

**Interview mit Tim, Couchsurfing-Host, persönlich, 02.05.2017**  
**Interviewerin: LS, Transkription: GS, Korrektur der Transkription: LS**

Das Interview wurde in zwei Teilen geführt, da es eine Unterbrechung gab. In diesem Transkript sind beide Teile zusammengefügt worden.

Luise: So let's start. In general, what would you or what do you associate with Couchsurfing? Just when you hear the name. #00:00:13-9#

Tim: Making friends. #00:00:16-6#

Luise: Okay. #00:00:15-5#

Tim: (laughter) #00:00:16-1#

Luise: That, that's actually cool. So you would say you actually got to make some friends? It's not about like staying at someone's place for an amount of time? #00:00:26-8#

Tim: No, right, so I've only hosted. I've never surfed, but I have found that I have made friends from all over the world and I would say that every day I receive some sort of message or text from somebody I've met, from one of my hosts. #00:00:45-1#

Luise: Yeah. #00:00:46-2#

Tim: So, on my birthday or Christmas. I have lots of friends now, so. #00:00:51-7#

Luise: Cool, but why, why did you never surf yourself? #00:00:55-1#

Tim: A lot of it has to do with age and lifestyle. And when I travel I like to be comfortable and have privacy and come and go and things. And, well, I enjoy hosting, as a host I, I'm sort of in control (laughter). #00:01:11-7#

Luise: Yeah, but I totally agree on that. I prefer hosting to surfing, too. #00:01:18-1#

Tim: Yeah. And so I know I'm rather clean and I like safety and I like quiet and things. And so I provide those things for my surfers, but I think it's a little harder to go and travel and guarantee those things for myself, so. And I'm at this stage in life where I can afford to stay in a hotel or at an Airbnb or something and I like the comforts of that, so. #00:01:42-8#

Luise: Yeah. #00:01:42-4#

Tim: Yeah, and I look at hosting as sort of an altruistic thing and that and the majority of the people I've hosted are young and they are usually in a gap year or they are in college traveling and it's my way of giving back and allowing people who may not be able to afford to travel the opportunity to see (*name of his place of residence*), [redacted] [Erläutert werden ein paar Eigenschaften der Stadt. Geschwärzt zum Schutz der Anonymität] and they wouldn't be able to come if they couldn't do this. #00:02:09-8#

Luise: Yeah. #00:02:09-3#

Tim: So. That's sort of my philosophy. #00:02:12-7#

Luise: So can you remember the initial moment when you signed up? #00:02:17-8#

Tim: Yes, so. It happened a few years ago when I had met a friend, a guy from Italy, who was moving here and he ... because it's so expensive, we had met out in a bar, at a, at a club, actually, and we became friendly while he was staying here. And he wanted to move to the US. And he went back home and he kept, sending me messages saying: "Would you, could I live with you?" #00:02:47-3#

Luise: Wow. #00:02:48-2#

Tim: And I said// #00:02:49-6#

Luise: (laughter) #00:02:50-0#

Tim: "No. No, 'cause I have a one bedroom". #00:02:53-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:02:54-4#

Tim: And then he said, "Well, would you marry me?" And I said, "No". He's like, "I pay you whatever". You know, he really wanted to live here and be a citizen. And I said, "No". #00:03:01-8#

Luise: So no romantic feelings involved? #00:03:03-3#

Tim: No romantic, it was like he was like willing to pay. And // #00:03:06-0#

Luise: Wow. #00:03:06-5#

Tim: He wasn't able to find a cheap place. And I said, "Here is what I'll do: I will let you live in my living room, month to month, until you find a place, but not permanently". #00:03:17-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:03:17-1#

Tim: You know, so he came and we moved things around, and he went to IKEA and he bought a small single bed and he put it in the living room. #00:03:25-3#

Luise: Oh, but that's so kind. #00:03:26-9#

Tim: And, yeah, and so he lived there and ... it lasted about two months and he found a place to go live and he moved out and I had this small bed in my living room. #00:03:35-8#

Luise: (laughter) Yeah. #00:03:39-2#

Tim: And (laughter), and then I met some friends who were hosting Couchsurfers and they told me about it and then I started thinking about maybe renting on Airbnb, 'cause I probably could make some money. And then I thought, "No, I'll just try this Couchsurfing thing first", and I hosted and ... just started to really enjoy it, so. I have to add like ... you know, from a personal perspective, I have lost a lot of friends that have moved away because of the economics of the city. And a lot of my friends are married and partnered, so I end up a lot, have a lot more alone time than I've ever had in my life. And I found that Couchsurfing allowed me to have people in that gave me friendship and company when I was ((really in)), kind of in a bad place in my life, so. #00:04:35-8#

Luise: Yeah. Wow, but that's, that's so nice. #00:04:41-8#

Tim: [starts to cry a little] Sorry. #00:04:41-5#

Luise: Oh, that's alright! #00:04:42-9#

Tim: Yah. #00:04:43-7#

Luise: Thanks for sharing. That's, so it was really like more of a life-saver// #00:04:48-9#

Tim: Yeah. #00:04:48-4#

Luise: For you. Wow. That's so cool. And can you remember like one, one moment that was particularly special or beautiful or amazing? #00:04:58-5#

Tim: Oh, many. But one, my friend (*name of the friend*), who's like a little brother to me now, he came Labor Day weekend a few years ago and he ... he is this dirty, little hippie// #00:05:09-9#

Luise: (laughter) #00:05:10-6#

Tim: Who had hitchhiked to, we would have seen like opposites. But he stayed a weekend and then he left and then he went down to LA and he came back a month later and he stayed with me for a month and ... like he was kind of a life-saver. #00:05:28-5#

Luise: Yeah, wow. But how, how do you, can you remember how it feels like to open up your like personal space to someone you just met? #00:05:38-0#

Tim: It's exciting. #00:05:38-9#

Luise: Yeah. #00:05:39-6#

Tim: In some ways ... And I found it's like a social experiment in many ways and that I found there is people who I don't like right away, I can tell. And I usually say I can only host a night or two, just because if I don't like them it's easier to say like, "Well, bye!" #00:05:58-0#

Luise: (laughter) #00:05:58-0#

Tim: But then I often found that there's some that I've hosted for a week or two because they come and there's like this instant connection. Like the moment they walk in the door, like you feel like you've known them, like there is this instant connection. And that's pretty amazing. And I think there's something about being in your home ... like I equated sort of like dating in some ways. And not I'm meaning that it turns to sex, but I mean that sometimes you go on a date and you sit with somebody and it's like a job interview// #00:06:29-1#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. #00:06:29-6#

Tim: And it's awkward and there's walls there. But there is something about inviting somebody into your home where they live far away and they are in your personal space and the walls come down because you know they gonna leave, so you don't have to be guarded. You are not expecting to go on a date, you are not expecting to be like in a relationship, so it allows just like openness quickly. And// #00:06:54-4#

Luise: Yeah. #00:06:55-2

Tim: And the vulnerability of being in a home that allows these walls to come down and intimate conversations happen very quickly// #00:07:07-2#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. #00:07:07-9#

Tim: And so it's really fascinating to me and fascinating how some people, there's this instant connection. #00:07:15-1#

Luise: Yeah. #00:07:16-1#

Tim: And then others, there's this awkward and which is like, "Well, I can get through the night// #00:07:22-6#

Luise: (laughter) #00:07:22-3#

Tim: "And thankfully I go to work in the morning, so, I'm gonna go to bed early" (laughter). #00:07:27-1#

Luise: (laughter) #00:07:28-8#

Tim: "Good night!" (laughter) #00:07:29-2#

Luise: That's right. Yeah, but I, I know that feeling. I think sometimes it's more, it feels more easy to open up to a stranger than to a person you know for like many years. #00:07:42-6#

Tim: Yeah, 'cause you are not being lost. There's no risk or// #00:07:44-5#

Luise: Yeah. #00:07:45-5#

Tim: Not as much to lose. #00:07:45-8#

Luise: And maybe they can like provide you with another perspective or another point of view which you, yeah, wouldn't have thought about. #00:07:54-3#

Tim: Absolutely, absolutely. #00:07:56-1#

Luise: But at the same time can you remember a situation which felt like insecure or where you were// #00:08:04-8#

Tim: Absolutely. #00:08:04-9#

Luise: Yeah? #00:08:04-8#

Tim: Absolutely. ... And it's a little awkward ... 'cause it deals with some sexuality. #00:08:14-5#

Luise: Yeah? #00:08:14-8#

Tim: So, that, I hosted a guy from, from Paris, but he was originally from Tunisia and he was ... identified as Jewish and when we met it was ... It's a really embarrassing kind of story! But he had messaged me that day, said he needed a last minute place to stay and I, that he had been kicked out of his previous host, he was sleeping in his car. #00:08:49-0#

Luise: Okay. #00:08:50-0#

Tim: He had rented a car. So I went and we met, we had coffee and right away my gaydar was tripped, I thought, "This guy is gay, but he identifies as straight". But I, you know, I just thought, "Maybe he's just, isn't out or whatever". And I am a sex therapist, a psychologist. And he said, "Well, I chose you because I'm interested in what you do", and as we talked I felt this is a person who's exploring and questioning (...). And long story short ... I guess, long story short: He started telling me disclosing things about his life, how he had sex with his best friend in high school and different things and ... but, and we went out, proceeded to get really drunk that night and really obnoxious. And we came back to my place, I was very uncomfortable with him and he was in my personal space. He came back into my bedroom and I was undressed and he took off his boxers, standing there and, and he was naked, we were both naked, and I walked him up to the bed and I put him in the bed and I said, "You go to sleep" ... And the next morning when we woke up, he was very uncomfortable, he was like, walking around in his blanket like embarrassed, and like, his like – you know, I could tell like, maybe now that he was sober he was regretful or whatever. But nothing have happened! #00:10:13-3#

Luise: Yeah. #00:10:12-6#

Tim: But he, he left. And I should add that the reason he was kicked out of his previous host was 'cause he was staying with a nudist in (*name of a city district*) and they were sharing a bed, and on the first night, he said the guy, he woke up and the guy was trying to give him oral sex. #00:10:28-8#

Luise: Oh no. #00:10:29-9#

Tim: And then he said the next night, when he woke up the guy was giving him oral sex again. And then he told him to stop and then the guy ((has)) kicked him out. #00:10:37-5#

Luise: Yeah. #00:10:38-2#

Tim: And I said to him, "That's horrible, you know, that's assault, that's exploitation. That's not right. You have a safe space to stay with me", etc. But then I realized like ... he ended up reporting me as unsafe. #00:10:52-2#

Luise: What? #00:10:53-2#

Tim: Yeah, 'cause he ended up writing me this horrible notes saying like, "You were naked and I heard you"// #00:10:57-6#

Luise: What? #00:10:58-4#

Tim: Like this is where it gets embarrassing, like this is totally// #00:11:01-2#

Luise: But that's insane. #00:11:02-5#

Tim: Well, it is insane, but ... so I had my door closed and I, I was watching some porn and he could hear it. #00:11:10-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:11:10-7#

Tim: So the next day he, well, he – so, I should ((prep the step)). When we left the next morning I was very uncomfortable with him because of how drunk he got, he have gotten and how he was like in my personal space and I realized like, "This is a person who is working through some issues"// #00:11:24-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:11:25-5#

Tim: And this is what I did wrong. This is what I owed. So when he left he took his backpack for the day, he was maybe gonna come back that night, I blocked him 'cause I didn't // #00:11:35-4#

Luise: Yeah. #00:11:35-4#

Tim: I didn't wanna deal with him. And that wasn't right of me. That wasn't amicable. I should have been more honest and said, "I'm not comfortable://" #00:11:42-4#

Luise: Yeah. #00:11:42-4#

Tim: "I'd rather you find somewhere else to stay". Well, it hurt his feelings, obviously. And he got angry and then he wrote – I don't know what he said 'cause Couchsurfing wouldn't tell me and so they blocked me and they told me// #00:11:54-3#

Luise: They just// #00:11:54-3#

Tim: I'm no longer welcome. And they// #00:11:57-2#

Luise: They just blocked you without any explanation at all? #00:11:58-6#

Tim: And that is their mode of operation. And I understand. Because they are a very small operation, they have over seven million members, they don't have the time or resources to look into he said-he said-sort of situations. They don't want bad press, they don't want unsafe things happening and so there's, they've got seven million other members, just – block. #00:12:19-4#

Luise: Yeah. #00:12:18-9#

Tim: You know, they are about making money and keep things safely, you know? #00:12:21-6#

Luise: Wow. #00:12:23-2#

Tim: So he, I, I suspected that, that it was him and I suspected that he wrote something. And so a few months later he wrote me a very vile message via WhatsApp that said, "You are a son of a bitch who's gonna burn in hell. You said you are a sex therapist, but you are disgusting homosexual"// #00:12:39-0#

Luise: Oh my god! #00:12:40-8#

Tim: "You had me into your house and you were naked and I heard you watching porn and you say you wanna help people, but you're gonna go to hell and bla bla bla bla". #00:12:49-5#

Luise: Oh my god. I'm super sorry. #00:12:50-2#

Tim: And I thought this was an unsafe person because, I thought, who would go into ((whom)) and sleep naked in somebody's bed? #00:12:57-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:12:58-5#

Tim: Look, I understand like maybe it happens one night and ... hand your, you know, it's a nudist lifestyle, it doesn't make it sex and maybe you were trusting, but if the man gives a blowjob, why would you get back in bed with him a second night? (laughter) #00:13:13-2#

Luise: Yeah, exactly. #00:13:13-6#

Tim: You know? And then I thought the way he was coming on to me, the way he was disclosing his own sexual questioning, I thought, "This is a person who's pushing the limits, who's exploring, but still has a lot of guilt and shame", and then he lashed out, out of anger, if that makes sense. #00:13:33-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:13:32-9#

Tim: Sort of the same motivation, I think, like that, that Pulse shooter in Orlando who was out sleeping with guys, having sex, and then turns around and shoots them all. [On June 12, 2016, Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old security guard, killed 49 people and wounded 53 others in a mass shooting inside Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, United States.] I thought this was a similar experience which leads me to why – you may have noticed in my profile that I identify as a nudist// #00:13:53-0#

Luise: Yeah. #00:13:53-8#

Tim: And this is, let me to this. And it's a little embarrassing – oh well, I don't wanna say embarrassing, but it's protective sort of, so. How that came about was ... when I'm – and it leads sort of to this guy – why I put it there and why I want people to know upfront and// #00:14:09-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:14:10-5#

Tim: Want their consent in all of this upfront, so I used to not. So I've always kind of been a nudist at home and I like going to the social group and I go to nude beaches and I go to different ((baths)) and everything. And when I first started hosting I didn't, I would, I wore clothes when my guest came 'cause I wanted them to be comfortable. But after a while, I was hosting so often, I thought, "Well, I'm not even like in my own home if that's//" #00:14:35-5#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. It's your space. #00:14:36-4#

Tim: It's my space. And so then I started saying like, "Well I, I maybe, are you comfortable with it?" And a lot of guys said yes they were, but in reality they would get there and, like this guy, they really weren't comfortable. #00:14:49-1#

Luise: Okay, yeah. #00:14:49-1#

Tim: And I started to get people coming in who were like, just wanted a free place to stay. #00:14:54-4#

Luise: Okay. #00:14:55-3#

Tim: You know? #00:14:54-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:14:55-2#

Tim: They weren't really comfortable and// #00:14:57-7#

Luise: Ooh, that's awkward. #00:14:59-6#

Tim: ((While)) I was watching like the show about Caitlyn Jenner who's an out transwoman and // #00:15:06-5#

Luise: Yaah, of course, I know her! #00:15:09-2#

Tim: Yeah, and I had this straight guy from like ... Canada who, I was watching it and I could tell he was just very uncomfortable. And part of me is like, it's nice to have teachable moments and it's nice to like ((expose)) people, but sometimes in my home I don't want to have a teachable moment. (laughter) #00:15:26-4#

Luise: Of course, yah. #00:15:26-5#

Tim: 'Cause like I wanted// #00:15:27-5#

Luise: Because it's your home, you wanna let go off like social expectations and social roles. #00:15:33-4#

Tim: Exactly, I, I teach in my daily life and I'm a psychologist and I always, so in my home I don't always want that, I wanna just be me. So anyway, I was at this party where I met these people who surfed and one is called (*name of a Couchsurfer who is a nudist*), I don't know if you've seen him on, but he has like hosted like 400 people. #00:15:54-7#

Luise: Oh no, I didn't. #00:15:55-4#

Tim: He's in (*city in the US*), his name is like (*name of the nudist Couchsurfer*). And I was talking to him about it and looking at his profile and he's like, "I'm, I let them know upfront and I require that they are." #00:16:04-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:16:05-6#

Tim: I was like, "You require?" And he said, "Yeah, trust me, it's just a lot easier". So then I// #00:16:11-1#

Luise: It's a good idea, yeah. #00:16:12-8#

Tim: I tried it, I tried it and I will tell you it changed everything. #00:16:16-1#

Luise: Oh, yes? #00:16:15-8#

Tim: And, and why is because it's the minute they'll come to my house and they want, are open enough, are open-minded enough to do it. #00:16:24-0#

Luise: Yeah. #00:16:24-8#

Tim: I feel like it's this litness test (laughter). #00:16:26-8#

Luise: (laughter) That's right. Yeah. #00:16:28-2#

Tim: Then I never had a problem since. #00:16:29-4#

Luise: Yeah. #00:16:30-2#

Tim: That every single person who's come to stay with me, like over fifty people, they come in, are open-minded and the majority of them are straight guys. And this is this – and it's weird to stay this –, but it's like changed my faith in like humanity as far as I ((see)). There are these straight guys who know that I identify as gay, but they are coming in and there is no sex// #00:16:50-4#

Luise: Yeah. #00:16:50-4#

Tim: And that they're like comfortable with their body and comfortable being a friend of me who identifies as gay. And like they are really cool and we have a great time. #00:17:00-2#

Luise: It's awesome. #00:16:59-6#

Tim: And, I don't know how to describe it, but it's sort of been like this healing thing like over myself, like, "Wow, I can be gay, I can be open and here is like straight guys who wanna stay with me" // #00:17:10-0#

Luise: And everyone is accepting and// #00:17:10-8#

Tim: Accepting and open and liberal – and it's just really amazing. So. #00:17:17-1#

Luise: That's nice. #00:17:16-4#

Tim: So. #00:17:18-2#

Luise: But after you got blocked, how did you manage to like, yeah, sign up again? #00:17:25-3#

Tim: This is kind of shady. So I hope you are not like working undercover for Couchsurfing. #00:17:28-2#

Luise: (laughter) #00:17:29-5#

Tim: Bad. (laughter) #00:17:30-1#

Luise: No, I'm not. (laughter) #00:17:33-6#

Tim: Hmm... and I hope they don't go like researching if// #00:17:36-0#

Luise: (laughter) #00:17:37-0#

Tim: If they read your dissertation. #00:17:37-8#

Luise: But you, you won't be included with like your real name, so. #00:17:40-7#

Tim: Okay, but they could research anyway. I just made up a new name and a new Facebook profile. #00:17:48-1#

Luise: Okay, alright. #00:17:49-8#

Tim: So. #00:17:50-4#

Luise: Yeah, but that's kind of interesting because, you know, at one hand they like try to be very protective with all the verifications and the personal reviews and at the other time I

feel if you like really wanna try to go around the system you, you can find a way.  
#00:18:09-9#

Tim: Right, so ... there are ways. #00:18:14-7#

Luise: (laughter) #00:18:15-9#

Tim: I'm a little nervous that they might read it and like go hunting for me 'cause, I mean, it wouldn't be that difficult to say like, "Oh (*city in the US*), nudist". #00:18:24-6#

Luise: Yeah, right, okay. #00:18:26-7#

Tim: And figure it out, so maybe change the city even if you wouldn't mind. #00:18:29-1#

Luise: Yeah. Yeah. Of course. I will do so. Yeah. #00:18:32-6#

Tim: Yeah, thank you. 'cause I do feel it's a very small organization. #00:18:36-2#

Luise: Yeah, it is. #00:18:37-1#

Tim: I mean it's probably only run by a few people with some interns. Do you like, have you met people who work for them? #00:18:41-6#

Luise: Yeah, I've been to the headquarter. It's on Kansas Street in San Francisco.  
#00:18:44-6#

Tim: Okay. #00:18:45-3#

Luise: And it's, it really just, it's like a place that reminded me of the public space at a hostel. #00:18:51-4#

Tim: Yeah. #00:18:50-9#

Luise: So, it's just like a bunch of couches and just some guys on a computer, but it don't has this like fancy design chic like Airbnb for example. #00:19:03-3#

Tim: Yeah. And I'm assuming like ... there's ways that they can find if you're on there. Like if you email, if you message somebody your phone number, your address, they've got things in there that recognize// #00:19:17-9#

Luise: Ah that's right. #00:19:15-4#

Tim: They can than block it instantly. #00:19:15-9#

Luise: Yeah. #00:19:16-9#

Tim: So I mean there are workarounds. And I had to struggle with it 'cause there's a part of me who felt it might being unethical, it might being dishonest by opening up another one ((web)). And I thought, "Well, but I didn't think they really gave me a fair, a fair voice in what had happened". #00:19:33-9#

Luise: I wouldn't, yeah, you did, you didn't do something wrong. #00:19:36-1#

Tim: I didn't do anything wrong, so. But that was, that was the worst experience that I had.  
#00:19:44-7#

Luise: That's kinda devastating because, yeah, I think like one bad review can ruin like your whole future Couchsurfing experience. #00:19:54-0#

Tim: Right. And I understand that they need to provide a safe space. #00:19:56-5#

Luise: Yeah. Sure. #00:19:58-1#

Tim: And it's kind of, I have opened it up, I've been open to having women although I don't think many women, very few women will want to come stay with me and I kind of understand that. And also I've realized that if I was having straight men there – my place is very small –, so I've also felt, “Well, do I wanna invite women and if I'm having a straight man and then have this like weird energy happening, playing out in front of me?”. #00:20:25-4#

Luise: Yeah. #00:20:26-1#

Tim: (laughter) #00:20:27-4#

Luise: (laughter) That's right. #00:20:27-1#

Tim: You know? So sometimes I've just felt it's been easier just to say I prefer male// #00:20:32-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:20:33-3#

Tim: Guests in this circumstance. #00:20:35-3#

Luise: Yeah. #00:20:35-5#

Tim: But I, I am open to hosting women. But I've also felt like sometimes the women's requests have been like, these Russian women where I feel like, “Are they looking for a husband?” It's been this really strange kind of (laughter) #00:20:46-8#

Luise: (laughter) #00:20:46-8#

Tim: (laughter) #00:20:48-0#

Luise: Yeah, but I, I think there are a lot of love stories happening around Couchsurfing, so. #00:20:51-9#

Tim: Well, that's the part that I also ... I think that we want ... As a sex therapist and sexologist, I am – and a nudist – I, I want to make sure that is, let people know that – how can I put this? Often times nudists are saying like, “It's never about sex!” #00:21:13-1#

Luise: Yeah. #00:21:14-1#

Tim: And I'm like, “That's not necessarily true”. #00:21:17-1#

Luise: Yeah. #00:21:17-7#

Tim: Like I think there is a way to ... to acknowledge that we are erotic, sexual beings. #00:21:22-9#

Luise: Yeah. #00:21:23-5#

Tim: And that that can be a part of it and that's okay and beautiful, too. But we also have to acknowledge things about consent and exploitation and safety. #00:21:33-1#

Luise: Personal boundaries. #00:21:35-0#

Tim: Honesty and boundaries and values and things like that. #00:21:37-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:21:37-8#

Tim: I mean ... I, first, it's funny, 'cause I used to heard it called like "Cocksurfing". #00:21:42-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:21:42-7#

Tim: And there actually is a website called "Cocksurfing" (laughter). #00:21:45-6#

Luise: Yeah, I, I found that, too, yeah. (laughter) #00:21:47-6#

Tim: But I heard of lots of, of people and myself included where I had, you know, sexual situations with guests. And it's, as long as it's mutual, I think it can be a great thing, you know? #00:22:03-6#

Luise: Yeah, yeah, I think so, too. Yeah, of course. And I think, you know, it's just like natural. If you like meet someone in your personal space and you feel like very comfortable ... and you got a connection, so why not? #00:22:16-6#

Tim: Absolutely. #00:22:17-3#

Luise: But yeah, it shouldn't be like a requirement. #00:22:18-4#

Tim: But like no expectation. I have had a few guests and I'm very protective of my guests. This is a little offending, too, because a lot of them do tend to be younger. And I feel like a father figure for some of them like some of these young guys who've come and who have opened up to me and// #00:22:35-3#

Luise: Especially with like your professional knowledge. #00:22:36-9#

Tim: Exactly. Exactly. I had a few who gone on to other places and they, where the guys had kicked them out because they wouldn't have sex with them. And I felt really angry and protective of them. Because there's one guy from, from Panama, he saved money for three years to come on this trip. And he came here and then he went to Miami and he stayed with me for a week and he, he had some cognitive deficits. #00:23:06-8#

Luise: Okay. #00:23:07-3#

Tim: He, he probably was on the autistic spectrum. #00:23:13-3#

Luise: Yeah. #00:23:13-8#

Tim: And this the nicest guy and so I felt, again, like a little protective of him. And then he went to Miami where he was staying with this older guy who, on his second night, said, "You need to have sex with me". And when he wouldn't, the guy said then, "You need to get out", and he had nowhere to go. #00:23:30-7#

Luise: Wow, yeah. #00:23:30-9#

Tim: You know? And he ended up leaving and going back to Panama early. And I felt so angry and sad for him. #00:23:36-3#

Luise: What? Yeah. Yeah. That's terrible. #00:23:40-5#

Tim: And I think those, but I do believe those a very rare. #00:23:44-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:23:45-2#

Tim: Like I have had probably over a hundred, well over a hundred people stay with me. Nobody has ever stolen anything. I used to, the first fifty I used to give my key to. #00:23:57-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:23:58-1#

Tim: And then I just felt, I've stopped doing that. Now I am more comfortable saying, "You need to leave when I leave". It just, I just felt better about it. But the only thing anybody has ever taken is an iPhone charger, and that may have been by mistake. #00:24:10-3#

Luise: By mistake, yeah, that's right. #00:24:13-1#

Tim: But ... I just feel like people are very honest. They come in, most are very respectful. I've only had a few like, a few who smoked secretly when – and that's another reason why I had that started, ((like, "Leave with me")). #00:24:31-7#

Luise: Alright, yeah. #00:24:32-4#

Tim: Because like, I had these – why is it that everybody from France smokes? #00:24:35-1#

Luise: Yeah, (laughter) yeah! That's quite common over there, that's right. #00:24:37-3#

Tim: (laughter) Yeah. But like, I hosted this, this couple from France and when I left, they stayed and they smoked in my apartment and they tried to say like they didn't, but I could smell that they did. #00:24:50-4#

Luise: Yeah, of course. #00:24:50-6#

Tim: You know, I think they sat by the window and opened the window, but I could still tell that they did. ... And then I had one guest who played music really loud when I was gone and the neighbors complained. #00:25:00-5#

Luise: Oh no. Okay. #00:25:00-7#

Tim: And so, I don't think he meant to do anything wrong, but it was just – and he was dancing (laughter). #00:25:04-9#

Luise: (laughter) #00:25:04-6#

Tim: Like he probably thought nobody was around and he was like dancing around the apartment. #00:25:05-7#

Luise: Yeah, [mimicking voice] yeey I'm free! #00:25:09-6#

Tim: And they heard him and so. #00:25:09-9#

Luise: Oh no. #00:25:11-8#

Tim: Can I run to the restroom really fast? #00:25:13-9#

Luise: Yeah, no worries. #00:25:24-9#

— Interview wird nach einer Unterbrechung fortgesetzt —

Tim: I feel like I've been a little bit out of place answering your questions. (laughter)  
#00:00:03-9#

Luise: (laughter) Yeah, but it's, it's awesome, you know? It's, it's very nice of you like, yeah, be comfortable to share. So I, it's not like a, yeah, it's not like a ... like a job interview. #00:00:18-0#

Tim: Right (laughter) #00:00:18-2#

Luise: So, yeah, so, you know? I can see where you put some emphasis on, so that's very interesting for me. #00:00:24-3#

Tim: Great. Great. #00:00:25-9#

Luise: To start again, how would you describe the ideal Couchsurfer? #00:00:31-1#

Tim: The// #00:00:31-4#

Luise: The ideal, the perfect, the good. #00:00:33-0#

Tim: The ideal? #00:00:33-7#

Luise: Ideal, oh that's right. That's right. #00:00:36-0#

Tim: I guess it depends on the ... the host (laughter). #00:00:39-3#

Luise: (laughter) ... Okay, so, so maybe what would you say what// #00:00:44-2#

Tim: For me// #00:00:45-3#

Luise: What is hosting all about? #00:00:48-0#

Tim: Hosting? ... Well, about the connection, you know? The, my ideal was so far – are the ones who come and there's, there's this nice mix of them being independent, but also wanting to interact. #00:01:03-1#

Luise: Yeah. #00:01:04-2#

Tim: You know? 'Cause I'm busy, I work a lot. And I do, it's funny, I'm kind of introverted and quiet actually. #00:01:12-5#

Luise: Oh really? #00:01:13-2#

Tim: Yeah. I am actually// #00:01:14-3#

Luise: I wouldn't think so. #00:01:15-4#

Tim: I'm a total introvert. #00:01:16-6#

Luise: (laughter) #00:01:17-9#

Tim: Very quiet, yeah. #00:01:18-4#

Luise: Okay. #00:01:19-0#

Tim: But I, I guess you call it, I'm an outgoing introvert, if that makes sense. #00:01:23-0#

Luise: Yeah. #00:01:23-7#

Tim: (laughter). #00:01:23-7#

Luise: (laughter) #00:01:25-1#

Tim: So, but I like people who are good conversationalists, who I enjoy showing people around the city. #00:01:37-5#

Luise: Yeah. #00:01:38-6#

Tim: One of my favorite things is I have a Vespa and I give people rides around the city. #00:01:43-7#

Luise: That's nice, yeah. #00:01:45-6#

Tim: And that's one of my favorite things to do, is show people around. And just to hang out a bit. But also have people who aren't so needy that they can, can go out on their own and do things during the day. #00:01:59-8#

Luise: So you don't feel like you are responsible for their whole trip? #00:02:02-4#

Tim: Exactly. Exactly. And I find that most do that, are really appreciative. I'd say the, the, it's easier almost to say the ones that aren't ideal. #00:02:14-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:02:14-9#

Tim: I think the ones that aren't ideal are the ones who come in, who show up late at night and want to leave early in the morning. And it's just like they are looking for a free place to stay. #00:02:22-5#

Luise: Yeah. #00:02:23-2#

Tim: Like I do feel it is about cultural exchange and relationship really... Or somebody, sometimes I prefer to host ... like one person versus two friends. Because there's been some occasions where two friends come and they're very like into each other and talking with each other in their own language or whatever and not really wanting to interact very much, so, like that. I've also found that if people are coming here for like (*name of an event*) or (*name of another event*), some sort of festival, that maybe that's not the best because they tend to like wanna go out and party and get drunk. And I had like, the only

other problems I've had is guests who've come in and throwing up in the middle of the night. #00:03:06-2#

Luise: Uuh, iih. #00:03:06-5#

Tim: A couple, I had a few people come back really drunk and loud, so I prefer people who aren't – I mean, I will offer people a little marijuana or a little drink or something and I don't mind that, but I, it's just in moderation. I don't like when people are excessive with anything, you know? #00:03:23-1#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. #00:03:25-8#

Tim: So that I find, but this is like 90% of people are, you know? Like I said, I've had over a hundred surfers and I've had maybe four negative experiences – one really negative experience and then just others// #00:03:42-0#

Luise: That weren't so well, but yeah// #00:03:46-7#

Tim: Like little ((flipped)). Like the guy that puked in my sink and clogged it (laughter). #00:03:47-3#

Luise: lih. (laughter) #00:03:49-2#

Tim: I mean we still got along and had a fun time when we joked about it and// #00:03:52-8#

Luise: Yeah. So he was really sorry about that? #00:03:56-3#

Tim: Yeah, and he lives in Berlin now. Maybe I'll see him when I'm there, you know? #00:03:58-6#

Luise: Ah, that's nice. Yeah. #00:04:00-0#

Tim: So maybe I'll say hi to him, you know? #00:04:02-0#

Luise: Yeah (laughter). #00:04:04-2#

Tim: I was still like, "You're cleaning it! I'm not". (laughter) #00:04:06-6#

Luise: (laughter) liih. But yeah. #00:04:11-4#

Tim: But that was a case where he came with his friend and they came for (*name of an event*) – oh, no, they came for (*name of another event*). #00:04:17-0#

Luise: Yeah. #00:04:16-5#

Tim: And they were just here to party. #00:04:17-8#

Luise: Yeah. #00:04:18-6#

Tim: And so they came back in the middle of the night, drunk. And it was like, "Guys, you should just have got you a hotel room, so you could kind of just come and go", and you know? #00:04:26-8#

Luise: Yeah, so what would you take into consideration before you accept a hosting request? #00:04:32-9#

Tim: Well, they have to have read my profile. #00:04:34-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:04:34-8#

Tim: Because I really, I don't like getting just like blank requests where you can obvious// #00:04:39-0#

Luise: Yeah, "I need a place to crash". #00:04:44-7#

Tim: Exactly. Or they, they say they've read it, but they haven't. 'Cause I put in there, like I ((put)) nudism 'cause I want you to know// #00:04:46-7#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. I saw that, yeah. #00:04:47-5#

Tim: I wanna tell that you read it and you know what you're up for. Because that shows me that you have taken the time to read it and are interested in staying with me, not just a free place to crash. So that. Otherwise? That's, that's about it. Oh! I will tell you like this may sound ((outrageous)), but ... if somebody is like ... mid-thirties or older I look at it with a little bit of skepticism, like, "Why?" #00:05:19-8#

Luise: Really? #00:05:20-3#

Tim: And the reason why is ... because the older guys that I've hosted, like there is a reason why they're forty years old and don't have a job and they are like, can't afford a hotel room (laughter). #00:05:33-5#

Luise: (laughter) But maybe they are looking for personal interaction as well? #00:05:37-3#

Tim: That's true and that's why I – it's not that I say I won't host him, but I'm like looking at the reason why. Like I wanna read a little bit about them and// #00:05:43-6#

Luise: Like, "What's your trip about?" #00:05:45-0#

Tim: What's the trip, 'cause I, I had a guy who was forty who was from Australia and he was just traveling and he hadn't had a job for a while ((when)) he came. And he was depressed, stayed on my couch for a week and never left the apartment. #00:06:00-2#

Luise: Wow, okay. #00:06:01-4#

Tim: And he kind of smelled and stuff and it was like, "Yuck!", yeah. #00:06:01-0#

Luise: Yeah. #00:06:01-3#

Tim: You know? Or ... so that's kinda odd. #00:06:07-2#

Luise: Yeah, but do, would you say, do you pay special attention to like the verifications or their references? #00:06:17-8#

Tim: No, 'cause I'll take people who never stayed before, have no references. #00:06:21-8#

Luise: Oh, that's cool. Yeah. #00:06:22-4#

Tim: I'll take a risk. I just wanna know that they have a – if that's the case –, they need to have a Facebook profile or some other form of social media. So that I can get on and at least look at their pictures and verify that they are that person and that they, kind of get an idea of what their picture, their pictures kind of give me an idea of like, if it's Instagram for example. Most people have Facebook, so I can at least get on their Facebook and see// #00:06:45-6#

Luise: That's right. Yeah. #00:06:46-5#

Tim: What they do, where they live. Then I ask for a WhatsApp number so I at least know that this is (laughter)// #00:06:52-5#

Luise: Yeah. Yeah to to// #00:06:54-0#

Tim: Who they are, say they are. #00:06:56-9#

Luise: Yeah, that's, that's good. #00:06:58-5#

Tim: Yeah, so I mean I'll, and like I said, if it's only staying a night or two I can put up with anything for at least a night, so. #00:07:04-7#

Luise: (laughter) #00:07:06-1#

Tim: (laughter) #00:07:07-8#

Luise: Yeah, that's very gracious? Yeah? #00:07:10-1#

Tim: Yeah. #00:07:11-0#

Luise: Yeah, that's, that's nice. Especially at the beginning, I found, when I started Couchsurfing I found it like very hard to find a place because, you know, you just, yeah, you have to have some references I guess to have someone like say, "Okay, she's alright, don't worry". #00:07:27-5#

Tim: Mhm. #00:07:27-9#

Luise: Yeah. #00:07:28-9#

Tim: Yeah. #00:07:28-9#

Luise: So in, especially in the beginning it can get like a little bit difficult to really participate. #00:07:34-4#

Tim: Right. And this is sort of funny, but I have had many guys come through who I think are questioning or who are curious or who are away from home and in a different country and wanna ask me questions about sex or about life. And so this is a, I feel like it's an opportunity to provide people that. #00:07:57-6#

Luise: It's like free consultation. #00:07:58-5#

Tim: (laughter) Yeah. #00:07:59-3#

Luise: Consultation. Yeah, that's nice. What do, what would you say how do you combine your hosting activities with your everyday life? Because especially hosting can sometimes get like very demanding. #00:08:10-6#

Tim: Absolutely. I've had to balance that because, like I said, I can get in, in the summer season I can get 20 requests a day. And I think I went through like a four month period when I first started doing it when I had somebody every single night of the week. #00:08:26-3#

Luise: Wow, really? #00:08:28-5#

Tim: Yeah. 'Cause it's sometimes hard to say no. #00:08:30-6#

Luise: Yeah, but how did you manage that? #00:08:32-6#

Tim: Well it was fun! And I don't mind. But here's the thing: So I had to put some boundaries for myself, I started to getting fat 'cause I wasn't getting to the gym. #00:08:41-1#

Luise: (laughter) #00:08:43-5#

Tim: 'Cause I found like I was coming home to let people in or meet them and so I was, I was interrupting my own routine, not going to the gym and things. ... Or I started, you know what, it was funny because one of the reasons I started doing it is because I was kind of lonely, but then I started meeting all the these people who would come and go. And then I wasn't having time to spend with friends here. (laughter) #00:09:07-0#

Luise: Yeah. Yeah. #00:09:08-4#

Tim: And so then I wasn't maintaining friendships. #00:09:11-0#

Luise: (laughter) #00:09:11-0#

Tim: So I had to find a balance to where I was like, "Okay, only one or two a week. I need some nights in the week where it's not Couchsurfers, where it's just me and I need to make sure that even if I'm hosting I don't turn down social opportunities with my friends here". #00:09:27-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:09:28-9#

Tim: Prioritize those, prioritize going to the gym and so, now, if somebody's coming and I'll say I will be home at 7.30 instead of 6, and they just have to manage for an hour and a half. And I'll go to the gym and do my thing and ... yeah. #00:09:43-4#

Luise: But, but that's a good, I think that's a good, yeah, way. #00:09:47-5#

Tim: Yeah, and I think another thing is like people have said, "Why don't you do Airbnb? You could be charging, you could charge". #00:09:53-5#

Luise: That would actually be like my next question. #00:09:55-3#

Tim: Okay, like, "It could be a hundred bugs a night you could be making", and ... As soon as money is involved it changes the whole dynamic. #00:10:04-8#

Luise: Yeah. #00:10:04-1#

Tim: Because no longer is, is it on my terms. I need to give them a key, I need to have fresh bedding. I need to make sure that, you know, it becomes very different. Now they are my customers. #00:10:19-8#

Luise: Yeah, yeah. And it's a service you provide. #00:10:21-7#

Tim: And they have rights. Right, I mean rights. I mean a guest has some rights, too. But it's a service now and they can be as messy as they want if they are paying or they can, they should have the opportunity to come and go or// #00:10:38-2#

Luise: That's right. Yeah. #00:10:39-3#

Tim: You know. And I think there is a difference in attitude of when somebody comes in, there – a guest, there's gratitude. And they are okay coming and going when I go or they are okay, just more, more conscientious. When they're paying there's this attitude, "If I'm paying you" (laughter)// #00:10:58-3#

Luise: Yeah, I expect something. #00:10:59-9#

Tim: I expect something. #00:10:59-8#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. #00:11:00-6#

Tim: Yeah. #00:11:01-1#

Luise: Yeah. #00:11:01-7#

Tim: So, it just changes the whole dynamic. So, I don't want that. And then also it would put, it, it could technically jeopardize my lease agreement with my apartment because I'm not, I don't wanna be running a business. And so, I've also been aware that, I really have to tell my neighbors what I do and I sometimes wonder, "Do they, are they aware that I have all these people in and out?" I'm sure that people have noticed. But if ever, if ever it became an issue I can show like, "No, look, this is Couchsurfing. These people are free. These are my guests. These are not, this is not a monetary, I'm not running a business out of my home". #00:11:37-8#

Luise: Yeah, but when I came to San Francisco, for example, I found out that the city itself like really tries to regulate Airbnb and all short-term rentals. #00:11:44-8#

Tim: Yeah. #00:11:45-7#

Luise: So there's this new law that you are only allowed to rent out your place for 90 days a year. #00:11:53-4#

Tim: Yeah. #00:11:54-1#

Luise: And you have to register for it. #00:11:55-8#

Tim: Yeah, yeah. #00:11:57-1#

Luise: So how do you feel about that? #00:11:58-5#

Tim: I have mixed feelings about it. ... I mean, I understand the principle of it 'cause I do think that people are ... When, when, when, when ... when housing is in such high demand I don't like the idea that some people are sitting on their apartments and are making a lot of money of it, you know. But I think the reality is ... that percentage of people doing that is rather small. I think, I think we have other issues in play as to why rents are so high. So I don't know what to say about that other than I see both sides. I, I ... I think it's good to have regulation, honestly. But I think that that's not the reason why rent is so high in the city, it's about other factors, so. #00:12:58-5#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. And you yourself have used Airbnb a couple of times as a guest? #00:13:03-4#

Tim: I do, I do. But I, and I, I have to admit that there, I've used it when I've gone to Europe, when I've gone to LA and I've had pretty good experiences and a few bad experiences. So it's really mixed. #00:13:18-6#

Luise: Oh okay. #00:13:19-6#

Tim: In general, it's, again I'm ambivalent, I see both sides because I also see that there's times maybe when I wouldn't be able to travel if I had to pay full fare in a hotel. But I also – there is reasons that we have labor unions. #00:13:34-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:13:35-3#

Tim: There is reasons why we fought hard to have regulations so that workers have benefits, you know, that they have health insurance and that they, you know? I feel like the sharing economy, it's more, I think for me it's more about Uber and Lyft than it is about Airbnb, but we have all these people who have to have multiple jobs to survive in this city and they are driving Uber und Lyft and they are not having insurance and they don't have many rights and things. And I think that's wrong. And so I try to go back to using cabs and taxis, because even though it's cheaper for me to jump in an Uber, I feel like in some ways it's just not, it's just taking advantage of // #00:14:16-6#

Luise: Like that difficult situation, yeah. #00:14:19-3#

Tim: Mhm. Colluding with it. We have to come to terms if we're gonna do the sharing economy, we need to come up with regulations that protects people and gives them benefits and rights. #00:14:33-0#

Luise: Yeah. So it's not like exploiting them, but it – because I think it could do some good things as well for you especially if it's just like some side money. #00:14:40-5#

Tim: Absolutely. #00:14:41-9#

Luise: But, yeah. #00:14:42-0#

Tim: But there are some people who are doing it and are making a living out of it and they are not getting any protections or benefits. So. #00:14:47-5#

Luise: Yeah, that's crazy. #00:14:49-1#

Tim: And then you have the, the leader of these companies who are making exorbitant amounts of money and ... it's just not fair. It's not justice. So. #00:14:58-9#

Luise: Yeah. Yeah, that's right. So I think we, we nearly touched on every aspect. Let me check ... Ah! Would you write a reference after someone stayed at your place?  
#00:15:19-4#

Tim: I usually always do. #00:15:22-2#

Luise: And what would be like things you would normally include in those references?  
#00:15:29-7#

Tim: Hm ... it's funny 'cause some of my, most of my references are so similar because I always write like, "They're friendly and open-minded". I won't lie like – but I won't necessarily write a bad review. I will like just be silent. I don't wanna like, I don't wanna, unless somebody is like, and I've never like, with exceptions like that guy from Tunisia, I don't know that I would, wouldn't recommend anybody. Like, you know, so, I don't wanna get in anybody's way. So, I wouldn't write a bad review. I just wouldn't write one. There has been a few like that and ((they care for that)), but it's more of a personality difference than that they were, didn't ((do)) anything egregious or wrong. It's just their personality. And so I just won't write anything ((about it)). (laughter). #00:16:22-5#

Luise: Yeah, okay. Fair enough. #00:16:21-2#

Tim: 'Cause I don't wanna get in their way. ... But there are those who I'll write a nice review and then there's the ones who I'll write glowing reviews because I just think that they are such amazing people. #00:16:33-9#

Luise: That's nice. #00:16:34-0#

Tim: If that makes sense. #00:16:35-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:16:36-1#

Tim: But I do think it's important to have the, the ability to write a negative review.  
#00:16:40-3#

Luise: Of course. #00:16:41-6#

Tim: If, if it's necessary. #00:16:42-9#

Luise: If like really something serious happens. Yeah. #00:16:45-5#

Tim: Serious happens or they are taking advantage or// #00:16:49-2#

Luise: And to protect the community or// #00:16:50-6#

Tim: Absolutely. #00:16:52-5#

Luise: Protect other Couchsurfers. #00:16:52-7#

Tim: Absolutely, to protect. But I'm not having anybody that I feel like I need to protect anybody from. #00:16:59-2#

Luise: Yeah and how do you feel if someone stayed at your place and doesn't leave a review afterwards? Is that alright for you? #00:17:09-7#

Tim: Hm ... yeah, I mean, I would say like 80 to 90% of the time they do leave a review. If they don't ... if they don't, it's sort of like, it's that mutual thing where I didn't leave them a review like, there was just ((unpleasant interaction)). #00:17:26-5#

Luise: Alright, okay. #00:17:27-6#

Tim: You know. I did have one guy who didn't leave a review and I thought – no, he just put, he left a review but it was like, “He was nice to me”. #00:17:35-8#

Luise: And that was all? #00:17:37-7#

Tim: And that was all. (laughter) #00:17:37-7#

Luise: (laughter) Okay. #00:17:39-5#

Tim: And I was a little ticked off that. But I think, 'cause I was really busy and I couldn't have spend a lot of time with him – but off the record I will say I think he wanted to have sex and I wasn't interested and I think that might have// #00:17:50-8#

Luise: Alright, okay. #00:17:52-0#

Tim: I think that// #00:17:52-8#

Luise: So he was kind of disappointed? #00:17:54-4#

Tim: He was doing some, some provocative things and I was pretending like I was unaware (laughter). #00:17:58-9#

Luise: (laughter) Nice. Yeah. #00:18:03-6#

Tim: I think that maybe that played into why, so why he did that, so. #00:18:08-9#

Luise: Okay. Cool, but, yeah, I'm out of questions. But if you feel like you need like there is something you need to, to tell or, yeah, you wanna share. #00:18:24-1#

Tim: Like I said, I just think it's been really life changing for me. ... And I think it's been a wonderful experience, like just really positive, like I said, it came to me in a time of my life where I was lonely and, and it just given me an opportunity to build friendships and give back. And like I said, I have these ... and I think I've talked a lot about age today, so you can see it as a theme in my life. I'm middle aged and it's, I didn't think my life would be like this like I [starts crying] Sorry! I could've // #00:19:01-4#

Luise: No, it's alright! No worries. #00:19:05-8#

Tim: Hm. #00:19:06-5#

Luise: I really appreciate like your honesty and yeah. #00:19:09-3#

Tim: Hm ... I thought I'd be partnered or ... have family. #00:19:21-3#

Luise: Yeah. But you still, you know, it's not too late, so. I think there's all like boundaries like we have in our minds, but they aren't like real boundaries. And you have that every, 'cause before I came here – it's the first time I'm traveling on my own – and I was like when the plane landed in San Francisco I was like, “Lulu, what are you doing here? You are on

your own, what if no one likes you, what if no one wants to, yeah, gets, sit down for an interview with you? What if this trip is like a total fail?" #00:19:59-0#

Tim: Wow. #00:20:00-7#

Luise: Yeah. And yeah, you know, at the same time it is, it's easy to say, but it's only like it's really only in your mind. #00:20:07-4#

Tim: Right, it is. Sure. It is. It is in my mind, but also I am 46 and my life isn't what I thought it would be at this ((age)). And so that's why, like I think I'm emotional, is because I had gone through a pretty brutal break-up. And so long having all this lone time and things. And ((then)) I started Couchsurfing and this is why it's touching to me, not necessarily – the tears aren't necessarily sad, in some ways it's more of like tears of ((obituary)). And that like, I have these guy who I feel like are my little brothers or like my sons or something across the world, who don't have a dad or don't have siblings who they'll write when they get a good grade or when they get a job or when they decorated their apartment – or one guy just wrote to send me pictures of his apartment and he said, "Look, I think of you when I dress up 'cause you taught me how to have style". And so// #00:21:02-0#

Luise: Wow, that's so nice. #00:21:04-8#

Tim: You know. #00:21:05-5#

Luise: That's awesome. #00:21:05-9#

Tim: And he's in Romania, it's just, you know, so those kinds of things have touched my heart. Or one guy from Argentina, he applied for graduate school at Yale. ... And I read all of his application materials and it ended// #00:21:28-7#

Luise: Wow, so you supported like his whole application? Wow that's// #00:21:33-1#

Tim: Yeah and he got accepted. #00:21:33-7#

Luise: Yey! Congrats! #00:21:36-2#

Tim: Yeah, and I was the first person he told. #00:21:39-1#

Luise: That's nice. Oh, okay. You nearly made me cry, too. #00:21:43-8#

Tim: Yeah, so. #00:21:45-5#

Luise: Yeah. #00:21:46-3#

Tim: And he came from a poor family without a dad. #time stamp missing#

Luise: That's nice. #00:21:54-0#

Tim: So there's that. #00:21:54-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:21:55-0#

Tim: My friend, (*name of friend*), who, you know, he's 23 and ... he was a hitchhiker and traveling around. And he is a white guy and he's really cute and friendly and ... but I know, I'm aware of my privilege. And we started talking on day about how ... how he is privileged

as a young, good looking white guy who's out-going, who's in good shape. And I said ... "You're invited into people's homes. Instead of you were a woman, or you were black, or you weren't these things, probably wouldn't get invited into as many homes". And one, and he had never thought about that before. And he got caught by the police here riding the bus without a ticket and I got really angry at him and he said, "Why are you so angry?" And I said, "Because you're privileged, the cop let you off. He didn't give you a ticket". I said, "If you were black, he wouldn't have done that". #00:22:58-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:22:59-5#

Tim: And so like then he moved back to a red state during a political election. And he has been, and he used to have dreads, and he didn't understand how dreads could be a micro-aggression. And I taught him that. And now he's ... speaking out against racism. #00:23:28-2#

Luise: Wow. #00:23:28-9#

Tim: And being a good ally. #00:23:30-1#

Luise: Yeah, so you really got him introduced to all this cultural like, yeah// #00:23:36-9#

Tim: And speaking out against Trump and speaking out in ways that he never had before. #00:23:42-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:23:42-0#

Tim: And then he will call me and ask me how to have conversations about certain things. #00:23:48-3#

Luise: Yeah. #00:23:49-4#

Tim: Or he was in a long-term relationship and his girlfriend caught him have watching porn and they've been fighting about it. And so he called me to ask me how to have these difficult conversations around sex, sexuality. #00:24:06-2#

Luise: That's cool. #00:24:07-9#

Tim: Yeah, so. So those are some ... important things. #00:24:14-8#

Luise: Yeah, very emotional moments. Very, very like stable connection, bonds. #00:24:21-8#

Tim: Yeah. #00:24:22-8#

Luise: Yeah. That's nice. #00:24:23-7#

Tim: Or last night I went – I'm sorry if these are too many stories. #00:24:25-9#

Luise: No! #00:24:26-8#

Tim: But last night I had drinks with a Couchsurfer who's in town for (*name of an event*). He lives in LA, but he disclosed a situation where it's really complicated, but he had, he had sex with his sisters' ex-husband. #00:24:44-8#

Luise: Oh no way. #00:24:46-2#

Tim: Yeah, and having so much guilt about it and shame about it and he came last night and he needed to talk with somebody, he had never told anybody about it. And he told me about it and we talked about (...) and what he could do. And, and, and, so those are the things like I've met people where I could be this friend for them. #00:25:07-3#

Luise: Yeah. #00:25:08-4#

Tim: They wouldn't had other places, so. #00:25:12-2#

Luise: And I bet you wouldn't have such an experience during an Airbnb stay, right? #00:25:17-5#

Tim: No. #00:25:18-3#

Luise: Yeah. #00:25:17-8#

Tim: No, I don't keep in touch with anybody I've stayed with in an Airbnb. #00:25:21-0#

Luise: Yeah, yeah because it's, yeah, you paid for it and you know, okay, after your stay that's all, that is it. #00:25:27-3#

Tim: Right. #00:25:28-1#

Luise: Yah. ... Wow, cool. Yeah, I really, thank you for all your honesty. #00:25:36-1#