



EPISODE 12: QUESTIONS FOR COUPLES JOURNAL – BEHIND THE SCENES

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/12](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/12)

Hello everyone. We have a really fun episode for you today. We're going to go behind the scenes on the Questions for Couples Journal and we're going to share some stories and memories in the process of writing the book and then really delighted to have my very special guest back, the love of my life, also known as the hubster. So as the planet comes together to deal with the virus situation that we're in right now. One of the things I want to do on the podcast is both share my coaching tools and concepts to help you make your marriage better no matter what is happening in the world. And also mix in episodes that are just a break from thinking about managing stress or crisis and just to have a space for fun. Like, a moment to have your brain focus on something else completely. And that's what I want to do with this episode, is really to share stories and some laughs with you all because to get through the heavy parts of life, we always need a balance with the lighter parts of life.

So, today I invite you to take these few minutes listening to this episode and just sit back, relax, pretend we just invited you over to our house to hang out. This is highly similar to what it would be like. And now I welcome back to the podcast. My very favorite person, the hubster, and I did this really in depth intro for him on the episode we did on managing crisis as a couple. So you'll have to go back and listen to that episode if you want his official biography. For today's show, he used just this really cool guy I married. So welcome. Thank you. Thank you. And on our last episode, as we were wrapping up, I asked you about sharing a fun story about being married to life coach and what that was like and you were going to think about it. So what did you come up with?

Well, there's so many, but I just right now thought of what the most recent one, which, you know, been watching this show that's this mess, which we love about a young couple. They're from New York, moved to Nebraska, and the wife ends up freeing a pig she did not want to





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see slaughtered. So as a therapist, you think your subconscious may have played a role in letting him escape. So I turned to my wife, “as therapist-adjacent, what is your position on the subconscious?” And just kind of have kept that as a therapist-adjacent, cause it cracked me up.

Yeah. Now he asked me all these questions whenever anything causes his mind. So when we were watching that episode and he asked me what did I think about her emotions influencing the situation with letting the pig go and I’ll put a link to the this show so you could check it out if you haven’t seen it. It’s a really funny show. So he says as a therapist-adjacent, what do you think about this? And I turned to him and I said, as a life coach, I think your thoughts cause your feelings. Boom. Boom. There you go. So that was a little behind the scenes. Ok. So today, let’s see. We’re going to talk about, as I mentioned behind the scenes on the Questions for Couples Journal and if you listen to the podcast, you’ve heard me talk about the book is coming out on April 21st I am so, so, so excited for it to be out in the world.

It is the perfect book for any time in a relationship, but especially now for all these at home dates and honest together time that we have, it’s really one of the best tools to bring couples closer and I’m so excited for all of you to use it and to have fun with it and laugh with it. There’s deep questions, there’s fun questions. So there’s a really good mix just like we have on the podcast too. And I want to share a little bit about why I love the format of this book so much because we as a couple love questions in our marriage and we use them all the time. So I thought it would be really fun to have my hubby come on and share a little bit about how we been using questions since before we got married.

Good point. All right. Wow. That far back. Yeah, no, definitely. We have, we’re big on questions. We read various books and that even when we’re dating, ask questions even to ourselves





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about what are our priorities, what do we have to bring the relationship, what do we want in a partner? And that I think really helped us be crystal clear when we met each other to be able to move forward relatively quickly and forming a relationship. And we've kind of kept that up. We love when we go on road trips, we love to take question books with us and we're asking questions. And even after a year, do you think you've learned everything, but you're asking about something that you've just never talked about and learn another aspect about your spouse? So those are always a lot of fun. We really enjoy those.

Yeah. So we live in Florida, which is a very large state. So when we go on road trips, we're in the car for four hours, five hours any way you want to go, it's like a four-hour trip. And so one of the things we've done over the whole, I guess this year will be our 13th anniversary, is that right? Yeah. Yeah. 13th anniversary. So over a decade we've been asking questions to each other. We'd do it a lot when we go on road trips sometimes we also do every once in a while we'll do like a question at bedtime or something like that, like for fun. And so when the publisher approached me about writing this book, I just thought there could not be a more perfect book for me personally because I enjoy and love using questions and we have so much fun with them and these sparks so much conversation for us.

And sometimes we'll ask one question and we'll have a whole half-hour conversation just on like one thing and wherever that leads us sort of down the road. So one thing that I will link to in the show notes is I really, I don't have any proof for this, but I think that this is the article that led to the publisher contacting me about the book is a few years ago I wrote my favorite conversation starters for couples and I wrote a list of like maybe 10 or 15 questions and I linked to a bunch of my favorite question books on that post. And that post, my natural inclination or something I already loved led to me getting to write one of those books. I'm so, so excited





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about that.

The hubby is just laughing. Okay. You know, we recorded this podcast basically live. So what happens happens folks. He laughs. That's what happens on the podcast. What happens on the podcast, stays on the podcast. There you go. So one of the things we wanted to share, we'll share a little bit about how we prioritize as a couple, like adding a new project to our already full lives. I think that that's really useful. Whether you're writing a book, you know, you guys listening to us, some of you may be writing a book but some of you might not, but we all are faced with adding projects or adding a new thing that we're working on and we have those challenges of how do we prioritize our time together as a couple and add this new opportunity or new adventure, whether it's a promotion at work or a new project that you get asked to work on so that it would be useful for us to share a little bit about our process for that and so I wanted to take you a little bit behind the scenes.

I wrote the book in November and December of 2019 which are usually, if you think about the holidays, the busiest time of the year seemed like a great idea. And I have a full coaching client load, so I did work in sometimes to work on it during my regular work hours, but I also had to work some nights and some weekends and we really had to learn to block off time to work on the book. Then honor that time. And my husband said something I really liked when we were preparing for today's episode. He said you have to defend that time from other things. So would you share a little bit about, even when you're working on your own projects and work and things like that, about how you approach your mindset around defending time from other things?

Yeah, I think it's just, you have to be very clear about what your priorities are. What are the things that have to get done, especially if they're time sensitive and if other requests come





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up, you know, other people think whatever they have going on is the most important thing of course. But you have to evaluate and say is that really true or not? And in our case we, yeah, we thought about it. And when you said, you know, this is a priority. So other things, you know, family engagements, anything else that might be a distraction, it's going to have to be passed or have to say no or rescheduled. So just have to be very intentional about that. Yes though our family is awesome. We love them. So much, but they're very spontaneous on both sides of our family. And so they often ask us to do things like spontaneously, Oh, we're going to go do this or we're going go do that. And I remember when weekend in particular where I had set aside that I was going to work on the book that day and we had some really aggressive deadlines to produce the book and then have it come out on April 21st of 2020 in case you're hearing this in the future. Hello future person. So we had some really aggressive deadlines so I had to work on the book when they had scheduled to work on the book that was not optional. And there was some family event where I was like, Oh, you guys have a great time.

My husband went but I couldn't go. And I remember, you know, some of our family members just being surprised that I wasn't there and it's like I'm actually writing a book. The hubby is nodding. Yes, that's correct. Yeah. So that was just an interesting thing to do and definitely defending once you set the time. The idea of protecting that time and really honoring that time I think is really important. So then another thing that we did as we prioritized, and this is something that I asked me clients a lot, is what is your goal? And sometimes we get a little cloudy on what our goal is and we, have one goal, but then the goal changes and then we have a new goal and it's really useful. So I just want all of our listeners to think about this. It's really useful when, especially if you're feeling overwhelmed, if you have a lot going on or if you have a new project. Like for me the book is new project to think about what is my goal and how do I need to adjust whatever I'm doing to accommodate that goal. So my goal was to write the book in a way that





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didn't feel overwhelming or in a way that didn't feel that it was like too much, you know, to enjoy the writing of the book because ultimately it was a dream come true. To get to work on the book and to also preserve and prioritize my marriage and my relationship while I was working on this project and one thing I think we did really well was we talked a lot about what our weeks would look like, what our time would look like, and I think that us working as a team was for me, really important for me to enjoy working on the book. It was that sensation of being a team and I talk about working as a team a lot in writing and with my clients and I'll make a note to myself to also include in the show notes. One of my article is about whether your relationship is an alliance or a team and basically in a team you're both working towards the same thing. So my husband in this case was also on my team of wanting the book to be a good experience for both of us. Do you have any you want to share just about looking at things as a team or through the lens of being a team?

Yeah, I mean it's just, you know, it's, this is a major priority and I have to support it. And like what if I was instead nagging you, why aren't you making time for us to go see the family for five hours every weekend or whatever. You know, it would be counter-productive. It would be stressful. It would undermine the goal that we want to get the book out and like we both do even though you're the one writing it.

Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for that. I think that's really awesome. And I think it's one of the things I love about having you on the show is when I was growing up, I didn't really have a lot of examples of what a thriving, loving couple looked like. And I know in my heart just hearing you talk, there's someone listening to us right now who's like never heard what teamwork in a couple looks like. And I love that we can just share that. I just got a little emotional. Let's take a deep breath. Okay. So one of the things we did was it was around Christmas time and we decided to





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forego a tree. And usually we have a really beautiful ritual around the tree. So will you share a little bit about our tree ritual?

Of course. My pleasure. Yes. So when we think on our tree, we, you know, we have typical Christmas decorations, but we've also gotten the habit of collecting Christmas decorations from wherever we travel. So when we're putting them up, it's a way to kind of look back over the years and look at all the cool experiences we've had together. And it's, it's special. It's definitely, a ritual like you say, which we enjoy very much so, but this time, I saw how much you have to do when it's like, Oh, I'll try to squeeze that in, you know, it would just be too much. And we had a trip coming up and so I suggested, why don't we this year, not put on the tree and just put up a little tree that we got the at Walgreens and we put it on the table.

Those are the funds that we got this tabletop tree and it had lights and everything. So it was this little tabletop tree and it had a little star, I think it was a star, and I would turn it on every evening. And I was like, I love my book tree. It became my book tree was like, Oh, we have this tree because a book is coming. And it was so fun. And then I think we left it up to like February, something like that. Yeah. And we did something actually that we decorated some parts of the house. So we put some ornaments just like we put some plastic poinsettia like where we watch TV and we put a few ornaments and sort of our dining room area. So the house just felt festive and it felt nice, but we did basically something you could do in half an hour instead of something that takes you the whole day.

And I think that worked really well. Yeah, it did. It did. I think what that's an example of that I really want our listeners to, to take away is a lot of times we have this, this is called in psychology cognitive distortions. All or nothing thinking like it has to be the full tree with all the





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trimmings or nothing. And it's so useful when you can say, this is what's possible now. How about we do an alternate version or a modified version. Here's what we can do now. And we enjoyed all of our decorations so much they were so meaningful to us, I think partly because they were so intentional.

Yeah. Yeah. So another fun thing was that I asked the hubby to help me review the questions and I think I mentioned that in another podcast episode that many of my questions were very verbose and quite long questions. So sometimes the hubby would read through them and he just cross out like multiple lines of things, which was so much fun. I'm a good editor, luckily. And um, to see, you guys know. So before I started the podcast, I wrote a blog for many, many years. And my husband, my wonderful husband who's with us today was the editor for that blog for quite a long time. And the punctuation police and the punctuation police. That is correct.

Apparently I have a situation with commas that he doesn't recommend to anyone and I make, he always says that to, some questionable decisions was semi colons here but okay. So since he's an expert editor I asked him to to help me review the questions and what was that like for you? Do you have anything you want to just share about that experience?

It was just a lot of fun that you know, obviously you wrote the book but I got to be part of the process and kind of see the behind the scenes day to day of seeing the book come together and you know, discuss things with you and stuff. I really enjoyed it.

Thank you so much. I have to say, one thing that came to mind was when you write a book with 400 questions for couples, one of the key things about such a project is not repeating the questions, like not having the same theme or the same idea pop up in different places. And one





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of the things that he really helped me do, because I was so in it all the time, he really helped me see, you know, what question number 27 is very similar to question number 83 and he helped me have sort of that bird's eye view to say, Oh, they are kind of similar. Why don't we tweak that and change that? So that was great. And that made me feel really great being that it was my first book when they sent it over to the editor who did the professional, you know, editing on the project.

I just felt so confident about what I was sending over. I knew he had checked the semicolons and we were in a good place with punctuation, which was great. Um, and so that was, that was really useful and really great. And then one thing that we made it a point to do also just in terms of prioritizing is we did make time for date nights and off time and relaxing and watching your favorite shows and sharing about our day. So it wasn't like it was just work 24-7 it was really a mix of, of maybe working a little more than my normal schedule, but not all the time either. And I think that's really important. Do you have anything to add about that? Yeah, no, I think we did. We found our balance really good. I'm happy with how it turned out. Awesome. Okay, good.

Good to hear again. So talking about how he was a help to me sort of pre edit what I said to my editor when we finally got basically the final version of what the questions are going to be and what the book was going to be they sent me multiple times, reviews of different sort of versions of the book and the very final one, we really like did a line by line, edit together. And I remember my husband was reminding me, we went out to dinner and because it was such an aggressive schedule, we were there like at the, at the restaurant, I think I had all these printouts with the lines of the different questions and what we needed to cross salad and add and tweak and stuff like that. And what was really fun about that is, you know, I was sort of the content of the question and he was like the way the question was written, like was it grammatically correct and





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all that.

So by the time we sent that in line by line edit to my editor who was amazing, she sent me, you know, back and you know, she's a professional editor. She works on a lot of books and she said, I have never received such a thorough edit from any of my authors. And I was like, score! Do you have anything you want to add about that experience? Just that I'm so proud. We put thorough, thorough job. Yeah, that was really, really fun. Again, here's another fun, behind the scenes story of the book. So, in the book, there's seven categories. So the categories have things like your past, your relationship, your goals and dreams, sexy times. And then fun sort of off the wall. Wacky questions. So there's a mix of really deep questions and really, you know, sort of beautiful questions for deep conversations.

And then there's a mix of like these really fun, wacky questions that are just like lighthearted. And in the beginning of the book I give very detailed, very life coachy instructions about how to approach answering these questions together as a couple. And one of the things that I do is I really explain that when you listen, you want to listen with an open heart and with an open mind she would ever, your partner is sharing. And the example that I used in order to illustrate that point was a movie. So one of the questions is what was your favorite movie when you were 12 and when I did the first draft of the book? I wrote as a potential answer just to illustrate the point. I wrote Xanadu, which was my favorite movie, I was 12 I think maybe younger. And then it is a movie for those of you who haven't heard about it, Olivia Newton-John was in this movie and it was about a Greek muse come to life.

It was a very fantasy musical movie that now has a cult following. But it was not a very popular movie when it came out. And it is one of those movies that if you say that was your favorite





EPISODE 12: QUESTIONS FOR COUPLES JOURNAL – BEHIND THE SCENES

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movies, someone might question you on that. So I tell this whole story in the, in the front of the book and they say, you know, if someone says Xanadu you have openhearted curiosity? You just ask them, why is that? What did you love about it? As opposed to being judgey mc-judgey. Really that's the movie that you picked. Why would you pick a thing? And like that's how not to do the book. So I read this whole thing out and I sent it to the editor and she wrote back just like one liner that was like Maggie, I don't think people will know what that movie is.

And I was so sad because she was right. And so it ended up being in the book was, I had just said, thank you guys. I had to think what is a movie that everyone on earth would recognize and that I could use as an example, even if you haven't seen the movie, you would just have heard of the movie. So I came up with Star Wars, The Phantom Menace because either you love it or you hate it and there is no in between. And so that became the sample movie for the opening of the book. Now what's really fun about that story is fast forward to now, right? The book is coming out. We changed it to Star Wars, which was a good change. I'm glad we did that. And my husband and I, whenever I have favorite shows to watch together is The Rookie and there's a scene in The Rookie and this year's season where one of the police officers has to do like he sends her a bunch of security questions and one of his answers was Xanadu.

And everybody looked at him, all his colleagues, all the cops in the precinct did him with his face. Like, what the heck dude, which is kind of like the face of my editor gave me about using that as an example. But I felt so vindicated. I was like, yes, Rookie, I will keep watching you. You and I both like Xanadu. So that was just a little behind the scenes, fun around something that didn't make it into the book, but it made it into The Rookie. So if you haven't watched The Rookie you totally should. Okay. And then the last sort of behind the scenes that I want to share today is my husband was out at the deli. Do you remember this? The deli. So you were texting me, I





EPISODE 12: QUESTIONS FOR COUPLES JOURNAL – BEHIND THE SCENES

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/12](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/12)

think you were asking me what I wanted for lunch or something. Yeah, of course.

So I was home working on questions for the book and he texts me and he's at the deli at the grocery store and he's like, Hey, what do you want? And you guys just imagine I'm sitting in front of a blank screen, you know, 400 questions thinking about what's the next one, what it's going to be. And so there is a question in the book literally was like this, if the deli means a sandwich after you, what would it be called? And that question was purely because my hubby sent me a text saying, Hey, I'm at the Deli. I was like, everything is fair game for a question. It's going in the book. So if you get the book, when you get to that question, you can just laugh because that is how that question was born.

So that's really everything we wanted to share. I think about the behind the scenes. Is there any final thoughts before we wrap up that you'd like to share? Putting the book together was a lot of fun and having this podcast conversation with you was a lot of fun. Thank you for being on my team. We're team Reyes is all the way. So, thank you all for joining us today. I will put the link to the book, of course, in the show notes, and I mentioned a bunch of things for the show notes today so, there'll be a bunch of things in the show notes system round and just always remember that you need three things to have a thriving five-star marriage. You need perspective, you need partnership, and you need pleasure and they are all in your control.

