



EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

Maggie

Hello, everyone, welcome to the marriage life coach podcast, we have a very special guest today, I am so excited to dive into all the things with her. Her name is Michelle, I do not know how to pronounce her last name, I tried a few times, and I got it wrong. So we're gonna call her Michelle, she will pronounce her name for you. She is the founder of Food Safety University. She is one of my most brilliant and delightful clients in the Marriage MBA program. And she's here to share a little bit about her experience and so many other things we're gonna discuss. So first, Michelle, please introduce yourself, tell the world what you do. And tell us about Food Safety University.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Oh, sure. So thank you so much for having me on the podcast. It's a delight to be here. And I am Dr. Michelle Pfannenstiel. I am a Veteran Veterinarian and I do what's called regulatory medicine. And I teach small food manufacturers how to comply with government regulations, and meet market expectations so that they can go out and sell all that lovely food that we all love to buy and support our local economy.

Maggie

So thank you for keeping our food supply safe. You're basically a superhero. Thank you very much. We appreciate it on behalf of everyone. So tell us why you decided to join the marriage MBA and like what brought you to this doing this work on your relationship?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Well, it was a couple of things so that you might have noticed we went through a pandemic this





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

year. And we were, I mean, it was pretty funny because the pandemic like laid bare, all of the things going on in our food supply in the United States and shelves were bare, we couldn't get meat, workers were getting sick, inspectors we're getting sick, right? And so I work in regional food supply. And I have a lot of different solutions to be able to create robust regional food supplies. And I ended up creating in 2020, a joint venture and I moved from Maine to Ohio when in a pandemic, and let me tell you, I met and Andrew and I decided we were moving, like I met the people who I was going to do a joint venture with. Andrew and I decided we were moving within a six week timeframe. And we moved in two weeks. We packed up eight years of life in Maine -- three children, one geriatric German Shepherd, one 19 year old cat, and two like five year old cats, and moved into a hotel first and then into a two bedroom, one bathroom Airbnb.

Maggie

So let's just say there were some stressors involved in your relationship.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

My husband works for me. So clearly, there was nothing we could ever argue about.

Maggie

Clearly there was no reason to ever have any kind of disagreements at all.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

None whatsoever. And then what originally happened was I was gonna come into one on one coaching and I had, I had said, okay, I was gonna come in on one on one coaching. But there is something I have learned about myself in 2020, which is: I love group coaching. I truly love group





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

coaching. And I mean, of course, I love one on one coaching, but just not as much. Like I get my one on one coaching by and large through Self Coaching Scholars, Brooke Castillo's Program. And that's as much one on one coaching as I ever want. So I love group coaching, because the questions that I asked myself, which is the questions that everybody listening to the podcast should be asking themselves, which is: how does this apply to me? Okay. And so I had thought about doing one on one, but I really would much rather do a group program. And then you were like, I'm doing a group program and if you sign up, here's a special bonus. And I was like, oh, let me sign up. Oh, my God.

Maggie

That's great. So good. And I think for me, I'm in a group for my business development. And what I find being in a group is sometimes when I hear other people being coached, they're coached on things that wouldn't have occurred to me to ask the question, but once we're answering that question, it totally applies to me and I'm so glad somebody asked it. That happens to me almost every week.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Absolutely. And, and, and I think that in this program, you know, we work on... we work on the relationships with our husbands, you know, which is my primary relationship, right? But through the work that we have done, I have better relationships with my children and who in this time of Coronavirus, doesn't need better relationships with the other small people that are living in their house? Right? I have better relationships with my clients. I have, you know, and so it's just and it's because I listened to the other coaching and I'm like, oh, wait, I'm doing that over there.





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

Maggie

One of the things that I find (this is just an interesting aside) is that sometimes in the scenarios, I'm like, wait, no, I'm the husband in the scenario like, I'll listen to another scenario, I'll be like, oh, I can improve in this area, actually, for myself, right? And it's, and if we're doing one on one, we're just coming with the thing that's already on our mind. The thing that would never occur to us doesn't arise in that container, which is just an interesting way to think about it.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right! And then we can never see us, you know, like, seeing myself from potentially the way Andrew sees me. It is not available, basically, to me in a -- it's just so much harder in a one on one versus in a group.

Maggie

It's an interesting thing. I think that, like you said, there's a place for both. And there's a place for whatever the support that feels good and nourishing in that moment. And I am now in the stage of my own life as a human and as a professional where it's like, I see the power of a group in a completely different way, having experienced it for myself. And I'm so excited to be leading this group, which is one of the questions I was talking to someone yesterday, and she asked me, "Do they talk about deep things, you know, do they get into the nitty gritty of the real stuff?" I'm like, this is not a surface level group. So let me just tell everyone who's listening right now. If that's what you wanted, I'm sure it's not. But if that's what you want, this is not that we get into the nitty gritty of the things. And I think what's really important is, I have this sense, and I certainly cultivate the sense that we all want to see each other win. Like that's what we all want. We all want to see each other grow and heal and, you know, feel supported in the things that we want





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

to improve in our lives. What are your thoughts about that?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

No, I absolutely. So first of all, yes, we talked about the nitty gritty detail. And what's in Marriage MBA stays in Marriage MBA, so we will not be divulging that on the podcast. But suffice it to say, you know, all the words are mentioned so yeah. And then, what was the second part of the question?

Maggie

It was just, you know, do we get into those things? And does how does it feel for you to know, like, for you as the experiencer, of cultivating that, allowing that for all of us to just be real in that?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Yeah. And but then that's like one of the most important things because it normalizes, in our conversation, that you can have a happy marriage. And that there can be things that you wish were better about the marriage, right? Because I've been ... we will have been married 15 years coming up this April. So I'll still be in Marriage MBA by then, and I'm at the point where friends are getting divorced. And, or spouses are dying, like that one's pretty petrifying. And it normalizes that, it's not an either ... you don't, it's like, it's not a perfect marriage or divorce. Right? Like, nobody looks like that. And it normalizes the conversation among women in a really healthy way. Because a lot of times, so like, I'm a women's college grad, and I love my siblings. But a lot of times (and I work in a very female dominated - the veterinarian culture). So if you don't know, 80% of veterinarians are women. Right? And so it's very easy to sit there and bitch about our spouses. Okay? And because that is our culture, we are a culture that complains. But what's very





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

normalizing, and what's very affirming is that when we have conversations, the conversations all have to have a point or a solution that we're looking for, which we'll get to in the conversation, right? But it normalizes that, we can have everyday conversations, we can make things a little bit better, and it's not: I'm either blissfully happy or I have one foot out the door.

Maggie

Yes, there's space for everything in between, and that I think it's important to talk about the messiness of it all. Like this can be amazing. This one part of our relationship can be amazing and this other part of our relationship is not amazing. And we still love each other, and that's fine, even as we work through whatever we want to improve in the relationship.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right, and it's important and it's also important to me as a you know, I'm a fairly in my like, circle of what I do. I'm a fairly public figure. There are not a whole lot of people like me. Like I'm on podcasts and I'm on Instagram, I'm on Facebook. Right and it's really important for me to be an example of what is possible, right? And when Andrew and I make our marriage just a little bit better, and we make when we make our marriage just a little bit better, frankly, my business gets better because he works for me. But we're an example of what's possible to our kids. Yes. Right. And that is, if there's anything more important than that, I don't know what it is. But I'm an example of what's possible to other, you know, female CEOs to other, you know, other women who were, you know, like we're having, I'm sure men never have this conversation, but like, can you have it all? Right, right. I, I do. I really do have it all. I have a profitable business. I have an amazing marriage. I have fabulous kids. I have mess that goes with that. Because it doesn't because life is not unicorns and daisies, but I accept the mess, right?





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

Maggie

Yes! Accept the mess. Hashtag accept the mess. Yes, that's so good. Yeah, I love it. So one of the concepts that I have taught on the podcast, so there's a whole episode on soul centered communication, and we're going to talk about it today from the lens of, I teach it in the program. And Michelle has taken soul centered communication, and as a very studious student would do - made it her own and taken it out and applied in all these different situations in her own life. And one of the reasons that I asked her on the show was, I was really so moved by how you took this and just embraced living this way. And I would love to hear, we're gonna recap briefly what soul centered communication is, but I'd love to hear just your experience of using that tool and how some of the things that you've just been sharing. So over time around, like you said, with your kids, or with your husband, or even with vendors or other types of people how you've applied it. So just to recap really quickly, I'm gonna let Michelle recap it. Since it's like one of the things that she uses so much. So tell us, Michelle.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

What is soul central communication? Right. Okay, so first of all, we had a great conversation on my podcast. So if you want to hear about this in a non-marriage related context, go listen to the episode, I think it's 16.

Maggie

And we'll link to that in my show notes here. So if you're listening to this, just go to the website, and we'll have the link there to go ahead.





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Yeah. And so, soul centered communication, what is it? So the first thing that you need to do is you need to like, take a pen and paper and write it out. If you're driving.... but take it out. And there are two parts to soul centered communication, okay? The first part is the soul. But the second part is the centered. Okay? And what you really need to realize is: is that if you're going to communicate, you have to communicate from the center of yourself. You have to communicate from not, not the person that's trying to solve all the problems, or not the person who's trying to put out all the fires, but who you actually really are. And there are lots of frameworks within which Maggie will teach you how to get to that person. But that is as important. Like, if you're not there, none of the rest of it works. So you know, we're life coaches, we talk about you know, all these different things, but the truth of the matter is, if you can't do mind management, you can't solve problems in a meaningful, in a meaningful way. Unless you are centered in on yourself and really being the person the universe is calling you to be. Okay. And that is someone who's like, right, I remember I have these values, I have these things that I know that I'm supposed to be living into, because that is what's calling to me. And when I think about those values, I settle down and my shoulders drop like, like, being centered is like a physical experience.

Maggie

Let's pause there. That is so so important. 14:32 I love that you said that being centered to the physical experience, the the physiology of your body is different when you are in a stress cycle. And coming back to center is really critical to create thriving. So in this podcast, what I like to focus on is everything is pointing to thriving. We're not always thriving or not always thriving in every area, like we were just talking about. But the place we know we're going is thriving and





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

thriving requires, as Michelle has so eloquently said, being centered. Continue.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right. So... the and you're not going to be centered all the time. But you can't get centered with your head and you have to get centered with your body. And you know, if you're centered or you're not, this is not a cerebral experiment, right? And so for all of us type A women who listen to the podcast, you know, you have to let go, you have to recognize your body to the point that you know when you're centered, which may be a very uncomfortable experience. So for some of the listeners out there and be tolerant to that discomfort, because on the other side is being centered.

Maggie

Yes! One of the things I used to do before I discovered this type of work, I could recognize myself as a person who lived inside my head. I lived in the top of my body, and the bottom of my body was just sort of there. And I wasn't as tuned as I am now to: my body is speaking to me. Oh, is my tummy clenching? Are my shoulders stressed? Am I relaxed? How do I feel right now? Like, just taking a moment? Even right now, as you're listening to this podcast? Just take a moment and just breathe into your body and just notice, is there a flutter? Is there a constriction somewhere? Is there an expansion somewhere? And that, that moment, that pause is always useful to get you back... to help you get back to center.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right and so that's an incredibly important, like, that is a minimum 50% part of soul centered communication... and feeling, you know, I horseback ride and so you know, feeling your systems





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

like connecting? It's I think of it as you know, I mean, I'm sitting in a chair, but it's that learned response of connecting with the saddle and connecting with the horse and bringing the horse up under you. That's all centering, right? And whatever, you know, lots of people do that getting your stride when you're running or when you're like, whatever. So coming back to that is incredibly important. And then we look to the soul part of that, okay. And soul is, of course, an acronym. Maggie knows I love acronyms! Acronym queen! And so the first question is, like, are you solution oriented? And actually, Andrew and I were having a conversation this weekend, and we're just kind of having, we were kind of having some trouble. And I was like, you know, what solution you're like, solving for, like, what are we solving for here?

Maggie

Yes! That's a great question. What are we solving for?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

What are we solving for here? And then when it turned out, he had no idea what we were solving for. We kind of stopped the conversation.

Maggie

And that immediately, it just brings you so much clarity, right? We as a society are very accustomed. And I feel like it's part of the ocean that we swim in that we'd like to look at every angle of a problem from like, if it was a prison, and it has 1000 sides, we will look to 1000 sides of problem before we think. But what about the solution? How about we look at that?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

Well, right? And this is why, you know, and this is why it's so useful with my clients, because, you know, like, right before I had this conversation, I was on the phone with the FDA and a client and varying things going on, you know, and I got to be really clear with a client, I'm like, well, what, what result would you like to get?

Maggie

Yes!

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

You know, what are we going for here? Would you like to stay in business? Because if you'd like to stay in business, then you're gonna have to hire me, right?

Maggie

There's, and there's like, what is the result you want to get? We go into so many situations in our lives where we don't even ask that. We don't take the time to ask that.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right! We don't because we're it's and I don't know, I don't know why. Because I think the results that we were trying to get were spoon fed to us for so long, right? Like I have middle school kids. So the results they're trying to get, they're trying to get good grades on their report card. They are trying to get on the track team. Like the results are so, but then when you get to be an adult, one of the fun parts of adulting. Right. Fun parts of adulting I say in air quotes is that you get to decide what your results are. And that's incredibly true with both a marriage or a business or any other business that you're in, decide what your results are, and just decide. And then if





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

you're having a conversation, are you moving towards that or not? So that's the "S," right? And then "O" is open hearted.

Maggie

Yes, yes.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

When you're opening -- I love the way you describe this Maggie. Is, you know, like, if somebody who loves you was in the room with you, would you be open to getting a hug?

Maggie

Yeah, I was thinking about open hearted, like, how can I possibly explain right in a visceral, easily recognizable way? Am I or not? How would I know? And when I really sat down to think about it, I was like, wait a minute, if somebody was in the room and they wanted to hug me and I am closed, I would not be huggable. I would be like later, right, in that moment. We've all had those moments -- "later, I'm concentrating," right? Which is fine, nothing wrong with those moments, we just want to start building the self awareness to know, when we're open hearted that also means: am I open to influence? Am I open to another person's ideas? Am I open to thinking about whatever we're talking about in a different way? And if I'm not, let's just recognize that that's not gonna be a productive conversation.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right, exactly. And when you're having conversations with your husband, about, you know, you don't have to necessarily be open hearted about the conversation about the grocery list. No,





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

it's like, like this. And I want to say, and then that brings up the idea that having soul centered communication takes mental and emotional work. Right? And so we're gonna apply it to the things where it matters. And so maybe that does matter. You know, we're a family that has a metric ton of food allergies, and all these different sorts of things. And so sometimes we do have to have emotional conversations about the grocery list.

Maggie

Yeah, totally.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right. But you have to decide what you're going to apply that emotional energy to. Okay. And so then that brings up the "U" and this is probably the hardest one. It is uncomplicated. Okay? Are you re-litigating every blessed argument that you have ever had in your entire, like married life? So I have to tell you, like, my oldest kid is going to be 13. And Andrew and I didn't ever have our first like, knock down, drag out fight until I was like six months pregnant. I had terrible pregnancies. Oh, my God. Like the worst -- I had hyperemesis and all this sort of stuff. And you say that I was on edge in that first pregnancy. I had lost my first two babies. And so he was pregnancy number three, and it was not good. And I was... it was like, holding on to him with like, with like my fingernails, right? So all of my mental and emotional energy was going towards surviving, literally surviving this pregnancy. I don't remember what Andrew did. But we have had the same argument for 12 and a half years.

Maggie

Welcome to humanity! And also I know that like, half of my listeners are like, that's me. And the





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

other half are like, that's my husband or my partner.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Yeah, exactly. And so now since we're coming up on our 15th anniversary, it's like you know, we've been doing this for more than a dozen years. Because my kid is about to turn 13.

Maggie

Yes. So why don't we stop that?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right. And so when I hear the words, a dozen years come out of my mouth, I know it's trying to retreat from the conversation. So anyway, yeah, so that's, so that's the "U" part. And that's probably the funniest to me. But it's also the most important because it's so easy to go into any conversation in a marriage with a kid. Oh, my God, notice how you do this with your kids? Or with your mother?

Maggie

Yeah, with anyone! Yeah, totally!

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Like, you're re-litigating everything that you've ever said to each other. Right? And once you've started to re-litigate, you've lost sight of your solution, I will tell you.

Maggie





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

Yes. So un-complicate is like one thing at a time? Are we talking about one thing at a time? Are we talking about 54 things at a time, right? And if we want to be solution focused, then we can't talk about 54 things because we can't solve all 54 things at once. We want to pick the one and then go to the next and then go to the next. So important!

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right. And so then The L Word comes into loving. Right? And are you being loving in that space? Right and loving doesn't necessarily mean capitulating? It doesn't mean that, you know, we have to be snuggling while we're arguing. The way I approach that is I use the rules of emotional weight loss. Okay, which is one of the few like in the first five of your podcast, right?

Maggie

Yes. Yeah. So we'll link to that in the show notes. So the emotional weight loss.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

The emotional weight loss, right? And so we have, we have no complaining, no defending, right? No convincing and no pretending. And so if I'm in a space where I know that I'm centered, right, I'm pretty calm. One of the kids could come up and hug me while Andrew and I are having this conversation. And we're not relitigating every single thing that's gone on in 15 years. Right? And then the next thing is, is that am I complaining, pretending you know, or defending and doing any of those things. Because if I'm like trying to, say I'm trying to convince him of something, then I'm not, then I'm off somewhere else. I'm off somewhere else. So being in a state of loving is being in a state of being able to have our relationship and in between us, my thoughts about the relationship and having him allow his own thoughts about the relationship and me not have





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

to control everything, or it capitulates everything.

Maggie

Yes so powerful! I like to think of loving is both soft and fierce. Like there's a place for both. And that loving includes loving the other person and yourself. Because what I see so much is so many of my clients who are loving, powerful, caring, deeply caring people will prioritize the other person to the point where they twist themselves into a pretzel. And it's like, hold on a second, you're loving towards them, and towards you, what honors them and honors you. How are we, both of us are cared for in the conversation.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right! And if you're not standing up for your own self and twisting yourself into a pretzel, you're pretending things are okay, when they're not.

Maggie

Exactly, which does not lead to thriving.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

No, that leads to resentment, right?

Maggie

Yeah. Yeah. It leads to all the other -- it's like do not go down that road, we know where that road goes, that is not a place we want to go. So tell us a little bit about whether it's a specific time that you like use this specific tool, or just what you've seen over the last few months and





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

applying it more often. What's the reflection that you have just about communicating using this framework?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Well, I think that one of the things that I decided to do, as I go out and decide to be an example of what's possible, frankly, of having it all, it is that if I focus on the habits that I want to have, then I will get where I'm going. And, to me soul centered communication is a habit. You know, we have all of these unconscious terrible habits in communicating, why don't we have conscious good habits in communicating? And you know, and so that is, so one of the changes is I have really taught myself by asking powerful questions by just, you know, deciding, okay, am I in convincing or pretending or, you know, complaining or defending, here? Asking those sorts of powerful questions when I am communicating with myself. So first and foremost, like, you got to learn how to communicate with yourself. Before you decide you're going to communicate with other people effectively, maybe try communicating with yourself effectively. And not try and beat the crap out of yourself to get a different result, because we all know how well that works, right?

Maggie

Absolutely.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

So it starts with soul centered communication, for your own self. Okay? And then when you get in that habit, and that habit looks like me writing in my journal, right? It looks like me getting coached and that sort of thing. When you're when you're committed to that habit, you just





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

noticed that you can apply it in other places. And, yeah, sure, maybe you're gonna apply it around the laundry, like something that you can be, like laundry is a more neutral subject. Whatever. You know, you're not gonna -- it's very hard to go from to start applying this on the deep things in your relationship, right? You know, you've got to crawl, walk and run.

Maggie

Yes, I always say start with the simplest, smallest, tiniest step that you can take first, whatever feels simple and accessible is the best place to start. The simpler anything is, the more likely you are to do it. And when you say simple, we're being sneaky, because we know if you start simple, you'll start to do it.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Yeah. So if you decide that this week, you're going to pick this like one small thing, right? And that you want to have a conversation, pick the mail or pick up you know, I don't know, like something like that. Decide what solution you're going for, and figure out how to get yourself to a centered place, and then practice having that conversation. But then go reflect with yourself. And say okay, yeah, what works in that conversation? What did I say centered in that conversation? Right? Did I stay solution focused? Was I, did I remain open hearted? Did we only talk about the mail or whatever the simple thing is, did we stay loving? And if you didn't just reflect on that, and then figure out what you're gonna do differently?

Maggie

Yeah. Love it! So powerful. Here's the thing is I was thinking as you were chatting like, there are no secrets, right? Like this that we're talking about today on the podcast for everyone to listen





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

to is exactly what I would teach in the program. The difference is when you get stuck, and you do that evaluation, and you're like, uh oh, I didn't, I was not open hearted, I actually got really angry in the middle. And then I wanted to talk about what happened in 1987. And like, when you do all the things, when you're in the group setting, I can coach you through it, I can ask you more questions, we can return to center, we can have that sort of deeper coaching experience through it. But I still want everybody to use this, whether they get coached by me or not, I'm like, you go out in the world, and you've practiced communicating this way. And we will all make the world a better place by communicating this way. Right? Messy and imperfect as it may be.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Absolutely. And that's why we're here. That's why we're out here. I mean, you know, like, there's so much value that people can get from this podcast, around all sorts. I mean, I listened to the podcast for a long time before I joined the Marriage MBA, and I apply the the concepts that you teach in the podcast, to my relationship with my business, to my relationship with my money, to my relationship with my husband, to my relationship with my kids, to my relationship with my business partners, to like, I mean, like, it's applicable everywhere.

Maggie

Love that so much, okay. So when we're doing things like this, and I love that you said, "and then reflect with yourself," whenever we engage in self reflection, there will inevitably be a moment where we find something about ourselves that we don't like that we feel we've missed the mark that we've disappointed our own standard that we have for ourselves. And I'd love to hear what you do, or what you've done. If you have a specific memory, when you find something that is a little bit hard to hear, so to speak, even if you're only talking with yourself about it. Because





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

I think one of the things that happens in coaching is sometimes coaching is confronting and sometimes it's uncomfortable. And I really want everyone listening to understand that we can be resilient in the face of that. And it's okay to feel a little bit uncomfortable while we figure out how to be more of who we want to be. And to normalize that, when we discover something that's difficult to hold. It can be difficult to hold, and that's okay.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right. And I think that's incredibly important. And what a lot of this work has taught me is that what I needed, or what I've been given the opportunity to do, you know, because when you say you need something that all of a sudden, like this gigantic burden. Because remember, all of this stuff is a choice.

Maggie

Yes, everything is a choice, always!

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

But when I... what I really had the opportunity to do is look at my level of attachment to my own thoughts, or my attachment to you know, and, you know, talk about -- it sounds airy fairy to say, you know, attachments to my own thoughts. But what that really means is when you know, it's like, how attached am I to how I think Andrew should be or how I should be, or you know, or how things are supposed to go. And one of the things I've gotten coached on a whole lot, which I'm sure there are ton of people on this podcast that will relate to is being right.

Maggie





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

Yes. Yes.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Okay. Because I have to be right. Like, I just on the phone with the FDA. I have to be right. Like, I have to be right, I have to say the right words in the right order. And I have to put that in the lap of the FDA.

Maggie

When you're protecting our food supply. Let's all be clear, it is clear to us -- it's like if you're doing brain surgery, you need to get that right. You don't want to be poking around in there. Right? So when you're protecting the food supply, it's very critical and important for, and I always talk about context in that context, it is essential and absolutely the right thing to do to be right. And what happens is when we take that home...

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Well, right. And that's where it... because what happens is, is like if you think about it, when many of us are going through our upper level, university courses, and then on to graduate school, if you think about what's going on in brain development at that point, our neurons are learning to fire and that which fires together? Okay, you stays together in your brain. And so if you're learning, you know how to interpret radiographs or how to do abdominal surgery, you know, or how to do you know, any of the things, you know, do financial analysis, right? And you're learning that as a 20 something, you have to be right. Because if you don't, if you are not right for your professor, or you're not right for your client, or if you're not right, you have to be. I have to be right. And so what I think ends up happening for a lot of type A women, is those neurons just





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

learn to fire together. And then we universalize without even realizing it. Being right everywhere. Because that's the habit that we get into. So then we go into and I see this with a lot of my like, millennial moms that (because I'm a Gen Xer). And so I've seen, you know, like my cousins are new Millennial Moms, or other like Millennial Moms, where they're like, "No, no, no, my husband does this all wrong." And I'm like, he's changing a diaper. Like, I recognize you're a veterinarian. But let the man change a diaper...

Maggie

Yeah. It's like there's poop. There's a diaper. Let's just..

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

And, so but there's this, you know, and part of that is absolutely cultural. Because if something screws up, it's never the dad's fault, right? And so we come up in this having to be perfect, right? And veterinary school is the hardest graduate program to get into. Right? And in order to become a veterinarian to get in and to get through, you have to be perfect. Right? And they will tell you that you have to be perfect, right? And so then we universalize that, but the same thing happens with medical doctors, and the lawyers, and the MBA.

Maggie

In so many professions, I've seen it across the board in STEM professions and helping professions and all these different places where, as a society, it's like, there are moments where absolutely being right also is essential. But then that universalizing it, right? And then that has to do with everywhere, at every moment of every minute of every day, then causes so much pain and so many relationships.





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Exactly. But it's a habit you learned that you can unlearn. And I tell you what, everybody who's listening, if I can unlearn. Like having to be right at every moment of every day. Anybody can unlearn it.

Maggie

Yes, amen.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

It's possible for anybody.

Maggie

I love it! And it just reminded me what you know, it was the army, right? You were in the army. So that's another place where you have to follow the rule. It has to be precise, it has to be measured, it has to be to the tee, it has to be whatever your commanding officer says it has to be. And if you're wrong, bad things happen.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Very bad things happen.

Maggie

So it's just like, anyone who feels like they're struggling, or if they're, if their partner is, is complaining to them about, "Hey, how about you just let me change the diaper? How about if I





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

just do that? How about give me a chance to do the thing?" We also have so much compassion and to say, we are living in a society where this is the structure that we were born into. And then we're reacting, all of us are reacting as best as we can to the structures that we were born into. And this is the way we change them by having conversations like this and saying, hey, heads up, maybe this was okay over here, but it's not okay over there. And how about we redesign marriage in a way that works for us? And you just make it up and make it different than it was before?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right? And what is standing between you and the marriage that you want, is tolerating that discomfort of not being in control with everything. It's tolerating that discomfort of unknowing. And maybe there's something really good on the other side of allowing that unknowing? And letting the other person just be who they're supposed to be.

Maggie

Love that so much allowing the unknown. Is there anything else you want to add before we start wrapping up for today?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

No, I mean, I just think that if you're considering the Marriage MBA, it has just been such a gift to me to meet every week, to take that time for an hour every week and have the Facebook group to really be able to reflect on having a... a marriage that that I want, right? And to be able to create the life that I want. And when things aren't going well to have a group of people, where I'm like, oh god, how do I fix this? Oh my god. And you know, and we have like a, you know, we





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

focus in on our marriage and our families and problem solving in there. But it's such a great community of women in order to, you know, to like go that, that bond of going and figuring this stuff out as who we are, and creating the life that we want to live.

Maggie

I love that so much. Okay, so just for fun, I like to ask a question from the Questions for Couples Journal at the end of every interview. And this one, I think it'd be super fun to hear your answer. So here we go. You get paid to take a year off to write a book about any topic. What do you write about?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Oh, my God. So that's so easy. So you and I have talked about this before. But I use this construct with my clients, when we're solving problems, and it's called S.T.R.I.V.E, and it's an acronym. And I could write an entire book on just the "S" of S.T.R.I.V.E, which is safety. What I ask people is: are you physically safe? So I work in food manufacturing, I also come from an army background. And if you're not physically safe, ain't nothing else happening. We have to solve that problem first!

Maggie

Yes.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

We got to solve for that problem first. So I would have, the first third of the book would be about that. And then the second third of the book would be about financial safety. Okay, so I am a Gen





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

Xer, and I bought a house in 2006. If you look, statistically, at the Gen X community, we have not yet recovered from the Great Recession. And if you take this question of financial safety: are we feeling financially safe? What does that actually mean? How do we define financial safety? And how do we -- what sort of relationship do we have with our money? And how are we creating our own financial safety? And then for those of us who run our own businesses and have employees and that sort of thing, are our employees feeling financially safe? Because what happens in -- I mean, I just had a coaching conversation about this this morning, where there is... I have my clients, they have a piece of machinery that's breaking down. And their workers are like, "Yeah, but if I don't fix it, you're not going to make enough money to pay me." Right. And it just creates this environment in the manufacturing facility where nobody feels safe. If you don't feel financially safe, you can't show up to doing whatever it is that you're doing. And then the third safety question is emotionally safe. Do you feel emotionally safe? So again, then you have to define what does emotionally safe mean? And am I emotionally safe to be the person the universe's calling me to be? And am I able to create that level of safety around me? Soul centered communication is a way of creating a safety container. Okay? And so I would have to get your permission.

Maggie

She might quote me in the book that she hasn't started writing yet, but all of us would read that book. I'm like wait, this is a hypothetical -- you get a paid year off to write a book. And I'm like, but I want to read the book - so Michelle you have to write that book!

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right? But then what's really amazing is, is that if you look at work from the positive psychology





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

people out of University of Pennsylvania, when employees feel financially and emotionally safe at work, okay, it is the equivalent for a million dollar business of getting like 20% more in profit.

Maggie

I love that! Okay, say that again. Because so many people that listen are either the employee at the place, or they will own the place. So when an employee feels financially and physically safe at work...

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

...and emotionally safe.

Maggie

So when they have the three safeties. It's the financial equivalent at a company if it's a million dollar company, it's 20% more in profit?

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

You will be 20% more profitable if people feel safe when they're working there.

Maggie

I love that so much. That is so good. And we talked so much about emotional safety in the marriage and how you only get to thriving, right? You have to have safety in order to thrive. It's all the things we talked about is to help you have more that. I love that it's been even researched and quantified for how this can impact business. People ask me all the time -- I just did a podcast interview before this one where I was being interviewed. And the person asked





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

me, "Well, you know, what are some side benefits from you know, working on your marriage?" And I'm like everything in your life gets better, obviously, right? It's like we create safety, though. Like, we think about the employees safety, and the whole business makes more money. It's such, it's an actual really grounded, actual thing. But it's also such a great thing to think about in so many areas of our life, when we create safety, everything gets better.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Right? And I mean, I can point to how we have a higher net worth (not just because of the stock market) now than I did when I was starting the Marriage MBA so..

Maggie

I like that!

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

And we have you know, I mean, Andrew and I talk about money a lot. I was an economics major in college for God's sake. And it's still -- a lot of families have a hard time really having those financial conversations. So everything that I talked about physical, financial safety and emotional safety 100% applicable to a marriage. And all of that is better in my marriage right now, because of the Marriage MBA.

Maggie

Okay, so that is like the most beautiful note to end on. Thank you for being here Dr. Michelle. I don't want to butcher your last name, so I will call you Dr. Michelle. We will link to her website at Food Safety University so you can all go and check her out. She is absolutely brilliant. And





EPISODE 59: COMMUNICATION, SAFETY & BEING RIGHT WITH DR. MICHELE PFANNENSTIEL

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/59](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/59)

if anyone listening to us, knows anyone or is related to someone who's actually in the food industry, you must tell them to follow her immediately. Thank you so much for being here.

Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel

Thank you so much, Maggie. It was wonderful.

