



EPISODE 21: USING ACCEPTANCE TO MAKE YOUR MARRIAGE STRONGER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/21](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/21)

Hello superstars. Welcome to a brand new episode. I am so excited to dive into acceptance with you. Today we're going to talk about how self acceptance and acceptance in marriage can help you make your marriage stronger. To really understand this can bring you such a beautiful turning point in your relationship, especially if you're struggling right now. A couple of years ago I did a training in New York city with Esther Perel and if you're not familiar with her work, she's like a total rock star in the relationship space. She did a continuing education training for therapists and coaches on how to help your clients overcome infidelity and I learned so many things in that training and one of the most important ones is there is no wrong reason to want to stay married. Sometimes we judge ourselves and our reasons as not good enough and then we feel guilty and it becomes this endless cycle of shame and guilt.

And if you feel any of that, I just want you to know there is no wrong reason. I teach my clients a very, very simple decision making paradigm, which is what do you want? Why do you want it? Do you like your reason? And sometimes when we ask what we want, we have to give ourselves permission to want what we want and make that okay. So if you're looking for that permission, it is hereby officially granted. And I think this is so important because it's part of accepting ourselves where we are today. So this episode came about because I asked the question in my Facebook group, The Better Marriage Club, which was this, can you accept yourself right now as you are and your husband right now as he is? And a bunch of members said yes and others said no. And I realized that talking about acceptance and how acceptance does not mean agreement is really important.

Both when thinking about yourself and when thinking about your husband. And as I was writing up the notes for today's episode, I found a quote by Deepak Chopra that I absolutely loved. And here it is: "Self acceptance leads to success, not the other way around." Let me repeat that.





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“Self-acceptance leads to success, not the other way around.” So think about all the ways that we postpone accepting ourselves. And I’ll give you some examples. I will feel better about myself when, so you fill in the blank. What you’ve used here are things that have come to mind both for myself and with my clients. I feel better about myself when I get a raise or a promotion or change jobs or bake the perfect pie or get my master’s degree or buy a house or in my case, create the perfect most amazing life changing podcast episode, right?

We wait for these external things to happen and decide that we will feel good about ourselves. Then when that thing happens, now, how many of you, and I’ve done this too, so I will raise my hand. How many of you have done this? When you actually achieve the thing, then you change the finish line. If you get the promotion, you want the next one. If you get the house, you want another one. If you get the degree you want to another degree, right? We move the finish line farther out and farther out and then we say, I will love and accept myself when I have this other thing. But if Deepak Chopra’s hypothesis is correct and itself acceptance that leads to success and that the other way around, then most of us are just doing it wrong and they really want you to consider that that’s possible.

And I have found with myself in a test, all these things are myself and then they test them on my clients and then they share them with you. That’s kind of how it goes in Maggie-Land. And what I have found is that when we’re able to accept ourselves, whatever it is that we’re striving for and trying to create becomes so much easier and we have so much more space around it. So here’s how acceptance and self acceptance affect your marriage. If one of the people in the relationship cannot accept either themselves or the other person, that will immediately cause a rift between the two of you. It doesn’t matter if you accept your husband a hundred percent if you can’t accept yourself. And if you’re always second guessing yourself and questioning





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your desires and really there's this element of rejection that you're experiencing about yourself, then you're putting distance between the two of you because you're not giving him access to everything you are.

Who you can be because you're putting up a wall of some kind and that and whatever area is that you're not accepting so you're not being fully a hundred percent yourself. If you're not accepting your husband, then you're obviously putting a rift because you're not accepting and experiencing him as he fully is right now today, so it doesn't really matter which side of the equation that nonacceptance is happening. It's going to cause a problem, which is why I wanted to have a whole podcast episode to talk about it with you because I know that it would be so helpful when you really see how this works in practice. Now what is lack of acceptance? I called it non-acceptance a couple of sentences ago and it's really rejection, right? Think about that for a second. Rejecting yourself or rejecting your husband is not a loving action.

And so of course it causes a rift. Why? Because you're not able to authentic really connect with each other. And obviously this is not good, which is why really working on self acceptance, self acceptance and accepting the other person is so, so important. So I want you to know why. And the second thing I want you to know is that acceptance does not equal agreement. I can accept myself today as I am even as I want to improve something about myself tomorrow. I can accept that this is the best podcast I can produce today, that these are the best ideas I can share. This is the best that I can do even as I want to make the next episode even better and sharing even more useful and powerful idea every single time. So acceptance does not equal agreement. That is so, so important. I can accept that I am messy sometimes even as a work towards becoming neater.





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Just to give you a real life example, and this is a true story. I would say it's probably a provable fact that I am somewhat messy, not a hundred percent messy, but at least somewhat messy. Back in my HR days, we were transferring from one office to another and we had no filing cabinets and I had like a table with a stack of folders. It was hilarious because it did not look neat at all. Just imagine 50 file folders stocked on a table and I remember my boss at the time came over and asked for something and I turned around like one of those swivel chairs. I turned around, I looked at the stacks and I picked up the exact folder that he wanted from the files and his face was absolutely unforgettable. This was probably almost 10 years ago and I still remember, and here's the thing, I think except that I'm messy.

Those folders were not in alphabetical order or color-coordinated. They were literally just a stack of folders, but I knew where every single thing was, which was why his face was so shocked when he came to ask me for something. He was just so impressed that I knew exactly where to find it. And some people who were way more organized than I was, couldn't find something to like save their life. So being messy in that moment was not an actual problem. So I invite you to ask yourself today, is there anything that you feel ashamed about that it's possible that it could not be an actual problem? If there is, could it be that you decide today that you still want to get better at it? And at the same time you can just accept that it's true in this moment. And I know one of the things that gets us caught up in all kinds of messages is we think to ourselves, Oh, well if I accept that, then I'm saying it's okay and you don't have to do anything about it.

You don't have to change it. You don't have to make it better. That is not the case. Acceptance does not equal agreement. So what is acceptance? I like to define it as, I think I heard Byron Katie say this, when you're not arguing reality, that's it. You just stop arguing with reality. So





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many of us spend so much time and energy thinking it shouldn't be this way. That person shouldn't have gotten a promotion or that person shouldn't have been elected or this shouldn't be happening. And it's like it's happening. It is this way, right? So when you accept that something is happening, this doesn't mean you agree with it. You're just not using any mental space or any heart space like the space in your heart or any of the rampant thoughts that go through your brain. A million miles a minute every day to argue with what's already happening.

One of my husband's favorite quotes is, it is what it is. That is such a great summary for acceptance. It is what it is. There is what is, which is the facts. And then there's the story I tell about those facts. And acceptance is where you just start to look for the facts. The sky is blue, the leaves are green. We could think blue is pretty and green is ugly and have all kinds of thoughts about them. But first let's just look at them and just see the sky is blue, let's accept the blueness of the sky. Okay. So acceptance equals not arguing with reality. When we stop arguing with reality and say, you know what, my husband will just never fold the towels. He's just not a towel man. That is not going to happen. Then we're able to let that go and then we can create this space of what do we want?

What do we actually want? I want the towels to be beautiful. That is what I want and this really cracks me up because I use towels as an example often. So I must have a thing about towels. I didn't even know that I had. We just literally got a new towel that we hang in the kitchen like last week we got it to dry our hands and it has this beautiful pattern on the outside and it's plain on the inside and when it arrived, I literally did a towel training showing the hubby what the outside of the towel was and the inside was. Needless to say, he was very, very amused and mind you, this was a request and not a demand so go back and listen to that episode if you need to. I'll put that in the show notes. I was just saying, hey, heads up. Check out this towel. This is the





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inside. This is the outside.

And yesterday it was inside out literally yesterday. And my thought was I must care more about those towels than he does. So I'm going to flip it the way I like to see it because I am the one who cares about seeing it this way. So with acceptance, I'm accepting my secret passion for neat towels, even though I am messy what a paradox, right? And I'm accepting that my husband does not have the same passion for towels that I do. And then what I do, and what I encourage you to do is to ask this question, what is going to solve my problem? Asking my husband to change the towels isn't necessarily going to solve it. Because if I've been married to him for over 10 years and he's never been passionate about towels, that is unlikely to start now.

He's not suddenly going to be passionate about towels. I need to accept that reality and stop arguing with it. And now I can have a much bigger impact on my own reality because I have the mental space to decide what I'm going to do about it. Which is why when you can accept either yourself, your husband, your situation, you create the mental space to create what you want. So acceptance is actually helping you create what you truly desire. And that is one of the greatest benefits of learning to practice acceptance along with the peace of mind that it gives you. And another thing I want you to know about acceptance is that acceptance is conscious awareness.

It is not denial. So we're not pretending like everything's okay when it's not okay. That is not what acceptance is, is saying this is what's happening. I acknowledge it in the present moment, I accept it as it is. And this is what's probably gonna happen in the future. And I accept that as it is. And what we need to look at is how we can be compassionate and generous and kind to ourselves as much as we are with other people. Because I know we're a loving, compassionate group. I know that if you're listening to this podcast, it's because you want to add more love into





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the world, more love into your life, more love into your marriage. So if you can be loving and kind to others, your kids, your family, your friends, your coworkers, can you extend that loving kindness to yourself? That is one of the entryways into practicing self acceptance. And I have something else about acceptance that I want to talk to you a little bit about, which is how any act of criticism is an act of violence. There's a psychologist named Harville Hendrix who says that, and it has stuck with me over the years, so imagine this, that any act of criticism towards yourself or towards another person is an act of violence.

It's an act of emotional violence instead of physical violence. So I know some of us have been that person that repeats over and over again. I did it wrong. I did that wrong. Oh my gosh, you can't believe I me that mistake. That is when we turn violence towards ourselves. And what is violence? According to the Cambridge dictionary, violence is actions or words intended to hurt people. So when we criticize and complain, we are seeing words intended to hurt people. And when we do that with our partners, we are intending to hurt them. When we do that to ourselves, we are intending to hurt ourselves. Now I teach that no one can hurt you without your agreement. Because they say words and it's really our thoughts and our stories we make up about those words that hurt us. So what we want to do is look at the intention we want to check in if we really have the intention to hurt ourselves and the person that we supposedly love the most when we're rejecting and criticizing them.

I think sometimes it's an unconscious intention. We do the criticizing, we don't realize that we're actually having this intention to hurt another person or ourselves when we're doing the criticizing. And I really want to increase your awareness about how you think about yourself and how you think about your honey to see if there's more rejection or acceptance. And how you can cultivate more acceptance in simple loving ways. There are two things you need to start





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practicing to accept yourself, your life, and your partner at the deepest level and here are really the two action items to take away from this episode. Stop criticizing yourself. That inner mean girl that we sometimes have and sometimes runs rampant. It's a moment to say, no, no, I do not accept those words about myself. Stop criticizing your husband if there's a lot of criticism happening in your home right now, you can take the emotional need and you can be the person who stops first and if you haven't heard my episode on emotional weight loss, I will put that in the show notes as well where we change the criticism to a request.

We stop complaining and criticizing and we make requests for what we want instead. So I'll give you a step by step in that episode. And then the second action item is to start practicing forgiveness for yourself, for your husband. And remember, just like acceptance isn't agreement. Forgiveness isn't agreement either. It's just letting go of that emotional charge attached to the situation that you haven't quite forgiven yet. So if I criticize myself and I notice that I'm criticizing myself, I am committing an act of emotional violence against myself. If I criticize my husband and I criticized them incessantly, I'm committing an act of emotional violence against him. The person I'm supposed to love the most. So I want you to realize that the first step, and I always say it's simple, but it's not easy, is to stop criticizing, whether it's yourself or your husband. And if you've been criticizing a lot yourself and other people, also extend yourself some loving grace and compassion.

Step into that forgiveness energy that you did the best you could with what you had in the moment. And now you're in a new moment and you're doing your best you can in this moment. And when you stop the criticism, that will give you a sense of relief. That will also give you the mental space to then create what you want because suddenly your brain, instead of those other things you were thinking, we'll have space to say, how do I want it to be? What can I do?





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How can I change my experience? So that's the first thing is to stop criticizing. The second thing, practicing forgiveness, to forgive yourself for the things that went wrong, to forgive that person that you're having trouble accepting for whatever it was that happened. And again, forgiveness is not condoning. It doesn't mean what they did was okay in any way.

It just means you're going to stop beating yourself up or beating them up in your mind. So it was not okay. It's not allowed in my space. Maybe it's something that can not happen again. All those things can be true and you can still forgive it and move on to the next chapter in your life. And of course, there's a lot more to this as you can imagine, especially sometimes with forgiveness, it can be very in depth. So there's a lot more to this that I addressed in depth in a coaching program one-on-one. Then we look at your actual situation, what's going on, what's the best strategy for your specific situation? But right now in this moment, think about what's bothering you the most and can you stop criticizing it and start making requests for what you want instead. That'll move you forward so much powerfully and so much faster than just staying in a criticizing energy.

So can you accept that it's happening and then look to what would help you feel better? That's a great question to ask, that's a great place to start and to start wrapping up this episode, I want to share a great exercise from the legendary Louise Hay that I sometimes give her coaching homework and it's to spend a whole week saying the following words: I approve of myself. Say I approve of myself a thousand times and you will see where you don't and you will see what needs accepting and what needs forgiving and what needs your deepest, most loving approval. Now imagine saying, I approve of my husband. Imagine saying that all week long. You will immediately see where you don't, whether it's his taste in socks or how he stacks the dishes. I approve of myself. I approve of myself, I approve of myself. It is such a great exercise. It's from





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the book. You can heal your life by Louise Hay and I want to wrap up today with something that I found when I was researching this episode that I absolutely loved. If you're in a place right now where you can close your close them, if you're not, no worries. Just take a deep breath and repeat in your mind as a say these really powerful words from Deepak Chopra. He wrote them and we're just going to recite them together today. Okay, so deep breath. Ready?

I will practice acceptance. Today, I will accept people, situations, circumstances, and events as they occur. I will know that this moment is as it should be because the whole universe is as it should be. I will not struggle against the whole universe by struggling against this moment. My acceptance is total and complete. I accept things as they are in this moment, not as I wish they were. I will accept myself today with love and compassion. I accept myself. I accept myself, I accept myself. There you go. I thought that was so beautiful and I just was so excited to wrap up with that. Today I am sending you all so much love and I can't wait to see you on the next episode.

