

Short Hand Transcription Legend:

** - asterisks represent actions and descriptions of when something is said without the running conversational tone.

"" - quotations represent phrases that are quoted from the past or referencing a specific title/topic.

Bolded - bolded words are words said with verbal emphasis

Italicized - Words said in Spanish

🎵 - music notes represent audio cues being played

G: Gabby Rivera

T: Therapist

K: Kat Lazo

🎵 It's a Revolutiooon 🎵

G: On this week's episode we're doing things a little differently. *giggle*

Mostly, it's going to be me in my feelings explaining why I even started a podcast about Joy. And uh, later on we're going to be talking to my therapist like...like my for real therapist. *giggle*

🎵 zap sound transition 🎵

I started going to therapy because I was having like massive panic attacks and acute anxiety and I was also dealing with grief and death and betrayal and unemployment and being broke and you can add a million and one things to what I was experiencing before like everything felt... like I was going to snap.

🎵 zap sound transition 🎵

G: Hello I'm Gabby Rivera, your queer butch hermana that reads tarot cards and makes you *cafecito* with cinnamon and welcome to the first ever episode of Joy Revolution! The podcast that asks: how do **you** prioritize Joy?

🎵 Joy. Revolution. Joy. Revolutiooon yeaahh 🎵

So normally this is where I would introduce my guest and I would tell you why I love this person so much and why I want to talk about Joy with them...but since it's episode one we got to talk about why **I'm** looking for Joy. Why I decided to start Joy Revolution. I'm a butch, queer, Puerto Rican writer from the Bronx and I'm tired. I'm tired and I want to

heal and I need some motherfucking Joy, but how can we get Joy if we're not allowed to heal?

There's this constant ache in my chest and I know I think in my heart it's the reverberations of a country that is yet to apologize for the violence of African American chattel slavery, for the sterilization of Puerto Rican women, the caging and separation of undocumented people, the genocide of native peoples, Jim Crow, the school-to-prison pipeline. This country doesn't apologize for shit. And the rest of us? The rest of us are just 'posed to just suck it up and not act like it's not our lives on the line. Like it's not our people dying in the streets.

Even sometimes with other queer and trans people of color, all we do is share our misery and y'all we are just too God damn cute to be taken out this way. *chuckles* I need to find my Joy in the middle of all of this and I realized that if I didn't do anything like if I didn't take an action to center my own Joy, I was going to drown in their misery. We organize, we protest, and Joy is another form of that resistance. Sooo I had to gather some of my favorite and most revolutionary humans and we're gonna explore and honor that Joy.

With each episode we are gonna dive into different forms. We're gonna talk about the Joy of tattooing, the Joy of journalism, the Joy of being queer and latinx and in love and you know why? Because it's **our** Joy and nobody can take it from us and if I'm gonna ask my guests to be vulnerable while exploring Joy then I have to be vulnerable too. I have to be vulnerable first and who better than to be on air with my therapist? *giggle* Yes! My actual real life therapist.

🎵 digital call beep 🎵

G: Hello!

T: Hi!

G: *giggling* This is a little different than what we normally do!

T: It is!

G: I've been in treatment with you for about like a year and stuff now. I have been in treatment with uh different therapists for almost like the greater part of like four years, maybe five. Um, I started going to therapy because I was having like massive panic

attacks, um acute anxiety, and depression bum Bum BUM. *T giggles* Um, and also there was like a lot of trauma, right? Like I was also dealing with grief, and death, and betrayal, and unemployment, and being broke, and you can add a million and one things, uh to what I was experiencing before like everything felt...like I was gonna snap. And so I went to therapy for all of this stuff and by “went to therapy,” I just wanna also say that like I secured therapy for myself at like this point in my life where I was like...not highly functioning, so it was a...it was a job. It was work, you know? It was like I had to figure out how to save myself.

By the time I’ve come to be in, in relationship with you, I feel like I’ve got some of these tools, right? I’ve got, I’ve got some working understanding of how to like take care of myself and I knew that when I moved that I needed to also be in therapy, and have a therapist that was also like a queer person of color. If I’m undoing trauma, then I need to talk to someone that like has already been invested in that work, who can understand where I’m coming from. For folks that wouldn’t understand why it would be important to have a therapist that shares identities I would love if you could like offer some insight on that and some some of your thoughts?

T: Absolutely. As queer and trans people of color we don’t often get to see ourselves reflected um in people in positions of power, um we’re just, even in media and art and um there’s something about that experience about having a reflection of ourselves that allows us to make meaning out of our own lives and um experience our own value and feel validated. And so, I think that part of the value of having a QTPOC therapist as a QTPOC person is um getting to have that need met of the validation that comes through personal reflection um, and also in addition, it’s nice to not have to explain as many aspects of one’s experience to the person that is supporting you. So yes, when it’s appropriate, there is value in being able to tell your story and articulate your experience. And there’s also something I think that’s really healing about sitting with someone who you don’t have to explain and break down the same kinds of things that you would have to with someone who does not share your experience um, living as a person of color in the world or experiencing homophobia or queerphobia or transphobia.

G: I have to be honest, like when I moved from New York to California, it wasn’t like I went into care immediately. Like I still had to call around and talk to folks and ask. There were a lot of therapy places that didn’t have any queer trans people of color therapists, right? And so in my need um to see somebody like I said uh, I have anxiety, I have depression, all that stuff and um, I take care of it, right? Like I have my meds, I have this, I have that, and still therapy is something that I need to be in like regularly, right? To feel really good.

So when I came to California, the only place that took me at first was like a white lady therapist. And I was like no, it's going to be good, I'm going to give her the benefit of the doubt... but I felt this incredible anxiety when I was like getting ready to go into her office and sit with her. There was like, it felt really sterile and it just...in my head I was like, I can't imagine all the times that our ancestors, that people of color before us have walked into like white doctor's office with all their trust um and and none of their questions being answered and then be taken advantage of, and be sterilized, or be experimented on.

Um, and I was like how am I supposed to sit into...sit in someone's office, share my deep ass feelings about growing up, about being queer, about being Puerto Rican with somebody who isn't like rooting their practice in breaking down these these uh institutions, right? Who isn't...hasn't rooted their practice in dismantling white supremacy, right? Who is like gonna try to like come at you from some spiritual place and I wanna be like, well where is your spirituality rooted? Is it rooted in a yoga practice that you stole from someone else? Like what's really good, you know like? *laughs*

Not only are you a queer trans person of color but your like practice, the way that you explained it to me when we first started being in session together, your work is in it. So I was wondering if you could share like what your therapy style is and what kind of like methods you include, you know? And, and feel free to use some of the uh methods that like we, that you use with me, you know?

T: One of the foundations of my work uh is it's humanistic. So it's a theoretical orientation that basically is founded on the idea that: you're a human being, I'm a human being. And unfortunately that's very radical in the psychotherapy...

G: *laughs*

T: I mean...

G: No, it is because it's like most of the time people are like *authoritarian voice* "oh I'm the therapist and you are the sick person." Like? Like? *giggles*

T: Exactly! So it's, it kind of entraps the idea that the therapist is the expert and then the client is the sick person. It operates based on the premise that...like a trusting healthy relationship is what allows for the healing process to take place.

G: So does that mean like the relationship between me and you?

T: Yeah!

G: Yeahh?

T: Yeah!

G: Okay!

T: Yeah, trust and and health in that relationship is where the process, the therapeutic process takes place, right? And if there isn't um a healthy trusting relationship in place then it doesn't matter how much of an expert in a particular subject matter that therapist is, healing is not going to be able to take place.

G: Right. There's that trust that you were talking about um and so as we, we build that trust um...I. I like to consider myself somebody that can do all of it. Every single thing, like I will stack my own deck so high and then just be running with that adrenaline in my pants and make sure I get everything done, right? *laughs* And you know I like have so m...I put so much pressure on myself um, to do everything I need to do to be perfect. I pay my own bills. I make my own way in this world. I am my own, uh, snuggle at night. I am my breakfast in the morning, you know what I mean? Like I do everything on my own and I do it all with a big ass smile on my face. I know that sometimes my presence, my gender presentation, my butchness, my tattoos, all this shit can make people uncomfortable. *sighs* They don't want to be around me sometimes so there's like all this stuff that I do intentionally with a big ass smile on my face just as like...habit, autopilot.

Autopilot-me is always gonna have a big smile on my face, you know? And so I think that was like the most terrifying part about like starting to wake up and not feel like Joy inside....because if I don't, if I can't even get on autopilot...how am I supposed to navigate everything that I need to do? How am I supposed to maintain my life? There's nobody here doing it for me. There's nobody here helping me through this mental health journey, right? Like everything is on me and so the waking up and not feeling that Joy was like feeling like um... like like the Earth was opening up underneath me. *sighs*

And it was like it was starting to get like every morning and and I'm telling... I'm talking about this too from...like I have, I've suffered, you know? Like we've all suffered, right? And I'm...I felt embarrassed that I couldn't find my Joy and I wasn't even in a place of

my most extreme suffering like how could I not find Joy but I got a roof over my head? How could I not find Joy but I'm like, you know, feeling successful in my career? How...was..wh..? How am I so spoiled that I can't just get it together like my great grandma would have, like my mother would have when she had two kids and she still like, went to work, had a master's degree, and managed the whole house, you know? There was like a lot of shame and I brought all of that to **you** *soft giggle* and you made me feel like you know, I wasn't alone...and not just cuz you were there or because it seems like I'm not the only one searching for Joy, maybe. Do you think...in your practice like when you are in community in, in this situation with other QTPOC, like is Joy something that many of us are looking for? Is it a common thing that comes up?

T: Well I think it's a collective human need, and unfortunately in our context of survival, you know, under capitalism it's not something that a lot of people recognize that they need. Um, I think, you know, as you were talking about, you know, wanting to be able to do what you had to do. And um, you know, trying to go on autopilot and I think that's actually the opposite of Joy.

G: *hums in intrigue*

T: Pain. Pain is not the opposite of Joy. It's us trying to hustle and function and push through and then there is not room for our deeper feelings.

G: *hums in response*

T: For us to actually feel our hearts and our souls and actually we can't feel Joy... if we, if we're not also giving ourselves the space to grieve, or the space to feel the terror of what's happening in the world. It's like giving ourselves the space for awareness of our emotions and the space to feel our emotions; that's what allows for Joy. So I think a lot of time people come to me because they want an alleviation of their symptoms, of their suffering so that they can um, function...

G: *hums in thought*

T: ...in their lives, and then what ends up happening is that they come in and they start to um recognize that as my, my therapist, my former therapist long-term,uh therapist and mentor friend, Linda, um says you have to feel to heal, right?

G: *sounds of excitement* You have to **feel to heal**.

T: You have to feel to heal! And sometimes that can be very painful, um but I think that Joy is something that gets uncovered in the process of that and it's, it's even a deeper sense of well-being then maybe people coming into therapy hoping for.

G: *hums and giggles pensively* Like I didn't even think of Joy as a concept before, right? Like when I was in the middle of all of that like I was talking about like abusive relationships, I was unemployed, when I was really going through the misery of it, right? This is like at least a decade ago for real, I was like...Joy? What's? You know? Who is even thinking about Joy, right? Like if I was to go out into my neighborhood in the Bronx nobody is out here talking about Joy except for maybe like the preacher and that Joy is only accessible through like following whatever particular rules that they have for their church, you know what I mean? And so it's like if you don't even know that you're allowed to access Joy and to have Joy, right? You are just...I was stuck. I was stuck. There's a lot of stigma in just trying like to better yourself emotionally. There's a lot of stigma in just like trying to get some help. When I first started going to therapy, people definitely had comments like "oh." Like I remember somebody, I'm not...I'm even gonna say, friend, family, whatever, I remember somebody very specifically being like, "but you weren't in a war."

T: *hums in response*

G: And I was like, "no I wasn't in a war but does that mean that I'm not worth...care?" Does that mean that like the panic attacks that I'm having are different panic attacks? Like are they not worth me investing and in loving myself and trying to figure out what is going on? Like because I wasn't in a war that means that like my suicidal ideation isn't as valid? Like all these different ways that folks tried to dismiss me and stop me from taking care of myself. It was really wild. You know? Like the stigma behind just trying to get some like mental health care, you know? Can we talk about that stigma, like how damaging it is, and also like where do you think it comes from?

T: *hums in agreement* Well I think that it's complicated because it's likely that part of that stigma comes from the deep distrust in the medical establishment.

G: *hums in agreement* Yesss!

T: Right? The really harmful history that's there um, you know, for black folks, for indigenous folks, for latinx folks, for women, for queer people, for trans people, and so there's um, there's good reason I think for the mistrust and perhaps the stigma has been um, a way of self protection and and community protection um, you know? And also I

think that our parents' generation, our grandparents' generation, if they were here. We're also operating out of a need for basic survival. I mean...

G: *hums in agreement*

T: ...the privilege of being able to put time and energy towards one, towards one's own healing might not have been something that previous generations were able to, to afford in terms of time, in terms of money, and in terms of the risk of being harmed.

G: And a lot of 'em are maybe, our like more traditional healing practices probably got snatched away from us too so it's like now you're in a new country, new place, and you don't have those traditional healing practices and whatever this country is offering you, you don't have access to anyway.

T: Absolutely, yeah. I think that's it. I think that's a huge part of it. You know? It actually, um, has not been true in my experience that people of color are not trusting of their therapist. I don't think that's true. I think there's a lot that gets complicated by race and, you know, various power dynamics. And you know, I myself as a queer woman of color therapist have all kinds of people, you know, who are very willing to come in and engage in the deep work. And um, so I think that some of the stigma is actually related to mistrust which...can be valid.

G: What is some of the stuff that like, you say to folks to like, help undo some of that like, internal shame?

T: We just try to normalize that, you know? It's the most human thing in the world to need somebody to talk to, to benefit from talking to somebody, right? We all need that and that traditionally, in so so many cultures there has been a person in that role...

G: *hums in intrigue*

T: ...you know? In our, our contemporary kind of Western culture, it's the counselor, or the psychotherapist, and it feels um, it can feel tied into the medical model and a, a worldview that's about pathologizing people. But traditionally, it wasn't about pathologizing anyone. It was like, of course you have your elder, you have your mentor, you have, you know, you have people in your community that you go to for counsel...for to to, you know, for mentorship, for reflection and so I think it's actually a very essential and timeless role that unfortunately has been kind of taken out of context and now we're sort of hopefully able to um, ree-establish that, re-establish that.

G: Yeah, like thinking on what you were saying about how like, there may, there were other folks in uh traditional cultures, there were folks that you could go to, to speak to and to connect with. There's definitely probably also like deeper more like community and family ties and stuff, uh, stronger bonds between folks and I think that part of the reason, uh, especially when we were talking, but a part of the reason why I was feeling... this like lack of Joy, right? Are some basic things. My family's far away and also like the nature of what I do, I write in isolation; so when we were talking about how can I like really find some roots and Joy, uh, you were like "Gabby, what? Yes you're writing, but what are some things that you're doing that go, that are like beyond, like not beyond me, but like that include others?" And that kind of like, our different, our different medium than just writing.

T: Yeah, I mean I think what, I think what you're, you're saying is kind of speaking to, uh, this idea that like we equate our value and our worth with our level of productivity and it's kind of like the, the way that we've internalised capitalism and we can like only feel good about ourselves when we are doing something worthwhile, according to us. Even if, even if our work is actually subversive there is still this sense of like, I always need to be doing something...

G: Yes.

T: ...to kind of prove my value. And so, I think a big piece of unwinding that is making space for experiences in your life that are not about your productivity. And um, where, where, you know, you actually get to just **be** and experience life. Whether that's doing absolutely nothing, and resting, and having a nap be okay, or if it's doing something just for what, what it gives you in the moment of the experience that you're having.

G: It like felt like it was like cracking me wide open because the first thing I wanted to do was just like talk to folks about Joy, right? Like I'm from the Bronx and I feel like a lot of us are really, we're loving, but it's like a little bit of a tough loving, right? Like you good, fam? You good. You know what I mean? Like, "yeah you're doing great!" Like, you know, "I support you yo," but we're not here like, you know, "so how did it feel when your grandfather left?" You know what I mean? It's...so to me, I wanted to be able to reach for folks and have like soft conversation, and be able to share emotion and like ask folks like, "you're also experiencing this wild chaos out in the world and how are you literally prioritizing Joy?" Right? And um, we've also talked, **Noralia**, about the way that like folks and community share energy, and so if I'm feeling, uh, depleted then when I'm in community with my folks we get to like build that energy together...

T: *quiet unintelligible confirmation*

G: ...and I was scared. *nervous chuckle* I was like, “who is gonna want to talk to me about Joy?” Like who is gonna even want to do this with me? Like...and yeah you just like encouraged me to kind of find that other outlet.

T: You know I think that this podcast is, um, an abundance of your own creativity, right? Like this came from you, you know, it seems like you're doing this just because it was your vision, and you wanted to, and you're doing it. And I think that, that um, kind of movement it...it comes from like, that kind of creati...that movement of creativity...it has, it has to come from a space of relaxation...

G: *hums in intrigue*

T: ...And resource. Like when we're going about our lives stressed out and feeling depleted, it's not possible for us to really generate and create. And so I think that being able to do this kind of creative work, this generative work, actually comes out of the other deep work that you've been doing

G: *hums in intrigue* *Both giggle together* And you, you know you're reminding me too, you're reminding me cause I was like, “oh, I needed Joy so then I started a podcast,” and that's actually factually incorrect. Uh, last year I was like...I felt all sorts, right? Nothing felt like it was um, like uh, you know? Maybe I was even drinking too much. I was tired all the time. I was stressed out. I was cranky. Like, uh, I was sad. It was just so much and we, I like pinpointed it with you and I was like, “**Noralia** I think I need like a routine.

T: *hums in agreement*

G: I think I need some sort of time where I am dedicating, uh, energy to myself in the morning, right?” Where I'm not jumping up and being like, “I got to answer this email. I got to do this.” Um, and so we talked about what kind of routine I would like to have...

T: Yeah.

G: ...and so together we like developed my routine, um...

T: Yes.

G: ...and I had, and I, you know? *giggles* And I'm not talking like that routine that's like, *in deeper, more rigid voice* "I get up at 6 a.m., and then I make my coffee, and then I take my child to work, and then na na ... na na, and then I'm home."

returns to regular pitch It was like, "nah bitch, you're gonna wake up. You're not gonna look at your phone. You're gonna do like a 10 or 15-minute affirmation. Tell yourself that you are goodness, you are God, you are worthy, you are loved, you deserve to be here. We're also gonna like stretch so that while you say these things, your body can be in relationship with you. You're gonna make sure that when you take a shower, you say, "thank you water," because the water molecules in your skin react to positive affirmations!" Like...

T: *giggles in background*

G: ...we came up with a **plan!**

T: Yes!

G: A **routine!** And like, not just routine, like we came up with ritual...and that, that is so tied to what you're saying because, like, were this a more traditional situation, if I was like, you know? I would love...I don't...you know? Well, I guess we romanticize like...pre-colonial whatever, but I imagine that I would have ritual.

T: *hums in agreement*

G: ...and so together, right? We are almost like altering the experience of being colonized people **by** developing ritual together, right?

T: Yes! You know? Like, I think that it's...what our ancestors knew and what they lived is... it's not so far away from, from our own body wisdom.

G: *hums in intrigue*

T: It's like...We've inherited it!

G: *gushes* UGH!

T: It's in our body!

G: UGH! Say that *whispers* AGAIN. Say it **again**.

T: *giggles* So like, if we can become present to really listening to our own bodies and those things start to come alive, and we naturally begin to feel our relationship with nature, and acknowledge, and communicate with the elements. And um, you know, remember that we are loved, and this is not something that we need to earn, but it's something that we essentially are and that we're a part of that.

G: I feel... listen, like, *chuckles* I think this week is like the first time I've considered the concept of "ancestral Joy." We talk about generational trauma. We are well aware that we carry the pain of like enslaved people, the pain of folks that uh, you know, of genocide, of all of this stuff, we are so aware of generational trauma. And I'm like, "wait I think this week...**I think this week** I tapped into **ancestral Joy!**"

Both giggle

Right? Like it's theirs. That's what you just said, you're like, it's there because we live at so many different, like, you know, intersections and the planes of reality are, you know, ever-bending or whatever it is, but it's there. And you know, like, to make this as accessible as possible, right? Like, so if someone doesn't have access to like therapists, right? And these frameworks of understanding, I don't even know if I would have had the concept of ancestral Joy, but that's totally just me and like my experience, you know? Like, of course other people are way more connected to like other roots and things like that, um, but I'm like, *sighs* how do you type tap into it? Like...

T: *hums pensively*

G: ...what are other like, methods, you know? Like if you're someone who's listening to this and you're like, "there ain't no damn QTPOC therapist around me and I still want access to this beautiful abundant Joy." Like... *trails off*

T: If there's a couple things that I could suggest along these lines for healing, um, if you have access to nothing else, I would say, you know, give yourself the permission to not do anything...sometimes. Not **all** the time, cause we all have to live and have our better have our basic needs met. But, to really allow for the space to relax, to cry, to feel our feelings, to just really just drop in and be present with ourselves emotionally and spiritually. To like, follow our own mind and emotions, our own body's desires...

G: *hums in intrigue*

T: ...and um, you know, if we, if we like to draw, to draw, if we like to cook, to cook, if we like to, um, you know, do, give massage, and do, you know, hands-on healing or it's work and letting, allowing that space to start to grow and to take up as much space as you can in your life. Like even if it's only 15 minutes, even if it's only 10 minutes a day, even if it's only 15 minutes a day but giving ourselves that because...we are worth it and that, that self-love is there.

G: I just want to say thank you like a million times over. Thank you for your support in this. Thank you for encouraging me from day one. Thank you for like being in this space now at Joy Revolution and sharing your expertise and sharing your energy with me like, you know, yes, this is like a client patient, or yeah, like patient something something relationship, right?

Both giggle

G: Like there's these different parameters but there's also like a lot of love you here from like the top and bottom of my big, chubby, beautiful heart I just want to thank you for being on Joy Revolution with me today.

T: Thank you, thank you so much Gabby and I also want to add that just being with you here in this space is bringing me so much Joy, so much Joy to see you, um you know, in your space of power and creativity, and bringing this offering into the world and yeah, I'm so happy.

🎵 musical transition 🎵

G: We're moving into this very special segment it's called:

🎵 dramatic cue 🎵

G: *superhero autotuned voice* **Lightning Jooy!**

Laughs bolsterously in autotune And normally with "Lightning Joy," it would be me and a guest and I would give my guest 30 seconds to answer as many questions about Joy as they possibly can; but like I said, this is a very special episode...this is episode number one. This is about me and Joy and so, this one time only, my producer extraordinaire, Kat Lazo's gonna be on the other end of this thing. Kat is gonna ask **me**

as many questions about Joy as possible in 30 seconds. Kat Lazo, are you ready with that timer?

K: *authoritarian voice* 30 seconds on the clock!

G: And...go! Lightning Joy!

K: What fruit is in Joy smoothie?

G: Bananas!

K: What herbal blends does Joy smoke?

G: Yarrow and chamomile!

K: What is Joy's best friend's name?

G: Marcy

K: What does Joy wear on a date?

G: Nothing!

K: If Joy were one of the characters from The Little Women: Atlanta *breaks into giggles* which would it be?

G: *in sing song voice* Miss Juicy Bay-bee!

K: What is Joy's love language?

G: *short pause* Sex.

K: What form of self-care is Joy?

G: Coconut oil.

K: *imitates buzzer sound*

G: *laughs out loud*

K: That is the end!

G: Yeaah, yay! I killed that lightning round! That's it for this week's episode, y'all. As always, a big thank you to the Joy Revolution family! On audio, we have Marcela Carbajal. Julissa Contreras is the studio manager. Music genius is Angelica M. Rodriguez, and producer extraordinaire, Kat Lazo. I'm your host, Gabby Rivera. You can follow me on Instagram and Twitter @QuirkyRican and you haven't already...remember to jump on the Joyride and subscribe! Thank you for listening to Joy Revolution, the podcast that asks: how do you prioritize Joy? Because we're meant to thrive not just survive. *voice begins to fade out and music cue begins to fade in* Yaaay! Thank you, N!

🎵 Joy. Revolution. Joy. Revolutiooon yeaahh 🎵

Closes with someone giggling