

Bonus Episode: Secrets, Advice + Ask Me Anything

Ologies Podcast

December 30, 2022

Oh hey, it's your sloppy baby, Alie Ward. This is not a normal episode at all, so if this is your first episode of Ologies, if someone over the holidays was like, [*slurred and rapid*] "You should listen to this," this is not the one to start with. Just go away, save yourself. Actually, I don't know, maybe stick around. So, typically it's an interview with an ologist, but this one is just me and I'm going to be telling you secrets, and giving you some life tips, and doing an AMA that patrons submitted questions for.

So, it's the week in between holidays and new year, everything is slow, flights are grounded, there's blizzards, but you still have to go to your job, probably, unless you got a full two weeks off, so I wanted to give you just a little something, just a little comfort hang out, just you and me! We're just hanging out, we're just shootin' shits, you know?

Also, if you haven't listened to the P-22 episode or the Meteorology episode, they are both absolute, certified bangers, please go enjoy them, especially P-22, we worked so hard on. And Meteorology will explain so much about what's happening blizzard-wise. So, get up in them if you're looking for some just typical *Ologies* content. So, do not sleep on those if you haven't heard them because of the holidays.

But this one, I just figured, let's tell some secrets, let me share some of my life tips that have gotten me through this year. It hasn't been the easiest year but look at me, I'm here and I'm wearing clean socks, and we're going to have fun. Okay, also, after the break, we'll do an AMA with questions from patrons, okay? Let's do the theme song, here we go!

Okay. Also, for those who don't know, did you know that theme song was done by Nick Thorburn? And he also did the theme song for a little podcast called *Serial*, but he lived in my neighborhood, and we were pals, and he did that one for *Ologies*. He's also in a band called Islands in case you're looking for more music to shake your lower half to, or your upper.

So, let's start with a secret, shall we? Let's do a secret. Umm... Some of you might not know that I dye my hair, I'm not a natural redhead at all and people sometimes call me a redhead and I just let them. But I have brown hair and then I dyed it blue-black during my goth phase, and then I went to go get it stripped and turned back to brown at some point and the hair stylist kind of gave me like a calico cat look where it... like just a patchwork quilt of hues and I was like, "This looks great!" And I think he was so excited I wasn't going to sue him, and he was like, "Are you okay with these patches?" And I was like, "I think it looks cool, it's kind of reddish, I like it," and then I've been a redhead ever since.

And I dye my hair myself. I've had it dyed in a salon a few times, but it always turns purple, and it takes like two hours, so I just do it myself. I think I use "Bright Auburn" by like a... Anyway, I just used box color, or I go to a beauty supply store, not that you asked. But I'm not a natural redhead. My hair also grows in gray, and I use this spray stuff on my roots when I have a shoot and I don't want to dye it. And once I was doing a shoot and this producer was like, I didn't realize that you have so many freckles and I was like [*awkward laugh*] and I looked in the mirror later and I realized that – because I don't have freckles – I realized that the spray stuff for my roots, which is a nice little auburn color was just all over one side of my face and I just had spreckles on one side. So, if you

need fake speckles, get some root touch up in an auburn color and just have at it. It is hard to get off, which is great. So, that's one secret.

Another secret is I have not sent my thank you cards from my wedding and it was 1.5 years ago. And I don't know what to do! If you got a thank you card... what is that? 18 months later, would you be more pissed? Would you be like, "I didn't realize you hadn't sent this?" But I will say, to be fair, we asked people not to get us gifts. We were like, "Don't get us gifts, you know, we have all the forks we need and just come get yourself here." And we did start a travel fund though for a couple people that were coming in that travel costs were expensive for them and then we just dispersed that, so we did a travel fund for other guests and a few people donated to that. But I know I owe thank you cards. And then of course, there's a wonderful aunt that's like, "I want you to have this awesome casserole dish," and stuff. So, I do owe people thank-you cards, don't get it twisted. But I printed out a spreadsheet of the addresses and the formatting was so tiny, and I've just been hung up on a spreadsheet for a year and a half. [*Why are you like this?*] [*mumbles*] If you're wondering how this happens you can listen to the ADHD episode. [*disappointed exhale*] So, I've got to get on that, that's my new year's resolution.

Also, you know what's fun to do? I'm not a person who sends out holiday cards because I don't think anyone wants just a picture of me on their refrigerator, but Valentine's cards, that is where it is at. Everyone's got their trees on the curb, holiday cheer is at a low... low, low, things are slushy out. You send someone a valentine's card, "Just thinking of you. This is what I love about you. I appreciate you." Fuck, you're going to make some days, you know? You got a widowed aunt? You got a friend who is single? You got a married couple? Maybe that's the best valentine they're going to get that year, you don't know. Anyway, so think on that. It's also just a nice thing to go to a café and just, you're probably going to cry when you write them. I usually, if I write valentines, which I haven't done the last couple years because things have been bonkers, I cry just writing them and even if you put them right in a garbage can, it'll do your heart some good.

Let's do one more secret. Umm... My dad passed away in July from a cancer called multiple myeloma. If you have been listening for a long time and you know that this last year, I've done a few more encores than usual and such, thank you for your patience with it because he was on hospice and my husband, Jarrett, and I moved into my sister's house, and we slept on a mattress in her hallway for 4 or 5 months taking care of him. And it was the best time I've ever spent... it wasn't, like, the best time like a trip to Cancun, but it was the most valuable time I could have spent, just the time that I got with him. And also, my fam, it was like so many Thanksgivings all wrapped into one, it just happened that one person was dying, which wasn't good, but it was so good to be able to spend time with him. And I'm doing okay. I thought I'd be a bigger wreck than I am, but I think that the time I got to spend with him was really, really healing, so I'm doing okay.

But why was I talking about this? Oh yeah, so the day of his funeral, the drive from the mortuary to the cemetery was like 30 minutes, which is like just enough time to be almost like a road trip vibe where it's not just a casual 10-minute drive. And so, on the way to his funeral, the burial part, I made a playlist called Funeral and I put "Funeral" by James Blake, and "The Funeral" by Band of Horses, and "Funeral" by Phoebe Bridgers, and "Funeral Singers" by Sylvan Esso, I think, and I also added "Shaking Hands With Elvis," which is a song by Allison Ponthier, who I love, and 'shaking hands with Elvis' is a euphemism for death. But I was like, "If I'm going to listen to music, let's just go balls to the wall sad and let's do it so on the nose that it's almost light-hearted." Anyway, it was good for the vibes.

Anyway. Also, I call sleeping... I have thought of sleeping as "The pearl zone" for a long time because I got into these sheets once that were so comfortable I felt like a little pearl in an oyster. And so,

pearl is like representative of sleep to me, and I got myself a little pearl ring, and sometimes when I'm, like... I'm off work, it's chill time, I will put on this little pearl ring to be like, "You're in the pearl zone." That one wasn't even a good secret but I... For some reason, it warms my heart.

Okay, let's have some tips. Do you want some life tips? "Alie Ward," you say, "it's been a rough year but look at you, you're still alive. How do you do it?" You're wondering. I'm going to tell you some of the things that are keeping me on the cusp of sanity. So, one thing I do, and I've mentioned this before but people often like, will tweet at me and ask, "What was the thing that you do?" So, I'm going to reiterate it for myself, even if you don't even listen to this, this is for myself.

Okay so, I had a really tough year and, like, years and years ago, listen to the Field Trip episode in the NHM to hear more about it, volunteering at the Natural History Museum changed my whole life. If you're in a rut, if you're feeling kind of rudderless, if you need to reconnect with what makes you happy or makes you feel like who you are, highly recommend if you can spare even a few hours a week, or a month to volunteer somewhere that makes you happy, definitely recommend. It changed my whole life.

But I also do this thing called REM-REM, which is I make a little note for myself on my day planner or whatever that's, like, REM-REM. It stands for: Reading, Exercise, Meditation, and Sleep, that's the second REM. [*hushed voice*] Also, we have an episode about sleep coming up, about dreaming, in the new year, I shouldn't have told you but I'm really excited; January 3rd it comes out. Anyway, REM-REM. Even if you just read one page like in a real book, just reading. Exercise, even if it's just a walk down the block if you can do it, anything that's intentional, a sit up, if you need to. Meditation, even just 5 minutes. Sleep, get in the bed with the lights off, teeth brushed. Just try to do that every day even in the smallest forms and it helps me so much just to know, "Okay, you're taking care of yourself, you haven't neglected yourself completely." And it tamps down that, like, despair that "I can't do something, everything is too much," even if you just do these tiny increments. So, REM-REM definitely gets me out of ruts and is like, a good way to show myself a little bit of care.

Also, I'm going to tell you about my binder. I will tell you again since the new year is coming up and you're like, "Maybe I need an organizational system." Let's talk about the binder. I have a mini binder. It's 8.5 by 5, I think? Whatever a half sheet of paper is, I'm horrified that I'm not doing the math right now. But it's like a half sheet of regular-sized paper and then I just use a hole punch, you can actually unscrew them, and you can shift where the holes go so you can make it into a hole punch for a smaller piece of paper. Three holes, it's a small three-ring binder, and then they sell little dividers... you can get the stuff at like an office supply store or you can order online. And little tabs, I have a tab for calendars, I just print up calendars from templates online and I do two months per page, you know, because they're half sheets. And then I have daily bullet-journal pages that I do my to-do lists. I have a section for podcasts that I want to do, or notes that I take for *Ologies*. I have a section for self-helpy journaling, I have a section for doodling. And then you can just go through, and you can take stuff out as you don't need it.

But you know when you have like a Moleskine or a bound planner and you don't need all the pages anymore but there's some shit in there that you're like, "These are some gold ideas, I don't want to chuck this whole Moleskine in a closet and lose some of these." Well, with a little mini binder, it's about the same size but it's modular, you can take things out. Anyway, I've been using mine since 2017. And I also like to draw little pictures in it of things I did. Like, if I had a really good coffee, I'll draw a little coffee, just doodling in the margins, it's just good, a little treat for your brain.

Anyway, also it's the new year, and I don't know if you have any new year's rituals, but for the last several years, I'll go spend some time by myself on New Year's Eve, in whatever way I can, and I'll write some things that I'm wishing for in the new year, or some goals I have. And I'll write them on

a little piece of paper, maybe I'll light a tiny bit of incense, if we're being honest, and then I'll put them in the jar and I'll seal them in the jar. Then a couple times a year I'll open the jar and be like, "How am I doing on these, any of them come true?" So, that's a fun thing to have and then your jar can sometimes just sit on your shelf, and you go, "Hey, what's up wishes? I see you." And if you're not a big party-on-new-year's person, it's nice to have some kind of little ritual you do like, "Here we go, starting another one!" You know?

I'm also going to tell you about a lantern. [giggles] Okay, this lantern has been life-changing for me. So, when we were sleeping on my sister's floor, right, we were at the end of the hallway where if you turned on the light, the hallway and the entire house, the light would go on and would wake up everyone in the house. So, in order to have everyone be able to sleep we had to turn it off but then the end of the hallway was pitch black. So, I ordered a little LED lantern that's battery operated but it has a regular little light, like a nightlight, you can use it as a lantern to read by, or you can turn the knob again and it turns into this LED flickering flame, right? You would use this like on a set in a community theater production of *Our Town* or something. These might be good for, not even good for camping. They're not robust but they're decorative and they look like a little old lantern. Anyway, so that was our solution to this hallway thing.

But then when we got home, I started using it for myself because I loved the way that the lantern, the little flickering looked, it was like a little brain massage in the corner of my eye. So, here's my lantern system, my lantern is sitting here right now, it's aflicker. So, when I'm working, when I sit down at my desk to work, if I'm fucking off and I'm not on task and I'm procrastinating or whatever, that lantern light is off, right, lantern stays off. Now, if I'm working but I'm not doing the thing that's my main goal for the day, for example, get an episode out, maybe I'm responding to bullshit emails that are not urgent at all, I'm spending too long on Twitter, whatever, looking at my Twitter replies or something, or maybe I'm spending two hours looking for a shelf for my office when I'm like, "I really, really should be doing something else," that light is just in the on, the cold blue light position. It's on, but it's not pleasing.

Then, when I'm working on the actual thing I have to work on, the task that's the goal for the day, I put on the little lantern flickery light. That way, the corner of my eye, I get the little dopamine hit of having this flickering lantern light on, and also, I get the reminder that, "Stay on target, stay on target, you're doing great." But if out of the corner of my eye I see that my lantern is off because I know I'm just dicking around or I see that it's on the cold light, I know like, "Come on, wrap it up, let's get back to the flickery."

So, anything that has three modes of increasing comfort or joy works for this, I think. You could probably do this with three hats, one being the most comfortable. Or there are plenty of lanterns out there that are dual mode, they've got an off, they've got an on, then they've got a flickery. Anyway, it's helping me out a lot. It's also helpful if you have to work around other people. Like Jarrett and my friends know that if my lantern is flickering that means I'm in the zone, maybe show me a picture of a cat later. But it's a nice visual signal. So, if you're working in an office, it might be helpful if your coworkers see you've got the flicker on, come back later when maybe the white light, or when it's off. Anyway, helpful, love it... love the lantern. Lantern, this lantern isn't even alive, and it doesn't know how loved it is.

Okay, another tip that has been helping me a lot, I don't know how you feel about laundry but mine can pile up and become like a laundry tumor in the corner of the room and I am in just denial of it. And so, when I stayed at my sister's, our mattress was right next to the laundry machine. And we went up there so hastily we didn't bring a lot of clothes, so we had an accidental capsule wardrobe, loved that part of it, where we only had a couple pairs of socks and stuff. So, we were doing laundry

every couple of days, right? We'd just gather up the towels in the house along with our socks and pants.

And what happened when I got back home was I realized, I can just do smaller amounts of laundry more often. Where when the laundry basket is full, medium-sized laundry basket, it's full, it's one load. When that thing tops off, when that thing is full, it goes straight in the laundry machine and there's no forgiveness for just more towels around it or on the floor it's just like, "When you see it full, it goes in the washer." Not, "Should I do laundry today? Should I do four loads of laundry on a Saturday?" It's just this kind of never-ending, "It's full, it goes in." There's never a backlog of laundry. So, I have now successfully made laundry easier to do by never having too much of it. So, just a load at a time, every other day or so, instead of just having every two weeks, I have laundry-geddon and I have an absolute apocalypse of folding to do. So anyway, it's a silly thing but it's been really helpful just to have the visual cue of, "The laundry basket is full, it's got to go in," and then I take out the decision making of, "Is now a good time?"

Also, you know how sometimes you'll do laundry, and you'll forget it's in the washer and if you have a front-loading washer that means it smells like dog shit when you're done? Front-loading washers... [deep sigh] I know that you have to clean out all the crevices, which I try to do, I don't know what happened with front-loading washers where it's just acceptable that if you leave your clothes in there for an hour after they've been washed, they're going to smell like assholes. They smell so bad, it's moldy, I don't... I hate it. And I know y'all are going to tweet and leave comments for me and send me emails about how to avoid this, I appreciate them already. I think I have to do a vinegar bath every other time. I'm just saying, it's a machine meant to clean things and the machine smells worse than the dirty laundry going into it. Why?! Why is this happening? It's not your fault and I'm not mad at you.

But I have this system now where when I put a load of laundry in, I take the empty laundry basket that I just unloaded, and I put it somewhere obnoxious; I put it on top of the kitchen table, I put it on top of the car in the garage, I put it somewhere awkward where I will see it. That way the next way I pop into the garage, the next time I walk by the kitchen table or whatever, I'll see the laundry basket empty, and I'll go, "That's right, I put a load in, better go get that thing out before it smells like mildew." So, that's been helpful.

Okay, I'm going to reiterate my mom's sleep tip for anyone that hasn't heard it. It's called the Fancy Nancy, we talk about it in the Somnology episode but if you're having trouble sleeping, think of a category of anything like desserts, or bands, or characters in the *Lord of the Rings* universe or whatever, fruits. Think of something that starts with A, something that starts with B, something that starts with C. Works every time to get me to fall asleep so fast. I hear so many people say that the Fancy Nancy changed their lives, so, props to my mom, Nancy, for teaching us that.

Another thing that's changed my life a little, tiny bit, to be honest, is microfiber cloths. You know how you have a dirty screen and you've got your disgusting fingerprints all over it and you know that you're not supposed to use Windex and a paper towel on it and it's just kind of mildly gross. Microfiber cloths that they give you when you buy a pair of glasses or something. I understand that those are for lenses and for glass and I should have known better. But I didn't trust that they would work on screens like they do... what a thrill. It gets fingerprints off screens and smudges off screens so well that I look forward to cleaning my laptop screen, which is not a thing I ever thought I would consider a hobby but here we are.

And sometimes, if I see other people's laptop screens that are all dirty, augh, what I wouldn't give just to freeze time, go over there with a little microfiber cloth and just [makes squeaking noises] clean it off. It has the same kind of oddly satisfying as when you watch those timelapse videos of

someone cleaning upholstery. It's that kind of satisfying, you know? So, a little microfiber cloth on your screen, use it on your phone. AUGH, it's a way to look at it and say "Wow, how clean is that?" That took two seconds. Microfiber cloths, love 'em.

I will tell you that I still can't type. If you've been following this podcast for a while, you know that I don't know how to type. I mean, I can do it, I can very quickly hunt and peck, but I've been writing professionally, I was a journalist for a decade before this and I don't know how to do keyboarding. And I didn't know that the knobs on the F and the J were intentional, I thought they were just a manufacturing defect on my computer, I did not know... I just learned what a home row was. And I've been meaning to take typing classes forever and I just started. I said to myself, "I'm sick of this shit, I can think a lot faster than I can write, I make so many typos, this is my year people." So, I just started taking typing lessons on TypingClub.com, and the last lesson I took, it said that I was typing 9 words per minute, so I think that's good. I think it's pretty good. [*"It's not good."*]

Okay, this is the last life tip I'm going to give you and it's kind of meaty, all right? So, stay with me here. But you know, hasn't been the easiest year, I've had to try to come up with ways to continue to be optimistic, and positive, and look on the bright side, and try to look forward to things, and to appreciate the things in my life that are good, right. And so, we did Eudemology episode with Dr. Laurie Santos last September, we did an episode on Awesomeology with Neil Pasricha who writes the *Books of Awesome*; he has a new book out, it's great, it was all about gratitude and the science behind it. So, those were two episodes with people talking about the science of well-being and what scientists have found are good practices for your brain. And the world is not always the best place, I get it. If you're feeling overwhelmed and tired, we're on year three of a pandemic, it's been incredibly trying, so anything that we can do scientifically to help our brains, if science says it works, I will try it.

So, I kind of started doing things that were recommended by scientists just in terms of a way to meditate, or things to think about, especially in the morning when I'm starting my day. So, here's what I do. I think about what the ideal day would look like. Like, if today went really well, what would it look like? What would the vibe be? What went well yesterday? What was something good that happened yesterday? Perhaps it was surprising; you can always find something. And then I remind myself that I deserve time to sit there and think about this stuff, I deserve to have a healthy relationship with my body, I deserve love because everyone does and sometimes, we think we don't and that's a bunch of horse shit, but it's really ingrained in us. I deserve rest and I deserve to enjoy my life. So, I try to remember those things, I deserve those things. Because it's really easy to say to yourself that you don't deserve any number of those things and then we walk around just suffering needlessly.

And then I think of five things that I'm grateful for, can be anything, anything, *anything*. It can be your partner, it can be finding a toilet when you really have to pee, or other things, it can be anything. You can be grateful for anything, five things. And then five people that I'm sending some kind of love to, just in my brain, just thinking of five people. Maybe it's someone that you... don't always enjoy, try to send them some, just thinking about them, send them some love. Maybe it's someone you know going through a hard time, maybe it's... whatever, someone who you really just appreciate. So, I think of five people I send love to. So, those are three fives.

And then I do three threes. The threes are, three things I'm looking forward to in the future, it can be my next cup of tea, it can be a trip that I have scheduled in 6 months, it can be anything. Three things I'm looking forward to. Three goals I have for the day, whether it's just, like, take a shower, research an episode, whatever, three goals that I have that I would love to get done that day. And then three things I like about myself, three attributes I have because, again, it's really easy to go

around as a perfectionist, or as someone who maybe is sensitive or gets down on yourself and just to have it engrained, "I'm a big turd, I'm a big walking turd in pants." And that's not you, there's something great about you and you maybe not, perhaps not used to telling yourself what it is. So, three things about you that you appreciate, as if you were a friend of yours. And then that's what I do. So, that's three fives and three threes.

So, I start with, what would today look like if it went well? Try to imagine it. Then I go into what worked yesterday. Then I do three fives: things I deserve, things I'm grateful for, people I'm sending love to, those are fives. Three threes: goals, things I'm looking forward to, and things I like about myself.

Anyway, to remember this, I actually made a beaded necklace out of beads, kind of like a rosary, but not Catholic and based on neuroscience. So, I made a little necklace, and this helped a lot when things were really tough taking care of my pop. It helped me to once, sometimes twice a day, just try to think of those things to put myself into a better headspace. So, those are my tips for this year.

After the break, we're going to get into Patreon questions submitted by patrons. It's kind of an AMA, we'll see what they asked, you ready? Oh, but first, we're going to give to a charity. We'll give to the Trevor Project which is a great organization, and they work to prevent self-harm and suicide in LGBTQ+ and questioning teens, in particular. We've given to them in the past but let's give to them. Okay. All right, after the break, your questions.

[Ad Break]

Look, here we are, it's just me and you again. Hi, it's us. Let's do some Patreon questions, you want to? Yes. You said yes? Perfect.

Spencer James Parks: How much has your brain grown since doing this podcast?

I think my brain has grown a lot of facts. But the growth that I feel like my brain has experienced the most through this podcast is honestly through feedback from listeners. I've learned so much about different types of people's lived experiences, and their perspectives, and how important that is to relay to other people who might not have access to people who have had those experiences. So, really like, trying to be a voice and educate other people to be more compassionate of other people's perspectives and experiences has been kind of my favorite growth point of this podcast. And so, yeah, I really love that.

Spencer also wants to know if I have a favorite candy... [*deep breath, quiet voice*] Favorite candy... Do you know what Chick-O-Sticks are? They're kind of like the inside of a Butterfinger, but without the chocolate and sometimes I could really go for a Chick-O-Stick. I introduced Jarrett to them recently and he went bonkers for them, and I was like, "That's the correct response."

Phoebe Teskey wants to know: What inspires you to paint?

Phoebe! Phoebe knows I used to be a painter. I haven't painted in so long but I started... kind of my career took a weird trajectory because I started painting on scraps of wood that I would rescue from dumpsters and use, at first, Tempera, which is a very unstable and very cheap... it's like finger paint, it's what you buy at a- I used to buy it at a teacher's supply store because it was used for preschoolers but it was cheap and the wood from a dumpster was free, once you subtracted the cost of the Lysol that you would have to douse it in. So, I used to paint a lot and I had my first ever art show at a flea market, the Fairfax flea market. I sold my first painting, this is how weird LA is, to Frankie Muniz, from *Malcolm in the Middle*, bought one of my first paintings and I can't even remember what the painting was, I would have to sit here and rack my brain. But I kind of would do paintings that looked like old signs and they were pretty goofy. I haven't painted in years and years,

but I recently set up a new office space for myself and I'm hoping to put an easel in here and maybe have some more time to paint. But I really miss it.

But yeah, I started illustrating for the *LA Weekly*, and that led to me writing for them on this very, very random kind of chance assignment. They were like, "If you can get yourself to the Tegan and Sara concert, we have a free ticket for you, the only catch is that you have to write a review." And I was like, "I will leave my house in one minute if that's true," and so I wrote a Tegan and Sara review and that started my writing, kind of, career. But I was very, very lucky to get my illustrations in that newspaper. So yes, what inspires me to paint? Usually like a play on words or a life situation that I want to illustrate.

Shelly Moody wants to know: What was your childhood, I want to be a ____ when I grow up, dream?

You know what it kind of was, was science communication and I didn't know what that meant but I really wanted to make some kind of documentary, or do some kind of writing or performance but that also involved science but I didn't know that science communication was a thing. So, this is pretty on the nose, I've got to say, which is why I maybe am too much of a perfectionist and I get too anxious about making the episodes the best they can be. It's because I get that this is such a dream job and I do *not* want to fuck it up. And so, I get scared of that. And so, y'all being here means a lot to me, of course.

Kevin Parichan says: Still waiting for the Gremmie merch. Rozelyn Hesby says: Ditto.

We don't have any Gremmie merch but you're correct that we do need some. She is ruthless in her quests for cheese so maybe we can do something cheese-like? We'll see.

Sarah Grace wants to know: What's your best post-breakup advice?

And Sarah Grace, that's a great question. You know, I've been around the block, I've been through plenty of breakups. My best post-breakup advice is, go on hikes if you can... I think it's probably good to get good microbes in your lungs and to see trees. I also think volunteering somewhere is a great idea, it's a good way to turn a new corner, you know? Don't look at their social media, don't do it. I know we're all science-minded here, we love a rabbit hole. Don't look at your ex's social media, there's nothing there that you need to see. No good can come of it and you're only buying yourself trouble. Spend that time writing a book or sitting in a park somewhere, I think.

And also, if they suck, and if they're not for you at that point, then you're better off without them. Just always know, you're way better off without someone who doesn't appreciate you. You're never better off twisting someone's arm to be with you or being with someone that you're not really stoked about. And a lot of times, you know, I've been through breakups and then the guy has found the perfect person for them, and I think, "I could not have done that," or "I have been so much better off." So, it'll work out in the end. And the nicer you are to yourself and the happier you are with your own life, that's going to be a super important foundation for whatever relationship you get in. Because if you hate yourself and you don't like your life, no relationship can be the best that it can be, you know? Okay.

Joe_S 1969 wants to know: What food would you refuse to eat as a child/teen that you love to eat now?

Uhhh... smoked oysters in a can. Jr. Roloff is a patron and he sent me some to my PO Box and I'm eating 'em. Oh, I eat them. They look very gross, they look very bad. You pull back this tin and then there's this kind of greenish yellow, it looks like bile but it's oil and you drain that off and then there are maybe two dozen thumb-sized smoked oysters that look turd adjacent. They're smokey and fishy and they are not something most people like to eat. Jarrett is absolutely confounded by my

family's consumption of them. We put them on Ritz crackers with a little schmear of cream cheese and a little, *doink!* Kind of like a cherry on a sundae but it's an oyster. And are they for everyone? Probably not. But oysters are among the more sustainable seafood so go for it. And tinned fish is having a moment.

Caroline Wight wants to know how I prepare my coffee.

Half-caf now, lately. I found that just going to half caffeinated has helped with my mood and anxiety a lot... a lot, a lot. So, I do half-caf and I'm not above a powdered creamer. I prefer a liquid creamer, like Chobani has a plant-based vanilla that's delish. But if I had a choice between a really fancy coffee and a gas station coffee, if I were being completely honest with you, if I were hooked up to machines that would test me for lies or shock me were I to be lying, I would prefer a gas station coffee. Because you can a lot of decaf, I don't know how long that decaf's been in that carafe, it's none of my business, but I'll drink it anyway, and then top it off with maybe some French vanilla coffee, couple of pumps of those you know, half gallon creamers you just pump, pump, pump, pump if you can, no one's counting. And I find that delicious. So, I hope that's not disappointing.

AnnAlien wants to know: I frequently find myself wondering if you really do know the answers to the questions you ask scientists and what percentage of the info is usually brand new to you?

A lot of the info is brand new to me! I wouldn't ask if I knew. Sometimes, I'll ask a question and be like, "Right?" if I think that's where it's going. But for the most part, I really am asking not-smart questions because they are basic questions that we maybe think we know the answers to, but we don't fully. So yeah, no, it's a real one. So, I hope that makes you feel better.

Kelsey Pudder wants to know: How do you stay so positive?

I try to do mind tricks to myself to put myself into better moods. Also wants to know: Is a taco a sandwich? And Kelsey, the answer to that is no, a taco is a taco. And I think if it is enclosed on three sides, it's not a sandwich. A pita pocket is a pita pocket, it's not a sandwich. I think if you've got a top and a bottom, you got a sandwich. I actually bristle at open-faced sandwiches; I think that's bullshit. Don't tell me it's an open-faced sandwich. If you've got a second piece of bread that comes with it and I put the top on it, then you've got sandwich. But if it's an open-faced sandwich, that's a toast. Don't tell me it's a sandwich and withhold a piece of bread, that's not what we're here for, don't lie to me like that, it's embarrassing. But I think a taco is... not a sandwich. Fight in the comments.

Margaret Aisenbrey wants to know: How do you decide what episodes to do? Is it the topic that calls to you and then the ologist appears, or do you decide because you found a cool ologist?

Mostly, it's the topic, I think. Every once in a while, someone is like, "I've got a great person for you," and then I've got to figure out, "What would the ology be for this?" And I'll look, and look, and look, and hope that I find that ology somewhere in the literature. That clingy clacking was me reaching for this book, there's *The Aldrich Dictionary of Phobias and Other Word Families*, and they got a lot of ologies in here.

Sometimes I'll just thumb through and the weirder it is, the more excited I get about it usually because I just get so excited that there's an ology for somethings that you just wouldn't... filmology is the film industry. I didn't know that... Augh, filicology, the biology of ferns. I'd do that. If I... pshh no. I can't believe I just missed this! Genephiladeltiology [phonetic] is Christmas and birthday cards and the collection of such! Now, we have a Deltiology episode that's about postcards, so that's kind of deltiology-adjacent but this is about Christmas and birthday cards. I wonder if that's about all greeting cards in general? Anyway, so yeah, I just think, immediately there's so many questions I'd want to ask for all of these. Illicibiology [ph.] is the biology of the aged, okay. Yeah, there's a ton.

So, typically I find the ology first and then I look for who the expert is. Like, let's say I were looking to do that fern episode, right, I would put that ology as a search term in Twitter or Instagram and I'd see who is using it, hashtag to self-identify, that's how I found Cole Imperi the thanatologist who, by the way, has remained a really good friend; we're going to go hang out and go away to the desert on New Year's together. And other times, I will put like, "fern expert" and then look on Google News and see what articles are coming up. Or I'll go onto databases like ResearchGate, and I'll put in some terms about, you know, within the realm of fern science and see who is publishing papers on it. So, that's how I find people. But sometimes someone is just like, "This is a great ologist and you need to know them."

Ayshia Yaeger wants to know: How has your journey with sleep procrastination been? Have you been treating yourself better?

And for the most part, yes. I have a way better relationship with sleep than I used to. If you listen to the Somnology episodes, which are great, with Dr. Chris Winter, I have had a problem with sleep procrastination for a really long time. I always feel like I haven't earned sleep, that's how I used to feel. And those episodes, that and the Chronobiology episode really scared the shit out of me in terms of, your brain needs sleep, it's not cute to withhold it, I'm not any tougher, I'm making myself weaker and my brain really needs it. So, I've had a way better relationship with it.

I will say, I know I'm going away for a few days for New Year's, and I have a really, really big episode coming out on January 3rd, it's about dreams. [*inhales*] It's a *big* episode and so I was up until like 4 in the morning working on that last night. So, right now, sleep is not great, but I'm really trying to figure out how to have a better schedule where I get up in the morning and I get to "work," my office, and then leave at a certain time. I have a difficult time maintaining that routine.

Bryant Bainbridge wants to know: Clearly you are a woman with both feet on the gas pedal (perhaps) as you tend to all things behind the *Ologies* scenes while pursuing your 300 other areas of personal compulsion and gravity (true). So, where in the natural world do you go to simply let it all wash away and recharge your oversized lithium batteries?

That's a good question. Probably sleeping is the place where I feel like I try to get some sanity back. I also, this year, I'd started to belong to a local botanical garden, never done that before but it feels tight, it's great. I have a pass, I can go in the garden whenever I want, I can bring a friend, if I want to go in the garden for 10 minutes and just stroll and sit there with a to-do list or a book and then leave, I can do that, if I want to spend half the afternoon there. So, if you have a local botanical garden and it is a place you like to be, consider asking for that as a birthday gift, like a membership there, or get it for yourself. 10 out of 10, recommend. I've never belonged to a botanical garden before, and it feels very indulgent in the best ways.

Okay, one more question. Cara B wants to know: How many countries have you traveled to and what was your favorite? And Scott Sheldon wants to know: Where is somewhere either domestic, or international, or both you haven't traveled to yet? Countries, I'm not sure, probably a handful, maybe six or seven.

But I will say, as long as we're talking travel and geography, I've been working on *Innovation Nation*, we just are finishing up our 10th season on it, it's on CBS. And over the last 10 seasons I've gone to a lot of states for work. So, I've been to 48 of them, people, 48 of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. I have not been to West Virginia or New Mexico, and I have to check those off my list, I have a map on the back of my binder, everything is shaded in except those two and I feel like I want to end in New Mexico because I feel like I could go to some kind of spa there afterward and maybe have a chill day. But also, there's a skunk expert in the wilds of New Mexico who doesn't really even

have internet service and I need to talk to him. He's the skunk guy, he's like the Merlin Tuttle of skunks. And so, I've been waiting this whole pandemic to talk to him. So, West Virginia, send me your scientists. Maybe once the airline debacle of 2022 is over, I can bounce around to those two and get a lot of interviews in one. But those are the two places that I'm really looking to hit.

So, the rest of- If anyone else submitted a question on this thread, I'm going to be answering them on a video that I'll post, that's for the Pal Tier and up. And I hope this was somehow helpful. I don't do these types of episodes often, I never just come at you and just, like, blab like this, but I hope that you have taken away some things from it and I hope it helps in 2023.

Honestly, it hasn't been an easy year for me, but I do feel like I've come out of it a little bit stronger, where I now feel like I'm better prepared to help friends who are going through the same thing, and I also have experienced pain that I dreaded for a long time, and I know that I got through it okay. And I also know, y'all taught me, that I'm going to be okay, like, if I need to take a week here and there to tend to personal stuff, you are still here, and you've been really vocal about that and that's fucking awesome. I am so lucky to have a job where you all are kind of like my bosses and you're so understanding, and I appreciate that so much.

I'm also super lucky to have Jarrett, you know, in my life. We got married before a lot of this went down, and I wasn't a person who really looked forward to marriage, it wasn't a big life goal of mine, but he asked me, and I was like, "Yeah, we are family, let's do that." And it has been really great being married the last year and a half and the things that he did, the ways that he showed up for me and my family, are just really, really heartening so I feel really, really lucky for that. Actually, someone did ask if we were going to have... Rozelyn Hesby wanted to know: When can we expect a song collab with you and Jarrett? And you know what, I'm going to put it at the end of this episode but Jarrett recently made a song that's wonderful and I did contribute a lyric to it because it was something that we were just goofing around, singing on the couch late one night and then he made a real song of it and it's great, so I'll put that at the very end.

Yeah, so I feel better equipped to handle life in the year coming up than I have ever before and part of that is just understanding that that life balance is really important and just trying to look for the good amid difficult circumstances. And also trying to realize that some of that good is in people around you, and people who are also going through tough things, and learning from them and how they went through it, even if it's just a podcaster with messy hair and a LED lantern, like, hi, we're buds and I'm here for you too. So, anyway, that's the 2023 episode.

You can follow us on Twitter @Ologies or I'm @AlieWard on Twitter and Instagram, *Ologies* is on Instagram @Ologies. If you get merch at OlogiesMerch.com tag a picture OlogiesMerch, tag a picture #OlogiesMerch, that way we can repost you on Mondays. If you make any art while you listen to this, you can tag it, #OlogiesArt and we'll repost it on Fridays. I'm also on TikTok. Y'all I did it, I'm finally doing TikTok and I put up a Meteorology TikTok, I'm @Alie_Ologies. I put up a Meteorology TikTok, it took me like an hour to film, it got 3,000 views. And then a few days later I put up a short video of me opening a roll of biscuits and that has a million and I don't understand TikTok at all but I'm trying to learn. So, say hi there.

Thank you Erin Talbert who admin's the *Ologies* Podcast Facebook group. Also thank you Shannon Feltus and Boni Dutch for the assists on that, they host a podcast called *You Are That*. Thank you, Emily White of The Wordary who makes our transcripts and Caleb Patton who bleeps them. Thank you, Kelly R. Dwyer who updates our website, she can make yours. Thank you, Susan Hale and Noel Dilworth, we could not do this show without you, they do so much. Thank you, Zeke Rodrigues

Thomas of Mindjam Media who helps with *Smologies*. Thank you, Mercedes Maitland of Maitland Audio who also does *Smologies* and is taking over editing duties for Jarrett Sleeper of Mindjam Media, who is wonderful and amazing and whose song you will hear very soon. Nick Thorburn wrote the theme music.

And, I guess, if you stick around to the end of the secrets episode, you're going to hear a secret again. Okay, the secret is, in 2023 I'm working on two extra podcasts and I'm not quite sure when they'll be launching, but I'm excited about doing them. Formats are a little bit different but I'm hoping to get them up in the first quarter of this year. We'll see folks, we'll see. The CBS show I've been doing for 10 years might be coming to an end, so that might be the end of my travels so I might have a little bit of extra bandwidth. We'll see. We've got some stuff in the hopper, all right? We're going to do our best. First things first, get a little sleep. Okay? You deserve it, you'll see. Stick around until after the theme music. Okay, happy new year. Berbye!

Jarrett sings with piano chords and light baby talk:

It's okay to be tired

It's okay to be tired

Sometimes you have to say, that's all I've got today

It's okay to be tired

Time to put your tiny stinky head

Snuggled in your tiny, stinky bed

Now you can breathe in deep

Let yourself drift to sleep

It's okay to be tired

It's okay to be tired

It's okay to be tired

Today you did your best

Now it is time to rest

It's okay to be tired

Transcribed by Aveline Malek at TheWordary.com

Things we discussed:

A donation went to [the Trevor Project](#)

"[It's Okay to Be Tired](#)" by Jarrett Sleeper

Follow Alie's TikTok: https://www.tiktok.com/@alie_ologies

Follow @AlieWard on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

Follow @Ologies on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

REM REM stands for: Read, Exercise, Meditation + Sleep

Five and Threes: What if today went well? What went well yesterday? You deserve (5): Time, a healthy relationship with your body, love, a happy life, and rest. Things you're grateful for (5); People you send cosmic love to (5); Things you're looking forward to (3); Goals for the day (3); Things you like about yourself (3)

The Fancy Nancy: fall asleep by picking a category of something (desserts, movie titles, cities...) and then list examples starting with each letter of the alphabet

[Mini-binder](#)

[The lantern I have](#)

Other episodes you might enjoy:

[Eudemonology \(HAPPINESS\)](#)

[Awesomeology \(GRATITUDE FOR LITTLE THINGS\)](#)

[Field Trip: How to Change Your Life Via the Natural History Museum](#)

[Field Trip: I Go France and Learn Weird France Stuff](#)

[Life Advice: For anyone who is tired](#)

[100th Episode: Best Advice I've gotten from Ologists](#)

Funeral playlist: "Funeral" by James Blake; "The Funeral" by Band of Horses, "Funeral" by Phoebe Bridgers, "Funeral Singers" by Sylvan Esso, "Shaking Hands with Elvis" by Allison Ponthier

Ologies info:

[Sponsors of Ologies](#)

[Transcripts and bleeped episodes](#)

[Smologies \(short, classroom-safe\) episodes](#)

[Become a patron of Ologies](#) for as little as a buck a month

[OlogiesMerch.com](#) has hats, shirts, masks, totes!

Follow @Ologies on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

Follow @AlieWard on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

Editing by [Jarrett Sleeper](#) of [MindJam Media](#)

Transcripts by Emily White of [The Wordary](#)

Website by [Kelly R. Dwyer](#)

Theme song by Nick Thorburn