



EPISODE 51: CHOICE BASED LOVE

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/51](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/51)

Welcome everyone, we have a juicy episode today, it is called choice based love. And it's kind of like unconditional love, but better. So one of my favorite things to remember for myself and remind my clients about all the time is we are always at choice. We can always choose how to react to something if we want to be in a situation, we can always look for a place in the situation or we can make a choice and look for a tiny little crevice where we have one tiny choice we can make, but we can have whatever impact we can with the choices available to us. And that we can have an impact or power over the situation that we're going through. So we're going to talk about choice based love today. But first, we're going to talk about Scrabble. And I almost named this episode, the one about Scrabble like a friends episode because the Scrabble story is so good. And it relates back to choice but it will all come together in a minute. But as I go back and think about the story I'm about to share, I think it illustrates making a choice and creating a different result.

So before we dive in just a reminder that registration for the next round of Marriage MBA, which is a marriage breakthrough program opens up again soon, get all the details and get on the waitlist at maggiereyes.com/group, you definitely want to get on the waitlist so that you get all the updates on that. So in case anyone listening is not familiar with Scrabble, it is a board game that you play by putting tiles with letters on a board and making words. It is my favorite board game. And we discovered it because we love to travel to Blue Ridge, Georgia. And we rent a cabin there we haven't this year, but many years before in the past, in the before times, we would rent a cabin and just relax and take walks and you know hear the birds chirping and, like enjoy the beautiful trees and paths and that kind of thing. And one year we were renting a cabin and they had Scrabble in the group of games. And we started playing it and we came home and bought it and we played it together ever since. So I did not grow up playing it as a kid. It's something that I discovered with the hubby and we play it together. So it's very meaningful to us to play together. And a couple of years ago we started the annual holiday Scrabble Invitational





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because we like to have fun and I love naming things. So basically, we play Scrabble at some point during the Christmas holiday season. And we call it the holiday Scrabble Invitational. We all laugh and it's a fun time. So this year, we had the third one and we actually played twice. So we played in the morning. And the hubby one he went fair and square. Okay, now I'm usually the queen of Scrabble in my house, I usually win but he won. And we got a special edition of Scrabble, that's how much we love this game. It is a holiday Scrabble and you get extra points for using holiday words.

And you get these special cards where you can do all kinds of cool things like you wait until your partner makes a huge score. And then you can skip your turn and get half of his points. So he keeps all his points, but you get half of whatever the score was. So, my husband did a play where he got like 16 points was amazing. And then I got 30 added to my mine. So it's crazy what you can do with them. So the first time we played the hubby who if you remember, if you listen to the podcast, this is your first episode, welcome. But if you've listened before, you know he's an engineer, very smart, very savvy person. So he kept switching out the cards getting better ones using them, really, for every turn that he had. And he was super strategic, about how he used these different things you can do with these cards. And he was brilliant, and he won the game. Now, I didn't really take advantage of the cards. I didn't play any holiday words, and I just kind of played how I always play. And they left it at that and I lost. And to ever have those moments, when you know you could have done something better. Like the minute it's over, you just know you didn't bring your best to the situation. Sometimes it's a conversation right? You have a conversation with someone and you know, you could have just been more compassionate or more loving or you know, supported them in a different way or represented yourself in a differently those moments, right. So I had one of those moments. And I realized as I was typing on my Notes for this episode that I was kind of in a fog during the game. I was kind of going through the motions. I didn't really realize it while it was happening.





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But the minute it was over something popped and they knew I could do better so I did. What I teach all of you to do I asked for to over, I asked the hobby for a rematch and hubby being the delightful human that he is said yes, and we played again. So we played in the morning, that we had a lovely day together this as I'm recording this, right after sort of the Christmas holiday. And then we played in the evening. So Scrabble is not his favorite game, he plays it purely because I love it. He doesn't really hate it or anything, but it's just not one of those things that is his favorite. So I really receive it as an act from love when he plays with me. It's a very special thing to me, it means so much and we make it fun. And we smack talk sort of lovingly with each other, we congratulate each other when one of us makes a great score, and things like that. So we have fun while we're playing we really interact as kind of a connecting ritual. So this time around for the rematch. I went to the box.

And I pulled out the brochure with all of the directions and they read every single sentence of those directions. What qualifies as a holiday word, how to use the cards, all the things are in every sentence. And when I was ready, I told him, I am ready now. And as we started the game, I started reading the cards, discarding the ones that seemed too hard to execute getting other ones using them as my different turns. And as I started getting all these extra points from all these holiday words, I worked the game. I learned the rules and then I worked it hard. And I got this card. Like almost near the end of the game, where I could look at all his letters and pick one and take it I could just take it, on of his letters. And he had an x. And as one of the most valuable letters you can put on the board. And it literally said to him, I want to stay happily married. I don't need the x like I don't need to take the x we don't have to proceed. And he is such a good sport. He said it's okay take it. So I did. And it was crazy. I mean two words with it. It was like a gazillion points. I didn't even need the x to win it was like extra. Okay, we tallied up all the points I ended up winning by over 150 points, which is just not a normal score in Scrabble. It's really





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because of the special rules. And this is the holiday edition of Scrabble. If you're curious as to what I'm talking about.

So when I was chatting with the hubby about it today I told him I think there's some lessons here. I think there's something to learn from my experience of playing once and losing, and then playing again and winning and not just winning but really massively winning. So here's what I thought about. I want to know what you think about this, you can feel free to let me know message me on Instagram @themaggiereyes, you can find me there. So here's what I thought, Okay. Sometimes we do things on autopilot, and it's okay. It's not a big deal. It's a Scrabble game. Like who cares, right. But sometimes it's not a Scrabble game, sometimes just a project at work or problem in a relationship or something bigger. And I really want to check in with you right now. Is there a place in your life where you're on autopilot like I was with the first match of Scrabble, where you need to get off autopilot and really pay attention. I ended up winning so massively because I did one thing, I just focused. I paid attention to the rules to how to get the most out of the game to how to show up in the game differently. And then I used every tool available to me to make the points in the game. Now this happened even on the same day, it was like night and day of experience between these two Scrabble matches. And we had fun both times we laughed and we enjoy each other's company. But the second time I knew I had given it my all, my whole experience of the situation was really different because of it. And it wasn't hard. It didn't take years of practice, it didn't take a lot of time, all I did was start paying attention.

And then I tweaked how I was showing up to the game as a result of bringing my awareness to what I was doing. And this really, when I started thinking about this reminded me so much of everything we do in coaching. We start paying attention, we make tweaks to how we're showing up. And as a result, many, many times we can create massive wins. And oftentimes





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in the amount of time, that seems very short compared to you know, sometimes if you spent six years doing things one way, and suddenly you do it differently. And suddenly you get a different reaction, right? It seems a very short period of time. But it's because you're focusing, you're paying attention to how to get the most of whatever situation that you're in. And I cannot overstate how powerful this can be in a marriage, right? When I talk about the power of one person changing a relationship for the better. One of the core things that we do to help make that happen when we're in a coaching situation is we learn the rules of the game. We stop playing on autopilot doing whatever we used to do before, right? We start reading the rules, quote, unquote, of what makes a marriage thrive, what makes a relationship work, which is basically all the things I talk about on the podcast every week. And the core, the absolute core is friendship, build a friendship, or as I call team all the time, you hear me talking about team, build a friendship, build a team. And on that foundation, you can build anything in your relationship. But you can't build the friendship on autopilot, if you have to look for the little ways to build up your score to make deposits into your emotional bank account. And I just really saw in playing the Scrabble game, just how you show up can have such an impact on the outcome, like one little tweak, when decision to take a beat, to think about the best option and then execute on what the best move is that you can make in that moment can change the total outcome of the whole game, right. So sometimes in Scrabble, you take a turn, and you play a word that isn't a huge amount of points, you play that word to do something, the way my husband and I talked about it is to expand the board, you kind of want to have the ability to make a word in any place on the board. And sometimes, the way the game is set up, there's these parts of the board you can't even use, if there's no word you can connect to it there.

So sometimes, to help every other player put more words down on the board, you sort of play whatever you can to expand the board. They usually when I played this game with my hubby playing, and we're expanding the board for each other. And as I thought about it, I thought





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that's teamwork. That's what teamwork looks like in practice. So think about just for a moment we're in life do you need to make a play of some kind, that doesn't have an immediate and obvious return. But it's just going to help you expand the board, either for somebody you love or for yourself. Where you will have more options and more opportunities to play a better game, because you took the play that expanded the board. Even if it wasn't the most immediately, you know, points filled, play that you can make. So sometimes you can play to expand the board. Other times you look for ways to really maximize your score to the greatest amount possible. And you hold on to letters that can be really valuable until you find the option that will give you the most points. And it takes patience, right not to play a letter right away, to not go for the quick win to hold on and wait for something better. I really find it so useful to think about that. Is there a place where it would be useful for you to slow down and wait for a better play? Just take that in think about that this week, is there a place where there's a different choice to make.

So that was how I made a new choice with Scrabble, I created a completely different outcome. We had a lot of fun, I learned all these lessons. And now I can share them with you. And it's all about making one choice that then impacted everything that came after it. And I just thought that was a perfect story to share when we talk about choice based love. So choice based love means you choose love first. That's the simplest way to describe it, you choose love first. That's it, you choose love. Now something that's really important that I want to make so clear is I think in our society when I use a word like love or when we think about love in the context of marriage, we have these connotations that aren't always useful. And I want to be clear that love can be very powerful, it can be tender, it can be fierce, it can be strong, it can be soft, it can be comforting, it can be challenging. So when I say choose of First, it does not mean you allow things that are contrary to your values that go against yourself or where your love for the other person somehow creates a betrayal of yourself. When you choose love first you choose love for





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yourself, for the situation for the other person. And that love can look like saying no or saying yes or making a plan or negotiating something different or even disappointing someone from a place of love. Okay, so with the story I'm about to share. It's just one example of what this can look like. But it for sure is one of many. So think about your situation and what choosing love first looks like for you. It can be very very different than the story. But I think you'll find the story really interesting and useful. So let's see you tell me yet what you think about it.

Okay, so first of all, the way I think about love is really not some mysterious thing that just happens to you sometimes, right? It's kind of outside of yourself, and you have no control over it. I think that's how a lot of people think about love. And I don't think about love that way. I think it's a very concrete thing that you can choose to practice, anytime. And I learned this concept, this idea of choice based love, at one of my continuing education classes at the Institute For Life Coach Training. And we can probably have a healthy debate whether it's unconditional love, or choice based love. And here's why I like to think about it through the lens of choosing more so than through the last lens of unconditional, because I'm always at choice, I always remember my moment of power, and then choosing the situation or choosing the person or choosing my reaction. I feel like it has this nuance that brings us back to our choice and our own internal power. So we could probably make a case as I described to you the scenario and the examples and all those things that you can see, well, that's unconditional love, Maggie. And if that works for you, and you like it, take it and fly with it, go for it all the way. I like to think about it as choice based love, I just feel much more powerful when you think about it that way. So you choose which one works for you.

Okay, so there was this continuing education class, and the teacher taught us this idea. And she taught it to us as coaches as a tool to think about our clients. And what she was telling us was that we can make the decision to love our clients, whether they are lovable or not. And I thought





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that was so powerful and so brilliant, so amazing. And then I thought about it in a marriage, right, as a wife, I can make the decision to love my husband, whether he's lovable or not, right? And we can make this decision with friends, with family members, with anyone, right, with our bosses, with our co workers, with our colleagues, with someone you see on social media that may not be being lovable in that moment, right. So one of the things we learned in the class really specific to coaching was one of the most important factors in a client success is the relationship and rapport they build with their coach. So Several studies have been done with teachers and with therapists, to the effect that we impact the outcome based on how we see the students or how we see the client.

So when we think about when I think about all of you listening, I think about your highest, wisest self, your most powerful self, I'm always speaking to that part of you, I'm always believing that you can take what I'm teaching today, you can apply it tomorrow, you can make your life better, you can feel more at peace and more relaxed and really amazing, right. And so that idea of how the teacher or the coach views, the student, or the client has a huge impact on the results that the student or the client creates. So imagine taking that to your marriage, how you see the other person, the person that you're in partnership with, that has a huge impact on the relationship. So if you choose to love them, whether they are lovable or not, it is possible, they could react differently to you because of the way you're engaging with them. Right? This is what I teach in so many different ways. I will repeat it over and over again. Because I always believe that it'll land differently. And there'll be someone listening today where you'll get it, it'll click Oh, I see what you mean now. So they can react differently to you because you're choosing to love them whether they're lovable or not. And then whatever outcome you're experiencing within shifts, hey, so I've heard versions of this idea before. And when I was in my coach training, I was really much more skeptical than I am now. And now I've tried so many things on myself. He does the things on myself. Then I test them on my clients, and then they see the results, we get and I'm





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much less skeptical. But when I was in coach training, back when I did my original certification at the Life Coach School, this was back in 2012. And at the time, because Brooke, the founder of the school was teaching the classes personally and she was telling us about unconditional love. That's how she talks about it. And I thought, well, this is a nice theory. But I don't think so. Right? This is a nice theory to think about.

And at the time, she was coaching one of my classmates about her boss and loving her boss on purpose. And I listened to all her coaching and I said well how could this apply to me which is what I always We recommend that you do when you listen to the podcast, when you listen to me teach anything, how does this apply to me? Right? I did that. And I thought about a work colleague that I had back then. And this person could be less than lovable on a regular basis. She was very moody, we had a lot of projects together at the time. And I really never knew, like when I want to go to work each day, it could have been negative nelly or nice nelly, like, I never knew which version of her I was gonna get kind of like a Jekyll and Hyde thing, right? And back then I was working in HR and I was doing the coaching training it nights, I went to work the next day. And I got an email about an issue that would have normally triggered an immediate response from me that necessarily a bad one, but to be honest, probably a very defensive one. You know, think about, have you ever gotten an email where you felt like you were being attacked? Maybe it was a text or email, something like that. Maybe the person was asking an innocent question. But you felt your fight or flight sort of just kick in immediately. This was one of those times the question, I don't think had any weight to it, but I immediately just felt that kick, right. So I learned this idea, the day before. And remember, I was kind of skeptical, but I was like, okay, here was the homework assignment, here is what my colleague was tasked to do, and I decided to try it on. It was not just your practice choice base loved or unconditional love. But to pretend that this person loved everything I did. That was the actual assignment. So the homework was, pretend this hard to love person loves everything you do. And as I mentioned,





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I was very skeptical. But I did it anyway. And I really want to emphasize that it's not like I drank some magic kool aid, and thought that this was the answer to everything I was more in the camp of this sounds crazy, but why not? Nothing else has really worked with this person, I literally have nothing to lose. And that was my attitude was I have nothing to lose.

So when you listen to the podcast, and you hear me tell stories about things I've done with my clients that you might feel skeptical about, or you hear my clients coming to the show and share relationship breakthroughs that they've created. I really invite you to not even worry about whether you think it's a great idea or not, I invite you to ask yourself, What do I have to lose? What's the worst case scenario, if I try this and stick with it, stick with it for a while and see if it works. Just to be wherever you are with it with whatever I'm teaching on any given day. And if you have a lot of resistance to it, then that's usually the thing to try first, to keep that in mind. That's how you decide which one of these things do I have the most resistance to? Okay, that's the one to see, we're working through that resistance actually leads you. So it could be the emotional weight loss tools, we'll link to those episodes in the show notes, which is no complaining, no defending, if you feel resistance to that, or no convincing and no pretending, which is the advanced emotional loss tools. It could be something like requests versus demands, and we practicing making requests instead of the measuring a lot of awareness to that are practicing soul centered communication. Those are just a few of the podcast episodes where there's very specific ways that you can show up with very specific attitudes or awarenesses that you can bring to a situation where you might feel resistance to them. So you pick the one that you feel the most resistance to and you play with that.

Okay. So this one was my that I had resistance to. And let's go back there we are cubicles, coworkers, acting as if this person loved everything I did. Okay. So I tried that on like a sweater. And then from that thought this person loves everything I do. I had to respond to the email. So I





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paused. And instead of replying and going immediately on automatic pilot, which as we know, is not the best idea whether it's Scrabble or your life, not the best idea. I thought, okay, if this person loves everything I do, if that was true, how would I handle this? How would I approach it? And then I realized just asking myself that question, that I would handle it totally differently. Instead of replying, I would gather the files involved. So this was when I was in HR, there's always a lot of files for everything. There is paperwork about the person or about the job or about whatever the project is to add together the files that were involved. And then I would ask for an in person meeting, to review and discuss the things that were asked in the email and then I would take it from there. Okay.

I thought if this person really loved everything I did, that's exactly what I would do. So that's what I did. And we had the meeting. And we talked about the issue that I had felt so attacked over, right? We talked about that thing for about two minutes, it was super clear, you know, the answer was immediately apparent, it did not take any time at all to just solve that and move on. And then we went on to discuss who my colleague was dating, what she had seen going on in the office the week before, and a bunch of completely unrelated to me topics whatsoever, just whatever was on her mind. And I remember sitting in that chair in shock, I looked very calm and totally relaxed on the outside, I was participating in the conversation. But on the inside, I thought, Well, how about that this coaching stuff actually works right in real life with potentially annoying people. And including me, because I in that case, could have been the annoying person if I would have stayed in reactive mode. And, you know, meet some snippy remark or something about the email and all that. So what was different? How did that happen? I was very perplexed, I didn't jump to reply, I didn't immediately launch into my own defense. And because I acted differently, the person that I was in relationship with, reacted differently. Also, that was one of my first experiences with this idea that one person making a shift can have a profound impact on how the whole relationship goes. And in that moment, my mind was really blown wide open





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to all the different ways I can apply that and how it could work and what it could do. And that's obviously one of the biggest themes that I teach on the podcast all the time.

So here's the most important thing that I want to share with you today. Which is, it sounds so simple, but in the moment, it can be really challenging, which is that at any given moment, you can choose to come from love, or from defense, or from fear, or any other non constructive emotion. But coming from love will always produce a better outcome for you every single time. Because regardless of the exterior situation, you're going to be calmer, you're going to be more anchored in your own power. And that alone, just that is a better outcome than being reactive and fearful. And probably annoying, because people living in fear aren't the jolliest jellybeans in the land. Right? So how do you practice this idea of choice based love? You make a decision that at any given moment, you can choose to come from love and ask yourself, what would that look like right now. You take the lead, you decide first, that you will come from a space of empathy and kindness and generosity and then take action. And the idea that this person loved everything I did, just having that thought in my brain allowed me to think about my reactions differently. So you can do this at home, at work anywhere in your life that doesn't feel good right now and would feel better if there was more love there. Think about what would feel better, if there was more love there. And then you don't have to wait for other people to be more loving, or to show you the love you crave or to do anything really. So in this case, I had this coworker where if I would have waited right? for her to be calm and collected I would still be waiting, 10 years I don't know. 15 years later, I'd still be waiting. I went leading with love, right? I started generating that love for myself planting it first, expressing it first, right, giving it first. And then I sort of sat back and see let me watch what happens. And you see what happens when you do this. And this is really one of those episodes. This is really true always but especially today, we're I really invite you to not take my word on this, like I don't want you to believe me and think Oh, that sounds great. And then leave this episode and like move on. I want you to try





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it to experience it, to play with it to see how what version of this applies to you and see what results you get what you can create when you make a new choice, whether it's playing Scrabble, whether it's with a co worker, whether it's with your partner, to make a new choice.

So the best way to create a life you love with the love of your life which is one of my favorite phrases. I love thinking about that. You are listening to me today can create a life you love with the love of your life. And the best way to do it is to choose to do it To make the choice to choose love first you start there, and then you see what happens. Okay, that is all for today. If you found this podcast episode useful, please share it with your friends share it with someone that enjoys Scrabble or that enjoys love or that can be helped the listening to this. If you're on iTunes, please leave us a review that helps more people find the podcast. So absolutely, I invite you to leave a review on iTunes with all my thanks. All my gratitude. Thank you so much. We'll be back next week. I'm sending you all a big hug today.

