships that feed you and also here's how you do the thermostat thing.

[00:07:09] It just was so it, it was so powerful.

[00:07:11] **Mercury:** It's an interesting thing sometimes with these videos because. I always struggle with, do these videos deserve like a deeper rewind because they're a minute and 20 seconds? Like I could spend five, 10 hours talking about a a one minute video, but that video in particular is interesting because a lot of my viral videos recently.

[00:07:31] Have come randomly, like I will be just sitting in my office with my assistant and then all of a sudden Basil will come in and be like, Hey, there's this one video. And I'll be like, oh, that pisses me off and I will just, I will do it. You know what I mean? And that's what that video was. I watched that whole video and I was so mad on her behalf and I was like, okay, I'm just gonna do this.

[00:07:54] And I didn't think anyone was gonna watch it. I often don't think anyone's gonna watch them [00:08:00] it. Has so little to do with trying to have a viral hit and has way more to do with trying to have fun with a circumstance that I'm dealt with. Right. And teach along the way. Mm-hmm. and that video was a, was super fun getting all those drills lined up and then zip tying all the drills and then it's so amazing and speaking louder above them.

[00:08:22] To me that was a, that was a fun fucking 45 minutes of trying to figure out how the hell we were gonna do that. Um, but like I'm happy that those moments translate, but sometimes it takes me three or four hours to do those. Yeah, I bet, I bet The lighting, the sound. I'm extremely particular on the production side of things.

[00:08:41] Sure. Um, because that's where, you know, I got my theatrical degree in production. So like that's where it all came from, you know, and that's why I have that knack. I'm, I often think I'm a better performer than I am a technician. , maybe that's not true, but maybe

[00:08:57] **Ronni:** it's all just your imposter

[00:08:58] **Mercury:** syndrome. It [00:09:00] 100% is because I think that like, there is something to be said about that, Ronnie, because like for me, So much of my career has been being spoken down to mm-hmm.

[00:09:12] that like, sometimes it's hard for me to feel like, oh, like am I, am I actually as good as so many people think I am? You know what I mean? Yeah. It's like I'm so used to being looked down upon. It's hard for me sometimes.

[00:09:26] **Ronni:** Yeah, and you know, I think I, I feel it that way about imposter syndrome too, that in some ways it is, it's less about your own internal monologue about what you can and cannot do.

[00:09:34] And it is so much about the environment that you are in and what your environment is telling you about yourself. Right. I think all of us as people who are socialized in the United States, there are so many seeds of doubt that are planted throughout our lives.

[00:09:51] **Mercury:** 100%. One. And, and we internalize every single moment of those and they come out randomly, , you know, like, [00:10:00] yeah.

[00:10:00] The other day I spoke in front of, you know, uh, college in Steven's Point, and I was paid to be there from the college, right. And halfway through it. I started thinking, wow, do they even care? You know what I mean? Like I got in my own brain about it and then afterwards the line of people who wanted to meet me and take photos was like, I don't know, like 80, 90 people.

[00:10:22] It was one of the longer lines we've had. And while we were doing it, I was like, God, that's self-doubt. Just go away. It's just ridiculous. Yeah. It's ridiculous how often you, even at the moments of success, you feel like a failure. And I can't help but think a lot of that is queer trauma. I can't help but think that like, you know, A is Catholic guilt that's in the back of my head.

[00:10:44] I always feel like there's something gonna about to happen. You know, like mm-hmm. if you're do well that the other shoe's gotta drop kind of mentality. Mm-hmm. , but also that queer trauma of like, no matter how good I was at things, that was always gonna be lesser than, you know, but my parents were always gonna be like, [00:11:00] Trying to minimize queer aspects of me mm-hmm.

[00:11:03] and trying to bring out the straight aspects of me to be palatable for other people's consumption. And like, I, I think a lot of that is, is there , you know? Mm-hmm. . Um, I, I think everyone experiences that. I think that queer humans especially feel that and different multiple tubes and, and, and, and wave.

[00:11:22] **Ronni:** So the, the next few questions that we have on our list are mostly around like healthcare and your experiences with healthcare.

[00:11:30] Um, we never ask anybody to divulge anything that they don't want to about their own medical care. So is there anything that happened when you were accessing healthcare that was a negative experience that you wanna share? Or is there anything that you would encourage queer folks to ask their medical providers?

[00:11:48] **Mercury:** Ooh, boy, there's a lot there. I'm gonna go after the negative experience because from the negative stuff, I feel like every time I go to the er, I'm just rolling a fucking dice of how [00:12:00] I'm gonna be mistreated. Mm-hmm. . Um, and a few years ago I had a kidney stone. My insurance was like, I don't know, like nine, $10,000 per person on the guy dam insurance.

[00:12:12] Mm-hmm. and it, oh boy. The, the, the amount of money we had to spend on that, we couldn't afford the dame surgery, so we were waiting. Because I needed to have a surgery to remove the dam, kidney stone. It was so big it wasn't gonna pass. So we had to do it that route. But, uh, I kept on asking for a quote, how much it was gonna cost, you know, and it never was gonna be a great answer, uh, , but like, we decided that there was just no way we could financially do that.

[00:12:40] So we waited like five, six months. So, yeah. Oh my God. I, yeah, it was awful. It was, every once in a while I would wind up. On the ground, just like in agony, and then 10 minutes will go by and I could go back and do my job, and that's how it went. I had to wait three months from the moment I got hired at this one job in order to have the insurance I needed.

[00:12:59] So, [00:13:00] wow. You know, I go in one night, uh, I think this is actually ironically, January, uh, sixth of 2, 20 20 . Oh my God. Yeah. Uh, 2021 rather. And nothing, nothing happened that night, . No. No. Huh. I remember being in the hospital bed waiting for a doctor that I, I, at one point in time, I just thought was never gonna.

[00:13:23] And, uh, watching all this tape of the, the riots of the capitol being like, well, if I die, this is the way to go out. . Yeah. , um, watching the end of the world right now. There you go. Um, but that being said, I got in there and the doctor, I understand needing to know things about the person. Right. But there's definitely ways to go about.

[00:13:51] Learning about my anatomy that isn't othering. Mm-hmm. . And one of the ways I would say is, is very othering, is a, [00:14:00] uh, you know, saying that, you know, one day when you're more of a real woman isn't a great way to frame it. Oh, and then directly asking me if I still have a dick is also really weird and saying it like that.

[00:14:13] Holy shit. Yeah, no, I, this also, Ronnie, this is multiple people. This is like two or three nurses and then maybe one doctor. Oh my God. I'm laying in bed and this was still Covid restriction, so I'm alone. And as a trans woman alone for, I think it was six hours. It wasn't like terrible. We had been in the ER a lot longer than that, but.

[00:14:34] You know, being in the ER for like six or seven hours alone, and I was having heart problems too, but it was actually acid reflex. I just didn't know what I was dealing with, you know what I mean? I was just scared, of course. And I'm sitting there and trying to communicate my gender to people. Um, because again, I'm, I have rests that are developed, you know, like.

[00:14:56] I look like a cisgender woman sometimes, depending on what [00:15:00] angle you're looking at. . Uh, and I pass sometimes, but when I start speaking I might not. And it confuses people, especially if they're not entrenched with our culture. Mm-hmm. . So, uh, when they meet me, sometimes I get that double take and there's nothing worse than a double take experience from a doctor.

[00:15:20] Right. Because you were handing that doctor. Faith that you have in them to take care of you. Mm-hmm. , and I cannot stress this enough, but as a trans person, I already, innately have a distrust to the medical system. Mm-hmm. . And it doesn't take much for me not wanting to, to, to, like, if you say something to offensive to me, guess what's gonna happen?

[00:15:44] I'm gonna stop listening, not because I don't wanna listen to the things you're saying, but because I am, I'm internalizing the pain that you just brought on me. Like you walked into a. and you Ina densely just kicked me right in the heart and you expected me to retain information. Mm-hmm. , you know, and [00:16:00] that was really hard.

[00:16:03] And I think there was another time too when they were removing. The kidney stone and you know, they had to go through the urea and all that crazy stuff. So I'm more already feeling feelings about vulnerable. Yeah. You know, uh, the, the surgeon, like, I don't know, the surgeon just refused, but the surgeon never gendered me correctly and in front of the person they were working with, who was gendered me correctly was calling me like, sir, him, you know, man, over and over and over again.

[00:16:30] And this is the person who's directly operating on me. Yeah. You know, and that's. Hard. Scary. So scary. I mean, it's just so wild though. Those kind of things, you know, and when I've told those stories publicly on the internet, people have always tried to find ways to minimize that. And here's the thing, I'm fine with doctors knowing about if I have testicles or not.

[00:16:52] I'm fine about that, but I'm really sure you can look up my file and find out pretty quick. Uh, you know what I mean? Like mm-hmm. , that's [00:17:00] one way to do it. Or discreetly say to me, Hey, you know, I'm just gonna ask you something really personal. Let me know if this is okay. Uh, we need to know if you have testicles or not.

[00:17:09] Just let us know. I don't know. To me, treat me like I'm a human and not a number. I think when doctors, especially in the er, there's such a, a thing about efficiency and about, you know, getting people in and out, and I understand that. So you're always gonna have a higher chance of being, have a bad experience in an er, all the, and in other places.

[00:17:27] But on the flip side, when I. Actually going through the surgery. I wasn't in er, I was in a, a different situation that time and I still was feeling very much like a number, you know, I came out of, uh, the surgery that morning and the nurse, uh, misgendered me like two, three times and I wasn't feeling good.

[00:17:49] I was already like loopy. Mm-hmm. , right? And she comes in and she says something to me, and I don't know, I think it was maybe the fourth or fifth time and I had it. I just fucking had it. [00:18:00] And I said to her, if you misgender me one more time, I'm not gonna be very happy. And she was like, I didn't do it. I'm like, you absolutely fucking did.

[00:18:08] Now just get the fuck outta here. I was like, very straightforward. And I, I regret sometimes how direct I am, but then I realize if people make me uncomfortable, they, they, I don't know, , if they make me uncomfortable, it's okay for me to make them uncom. Yeah. And uh, she then cried at a mother my, to my mother-in-law about it and talked about, you know, she was just trying to be a good nurse and blah, blah.

[00:18:29] Oh God. I, I still can't get over that. You know, like, it's wild to me that you misgendered me, you treat me this way, and then you cry to my mother-in-law. That's weird. , you know, and then God bless Laura, uh, who's my mother-in-law didn't know how to handle, and she's just like, oh, you know, she's, she's moody sometimes

[00:18:53] Well, she's not wrong. I am,

[00:18:54] **Ronni:** but you know, it sure would've been nice for her to be like, well, yeah, don't fucking, I misgender her again. Yeah, I know. No wonder she's pissed [00:19:00]

[00:19:00] **Mercury:** off. No, no, no. I'm, no, I'm just happy that Laura loves me. . . You know, uh, I, I think that what's so interesting in a lot of ways is me and my partner, partner is Zy.

[00:19:11] Me and my, my spouse have been together for seven years. We transitioned it together. So like we were, we've been together for like three years before we came out. We got married and a month later we're like, Hey, everybody, we're trans, uh, . You know, and it's just been a really wonderful experience. But I can't imagine what that feels like for a mom who sees these two, you know, people that they love so much.

[00:19:34] And then, you know, right after the wedding, their lives just changed so drastically. But the support that she's given us has been always so great. You know, always making room for our feelings and everything is, is wonderful. That's wonderful.

[00:19:48] **Rebecca:** A good mom. You give out so much great advice on your platforms, but in terms of sort of dealing with the medical system or interacting with a healthcare provider, [00:20:00] do you have any advice you would give to other like trans kids or young trans people or adult older trans people about, you know, what sort of advice you would have for those

[00:20:11] **Mercury:** interactions, you know, Have learned to be really direct about what I need and what my boundaries are in a lot of ways.

[00:20:20] And I've also learned that, um, I try my best to leave emotion out if I can unless I have built up a relationship with the physician, right? Because what I have noticed in my experience, , is if I come in and I'm emotional about things, I never really get the results I need. Uh, That's what I have noticed. I have noticed that for me, I have been very direct with what I need.

[00:20:44] I stand firm with what I need and I know what I want before I walk in, but I'm always willing to listen, right? Because there might be something that is really good, but the, the time for, for our transitions and for us as trans people, a lot of doctors are [00:21:00] still trying to catch up and a lot of times, I'm sure writing, you know this sometimes us as trans people, we walk in and, and.

[00:21:08] We just have like, okay, I wanna be on this medication and this medication and that medication because like every trans person takes Theran. Next trans person, they meet and they just bring 'em on their wing and they're like, okay, see, they're gonna put you on this amount of, uh, Esther, and then this amount of, you know, progression and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

[00:21:26] You know what I mean? Like totally. That's the kind of community we've developed for

[00:21:30] **Ronni:** so long, but out of necessity, right? Yes. I feel like this crowdsourcing of information has been a part of the queer community. Forever because we had to rely on one another to take care of each other.

[00:21:42] **Mercury:** Yeah. 100% as again, is a direct response to trauma.

[00:21:46] Right. So like you have it woven in your community and how you deal with things. I think it's important for us to unpack that and try to give physicians an opportunity to help us, right. But also protect our [00:22:00] space. Mm-hmm. , I do think ultimately we know what we need and we know what we want, and. I think it's very easy to do the desires and the under and the wishes of someone who appears to know more about our medication than we do.

[00:22:16] Yeah. You know, I'm easily swayed too. I'm very easily swayed. , uh, if you're like, yeah, but there's one thing where maker your, your, um, your butt look big. I'm like, oh, I don't want that. You know, actually, I do want that. Any, Ronnie, if you know anything to gimme me, my butt look good. ,

[00:22:30] **Ronni:** I'm gonna, I'm gonna go right to the literature to find out

[00:22:34] **Mercury:** Yeah.

[00:22:36] **Ronni:** Oh yeah. You know, it's interesting. I feel like one of the, um, And I don't know if ev, if every physician gets to this point or every healthcare provider gets to this point, but I, at some point I got to this place in my career and my experience and my education where I felt really comfortable saying to people like, look, I know a lot about bodies in general.

[00:22:57] Like I know a ton about a lot [00:23:00] of things, but you know the most about your body in particular, and so I have to rely on you to tell me. What you know about your body, what you, you know, how you think things are gonna go. And I, you know, I think when we're starting out, maybe we feel a little bit like defensive or nervous or imposter and we make up for that by like faking it till we make it.

[00:23:20] And to kind of like settle into a place of curiosity and humility. Can, it takes a lot of practice I think.

[00:23:26] **Mercury:** 100%. 100%. I mean, it's interesting as trans people, like how often I feel like. I wish I could go back in time and see how much knowledge I've gained about my own existence, , you know, and my place in the world, because I feel like I understand the world in such a vastly deeper and more complex way than when I did prior, partially because I have to be aware so much more.

[00:23:53] Mm-hmm. , you know, like I have to be so much more present. I have to be so much more. Uh, willing to [00:24:00] adjust and to take the, you know, proverbial volleyball of life and go, okay, I got it. You know, and and keep the ball up as much as I can. Uh, and a lot of that is like generally medical care. Mm-hmm. and trying to.

[00:24:17] I mean, I, I mean Ronnie out live right now, if I don't Google every single thing that you've ever told me, , I know

[00:24:24] **Ronni:** that people do that. Of course they do, because like people wanna be empowered. That's all right.

[00:24:28] **Mercury:** Yeah. But so few physicians make you feel empowered. And I feel like, you know, up until recently, and, and by recently, I mean the last like two, three years, I've never felt good by going to a physician.

[00:24:41] I always felt like I was being told. , oh, you're fucking up again. You know? Mm-hmm. way to take this meat, meat suit and fuck it up. You know what I mean? , I, I always felt that way. You know, I had a family care doctor, um, since I was like seven or eight all the way until like after college, and my mom and dad saw him, [00:25:00] and my brother saw him, and my cousins saw him.

[00:25:02] Everyone saw, saw this guy, and I remember asking him shortly after my mom died, if my mom's cancer was hereditary. And I'll never forget him laughing at me and be like, no, no, that's not. And I'm like, I fucking asked you a goddamn on. My mom died a month ago, . Oh my God. I'll never forget that. I'll never forget that because he made me feel like the fact that I even thought that that was a thing.

[00:25:28] That I was being selfish. That's how I felt. And you know, I just, I didn't go see a doctor for years after that cause I was just like fucking, you know, , I'm, I'm fine with chop off my ankle. I'll go to the er, we'll figure it out. , you know, I'm what a heartbreak. Yeah. But a lot of that is also internalized misogyny and intern.

[00:25:49] Pain too, because how often do we tell men or people who are raised as men Right. To be, uh, you know, tough it up, suck it up buttercup. Yeah. You know, so [00:26:00] like a lot of that was in my brain too, where like, I wa I didn't deserve the time that I needed for my medical care that like, if I'm not, you know, on my death, And, you know, breathing my last breath, then I need to suck it up and move on.

[00:26:15] You know what I mean? Mm, mm-hmm. .

[00:26:17] **Ronni:** Yeah. I wanna know what

[00:26:19] **Mercury:** gives you joy. My, my partners. Um, very much give me Troy, my spouse. Mouse in particular, uh, gives me a lot of joy that, that that's Zizi or Ari, I would say my cats Nitro, Alabama, Jenkins and Apollo Sassy, PA Johnson iii. Um, both of those give me a lot of joy and honestly, the Rocky Franchise I do.

[00:26:44] Me so happy. I'm not even kidding. I am obsessed with a Rocky franchise. I, I, I could recite you almost every, the, the New Creed movie. I'm, I have seen that movie three times already. I, wow. I love it. I've gone back to [00:27:00] the, the movie theater like Michael B. Jordan. I love you. You know, so amazing. I feel like I'm the only, like, I'm the only queer in, in this.

[00:27:09] Sea of just like Gen Z guys just going, oh yeah, beat 'em up. And I'm like, yeah, you beat 'em up. Michael . Yeah, do it, do it. Watching it for entirely different reasons than everyone else. . Um, but like I honestly, what brings me joy is trying to just like relax and chill and connect. Right now I'm recording this in, um, my.

[00:27:36] Production studio here in Tropical Madison, Wisconsin, , and we have 3000 square feet of playroom. And we've used this space essentially as what we call the clubhouse because it's like where my, I, I've never had a space, I, oh, I haven't had a space in years because of. Being a trans person. Um, even our local gays are not necessarily most friendly sometimes to queer people who are [00:28:00] really queer.

[00:28:00] You know? Like, like, so queer. We're queer, queer, you know? Yeah. Queer Squared. Uh, we'll call us, uh, . Um, but that being said, uh, often I don't feel safe going on those bases. Mm-hmm. , so a lot of my trans and queer friends haven't had a space to go to. So we call this the clubhouse because people come and go all the time.

[00:28:21] We always have, you know, popcorns and movies playing and we're just chilling. Oh. And it's like a little, it's a little clubhouse where my, my friends come and hang out with me most days and while I, I work. And, you know, in the last several months, I don't think I've done a video alone. And when I was like doing this job before every single video was alone in a second bedroom in my apartment, you know, Isolation, the loneliness that was creating was really hard.

[00:28:51] And now every single time I record a video, I'm bouncing ideas off of someone else. Or, you know, I'm in a [00:29:00] space filled with, you know, um, you know, dart boards and basketball hoops and just a lot more fun and energized rather than like isolated and alone. Mm-hmm. . And, um, that, and it keeps this from feeling.

[00:29:14] So hard, you know, especially when we're our, our organization trying to raise 1 million for trans healthcare. You know, like, it's like that's already fucking hard. Uh, trying to do it while also feeling extremely alone is even harder, you know? Mm-hmm. . So joy, I'll just, and I'll

[00:29:31] **Rebecca:** just add, I think that as adults we forget to play, you know, and I think.

[00:29:38] Finding ways to sort of be goofy with your friends. Ronnie and I met at summer camp 30 years ago, , and I feel like a big part of what keeps our friend group going is that there's still that part of us that's still like, An idiot, teenager, and that part of us comes out when we're together. Um, now with a little bit more wisdom, perhaps an experience [00:30:00] layered over it, but it's like a group of people that we can be our goofiest least polished selves with.

[00:30:07] And it's so important to have people you can just like be, you know, without any of. Filters, you know, that we

[00:30:15] **Ronni:** bring to adulting .

[00:30:17] **Mercury:** You know, that is so true, Rebecca, because like, a lot of this is like, I don't feel like I gotta perform myself in front of others every day. That I, I, what I'm trying to say with the clubhouse is I, I don't have to perform in front of people that I truly understand and love me, my friends.

[00:30:35] That, like the door is always open here, and then when we really need me, I'll try my best to be there, you know? But ultimately I'm just gonna do my own thing. , you know? And doing my own thing is what keeps me happy. I love feeling like a young kid and feeling like I can be goofy and silly around people and carefree.

[00:30:54] That's just that you need to have that, you know? Yeah.

[00:30:58] **Rebecca:** Can you tell us about this incredible [00:31:00] fundraiser that you're organizing?

[00:31:02] **Mercury:** Yes, I can. Thank you for the segue. Uh, I am doing a fundraiser for transhealth by trans people. For trans people. It is through an organization called Point of Pride, uh, which is a non-profit organization, started in 2016, and this organization is a completely volunteer organization, so all the money they get goes directly into whatever they're trying to.

[00:31:27] And what they're trying to do is raise money for gender affirming care. So they're paying for surgeries, uh, electrolysis, um, H r t, um, so Homer replacement therapy, and they're paying for garments such as binders and gaffs for people. Um, so people who would not be able to access this agenda, affirming care otherwise will be able to do it.

[00:31:46] So through the point of pride access fund, and right now we're raising 1 million for that access fund and that will help 11,000 trans people. In all different kinds of ways. We [00:32:00] put a lot of that money in biters and gas to make sure that many people can access that care as possible. But also, like about two 300 people will be able to access H R T, who would not be able to otherwise, and a lot of people will be able to access surgeries who would not be able to otherwise.

[00:32:15] And I think it's like 20 to 30 people. If you're like, well, America, a million dollars, that should be helping more people. That's the thing. This stuff's fucking expensive. Surgery is alone. I mean, their access fund accounts for like anywhere between 10 to $15,000 per person. So like if we were just raising a million dollars alone, that would take up so much money and it would not help nearly as many people.

[00:32:40] So trying to find ways to do this is so. It's difficult. Um, we're often working within a broken system mm-hmm. , but I've found that doing things like this where we're raising money directly for people and helping them directly, like they're applying and they're getting the help they need, uh, that's [00:33:00] huge.

[00:33:00] That is like, I'm happy that we're able to be a part of that, and I love supporting people's GoFundMe. Right. But my, my rule of thumb is I don't share GoFund. If I don't know the person in real life off size, the internet, right? Hmm. Because so much can go wrong with that, you know? Yeah. So in order for us to, to help people in a large way, the point of pride is the best way to do it, because they vet everybody and they do the work for us.

[00:33:27] But, um, they're already built for that, you know, so they're able to help a lot more people than I ever could with the money that we can raise. So we're already, as we're recording this, right now, we're at $70,000. And we're aiming for a million by the end of March 31st. And we'll be doing a 30 hour live stream on March 30th at 4:00 PM Central time, all the way until 10:00 PM March 31st, the trans day of awareness or visibility rather, rather.

[00:33:57] And we're gonna be extremely visible that day, I promise [00:34:00] you. And you can watch the live stream either on my TikTok or on my Instagram. And if you wanna donate to that, you can by just going to my TikTok or my Instagram. Or my website, mercury star.com and you can find a link there. So.

[00:34:14] **Ronni:** Cool. Um, who are your queer icons?

[00:34:17] Living

[00:34:17] **Mercury:** or dead? Oh, wait, living or dead? Yeah. Um, father Dre Queen right off the gate. Um, Marsha p Johnson, uh, right out of the gate. And not just not because of the brick, because all the activism that we know she did, right? Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. . Everyone always wants to focus on the brick and they really forget about how much she really did for the trans community.

[00:34:38] In the late sixties and seventies, like she did some backbreaking work. So we can be where we are now and, oh no, Harry f Harry Stein, uh, far Stein , how you wanna say his name? Uh, and the reason why I say him is because when I was in high school, he had a P b s show. And that p b s show was the first time I ever saw a group of [00:35:00] queer people together on television.

[00:35:02] Real queer people, not, you know, will and. Queer. And I was like, probably like 17. And I remember he showed a trans woman and I was like a scandal. Like look at a scandal. And that was like one of the first times I saw a trans person. Mm-hmm. And yeah, I was probably shitty about it, you know, because I was 17 year old kid in a farm town.

[00:35:26] But at start of my gear is turning, and I think that visibility in, in the nineties and and eighties is wild. And I think we often don't understand how much hits they took in the face for us to be visible now. I mean, mm-hmm. being visible now is hard being visible in the eighties and nineties during the AIDS epidemic.

[00:35:48] Are you fucking kidding? You know, like it's, it's wild. And then for then, all the things that they were censored, they were so censored to be able to talk about their lives, but they were still there. I'm just so impressed by that, [00:36:00] by anyone who's been around for that long and doing all the great work. And I met Bob Dre Queen, so that one's just bother

[00:36:06] Oh wow. I actually. Bob and I are friends now. We've talked many times since, uh, he came over here to the studio. So what a wild experience My life has been, meaning my gay icon and vibe because I think amazing. I think we're here as one of the greatest queer liberation shows of all time, and I have often said that I wish that, uh, that show was what RuPaul's Drag Race.

[00:36:31] Because I think queer uplifting joy is much better than you know, who's catty on a Thursday night. You know, , I think we

[00:36:38] **Ronni:** made it through most of our questions, unless there's anything else you wanna make sure that you wanna say, mercury. Um, I

[00:36:44] **Mercury:** love you. I love you. Thank you for having me on , uh, I think everyone who supports Ronnie and Rebecca, and ultimately thank you for supporting me too.

[00:36:53] Absolutely. And support, uh, trans people right now more than ever. Uh, it feels like there's an attack from every single [00:37:00] angle in our country. Hang tight, everybody. Um, we just gotta get through the next couple of years. Uh, . Love you all. Everybody .

[00:37:09] **Rebecca:** Aw, love you too. This is, you're, you're amazing.

[00:37:12] **Mercury:** Thank you.

[00:37:17] **Ronni:** you've been listening to. This is probably a really weird question, which is created, hosted, and produced by Rebecca Davis and Ronnie. Hi. You can

[00:37:26] **Rebecca:** learn more about us. Read our show notes and find links to resources on our website, www really weird question.com.

[00:37:36] **Ronni:** Follow us on Twitter at a really weird pod.

[00:37:39] Rebecca Tweets at History Davis and Ronnie at Dr. Awkward md.

[00:37:45] **Rebecca:** Send us your really weird, not really questions by emailing us at really weird question gmail.com.

[00:37:54] **Ronni:** Nora Carlson is our website Guru and social manager.

[00:37:58] **Rebecca:** Mick Finnegan is our sound [00:38:00] engineer. Mark

[00:38:02] **Ronni:** Wessel. Bacher, composed and recorded our incredible theme music.

[00:38:06] **Rebecca:** We are grateful for the financial support of the Phil's Wickler Charitable and Memorial Foundation Trust. We additionally thank the foundation for Delaware County.

[00:38:17] **Ronni:** Please rate us and review us on Apple Podcasts to help other people find us in their feed.

[00:38:22] **Rebecca:** Our website is also where you can find links to our fabulous merch, which helps support the show.

[00:38:29] **Ronni:** Thank you for listening and keep on asking those questions.