



EPISODE 60: THE ART OF HOLDING SPACE WITH ADAM BRADY

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Maggie

Hello, Hello, everyone. Welcome to another episode of the Marriage Life Coach Podcast. Today is a very, very special day. We have a very special guest. It is a fabulous gentleman named Adam Brady. And we're going to talk about something called the Art of Holding Space. And this is such an important thing for me when I'm coaching my clients. But it's such an important thing when we are married, and we have partners that we want to love and we want to love more deeply and feel more connected to. If we can learn to hold space for the people we love the most, it brings such a huge deepening to the relationship. And I was telling Adam before we started recording that he wrote a fabulous, fabulous article that I have sent to so many of my clients. It's like my number one reference point when anybody wants to know anything about holding space, like read this. So today we're going to talk a little bit about the elements that go into holding space, why it's important, how it helps you. And first I just want to tell you a little bit about who Adam is. He is a Chopra Center Vedic Educator, he is a certified meditation, yoga and mind and body wellness instructor, he's a martial artist, and an author. And he wrote *The Path to Stillness*, *A Meditator's Guide*, and *Warrior of Light* along with over 50 published articles on meditation, yoga, mind, body, and health, all of those things. I'm so excited to have him here. Hi, Adam, I am so excited to have you on the podcast and talk about holding space and how powerful the art of holding space really is. And what I'd love to start with is just some of my listeners have heard this term before, some of them have never heard this term before. And they just start with just talking about why it's deeper than simply offering support, and how you define holding space just at a basic level?

Adam Brady

Well, first, thank you for having me, I'm really excited to talk about this because I think it's a really interesting topic to understand what it means to hold space for another person or people,





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it doesn't have to be just an individual. But in my mind, the idea of holding space really means to be able to embrace that individual, or that group of people in a safe environment where they can feel comfortable to be their authentic self, where they don't have to worry about what anybody else thinks worry about being judged to know that they are totally safe and protected and, and can be genuinely heard with whatever's going on with them. It doesn't matter. It's like this, this big, comfy warm blanket of protection of gentleness, of just compassion to embody that person, that individual or that that group of people like in a yoga class to say that you're safe here that we've got you covered, and you can be whatever you need to be in this moment.

Maggie

I love that so much. I love that you mentioned the yoga class, one of my clients, I was talking to her about holding space with her family and other kids. And she took it to her team. And so she sent the whole, this article that you wrote to her entire team so that they could all hold practice holding space for each other, which I thought was amazing, as well. So one of the things that I love about how you teach holding space and how you try holding space is how you make it so grounded and so clear that there are certain activities we engage in or not when we're in the act of holding space. So what I'd like to do is just go step by step on each one. And before we start that, we know what holding space is. Of course, compassion is always valuable and loving embrace is always valuable, but why do you think it's important for us as a community, as a society, to talk more often about holding space and to understand how to do this practice?

Adam Brady

Well, I think more compassion, more understanding is such a vital component of what our culture and our society is kind of lacking right now. And the more that we are able to listen to





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each other, to genuinely hear what the other people have to say. There's so much polarization, whether it's ideological or political, and in different extremes that that we all seem to find ourselves in. We can't ever cross that chasm until we are able to be in the presence of another and listen honestly and openly to what they have to say. So that we can reflect on it, we can take it in and we can let it bake within us and then give back our thoughts and opinions, rather than always having something that we're about to say to the other person before they get to finish and articulate what they need to say, so that you can feel heard. And then we can have a more honest and open dialogue. It's not until we've got that, that you know, that unification of the meeting of minds between different people that that we can kind of heal some of those wounds that we seem to have so close to the surface right now, in our culture.

Maggie

I love that so much, and as we go through each of the elements of holding space, what I want to tell everyone is, this is not an on off switch. This is more like a spectrum. That's something I talk about a lot in the way that I teach. And then a coach is that we have, as a society, this all or nothing thinking, like I'm either doing it perfectly, or I'm not doing it at all. And when you're doing something like holding space, or practicing one of the elements of holding space we're going to talk about today, I just want to invite all my listeners to think about it like maybe I could do one degree more of this or 10 degrees more of this, I can lean a little bit more into this, as opposed to: okay, now I know what holding space is, and if I'm not doing this 100% then I'm doing it wrong. I think the more we lean into it, the better. Would you agree?

Adam Brady

Yeah, I would. And and since there are these different elements of holding space, as with anything, you know, if you're trying to incorporate a new skill or a new pattern of behavior, like I





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teach Ayurveda, which is the Indian, ancient art of health and well being, and there are all these different ways to live in Ayurvedic lifestyle. But in the beginning, if you throw yourself... if you jump both feet in the pool, you're probably gonna get overwhelmed in trying to change your lifestyle all at once. So you need to take baby steps. So each step becomes comfortable. And then you can add on and add on. So one, one little step at a time gets you closer and closer to the point where you can authentically hold space and feel comfortable with it. But any step you take is a step in the right direction, it's going to get you closer there to being more present and being more aware and attentive to the other people in your life in whatever regard. So it, you know, and in the beginning, it might be something that is, you know, like you think of it as a separate activity, okay, now I'm going to hold space. But the more the more you do it, the more comfortable you begin to get with each of these steps, the more it just becomes a way of who you are. And instead of it being something that you do, it's something that you, you, you be. You are. You're you're a space holder all the time, and it just becomes a part of who you are at that deeper level.

Maggie

That's 100%, I should have suspected, I don't know, we'd be very like minded. And we are. And it's exactly that. It's the more you practice these principles, the more they just become so natural to you that in the beginning, you have to make a lot of intentional effort to focus on them. And then they... you turn around one day, and you're like, oh, no, this is how I naturally listen in a conversation. This is how I naturally show up in this relationship. So let's dig into the first one, which is safety. And I like to describe safety as a feeling that we create for ourselves. We cannot control another person's safety, but we can influence their experience of safety. We can do things that will help create a safer emotional environment or a mental environment, depending where we are. How would you like to describe when we are holding space? So we're the one in





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charge of cultivating the safety? How do you approach that?

Adam Brady

Well, in a situation like when I teach a yoga class, or maybe a meditation class or any environment where you want to cultivate that, from the very beginning, I think it's helpful to help the participants recognize right out of the gate, that they are safe there. That whatever is going to happen there, whatever you want to talk about, whatever you're going to experience... sometimes in yoga class, you could be teaching a pose and somebody just breaks down, you know, it dumps some toxins out of their system and, something comes out and it moves some emotions. So you just have to be willing to allow that to be okay. And let them know that it's okay for that to happen. And that they you know, it's kind of like that saying, you know: what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. What happens in this space, stays here. That is not going... that it is secure, that we don't talk about this outside of this place. That this is your opportunity to feel safe and protected. And you know, a lot of the time like, I'll probably come back to talking about meditation a lot during this, but I'm a big fan of meditation and the ancient sages that would meditate in caves, a lot of times they would sit in these caves because it was a safe environment. You don't have to worry about am I going to get attacked by a wild animal if I'm sitting out in the middle of a plain or something like that, but if I'm in this pocket of rock I can put my back up against the wall, I feel safe and secure. And then you can be your true self, you can explore those deeper levels of your own being. And, and in the same way, when you're holding space, when you have to create that environment, close the door, dim the lights, do whatever you need to, to create, like a nice cocoon environment. So that those participants, that person knows that okay, it's just for us. This is a safe space to be myself and let down my guard. Whether it's like, you know, like I in the article I talk about, like a medieval castle, and the cathedral is nestled inside it. You know, the most sacred spot needs to be protected by the walls





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of the fortress. And that's really important to put up that perimeter. And say that whatever's going on here, if somebody accidentally stumbles into your space, like hold on, this is not for you, this is special for us. And you need to protect that and keep it safe.

Maggie

One of the things and as you said is that cocoon, that idea of a cocoon. So here, the people who listen to this podcast want to make their marriages stronger and better. So I would invite you all to think about what feels like this cocoon energy to you. So everybody might have a different answer to that. But think about what would inspire that feeling of that cocoon energy. And one of the things that I used to do when I was an HR, I would do a lot of trainings, and in trainings, and you get a whole group of new people that suddenly had to, you know, be in a training room for three or four hours, one of the ways that we created safety is just telling them what was about to happen, right? That idea that transparency helps create safety. Here's how it's gonna flow, this is what we're gonna do. So there's no surprises, the person can sit back and relax. So oftentimes, when I'm talking to a wife, who wants to have a difficult conversation with their partner, I'll say, hey, how about you give them a heads up, you have this on your mind, you'd like to schedule a time when it's good for them. And that's kind of part of the seed of safety, even before the actual conversation, to say, this is what I'd like to talk about, when are you available to talk about that? And then create safety from even before you're even in the conversation. So just to give an example, I like to be really practical on the podcast. So let's talk about suspended self importance. Tell me everything, Adam.

Adam Brady

Well, this, this, I mean, it basically boils down to the idea of putting yourself last in this whole exchange. That you're really there to listen, to tune into what the other person needs. It's





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not about you. And that can be hard for us sometimes, because especially if we go into a conversation with our partner or with somebody that we're trying to, to have this discussion or open up this safety cocoon for them, then we can't bring ourselves as an ego into this exchange, because the temptation is that you're going to try to make it about you. And that's the thing, I think I made a point earlier, during conversations, so many of us have the tendency to be thinking about what we're going to say before the other person has even finished what they need to express. So we don't even get the chance to absorb it. It's already bounced off us and we're ready to go with what our counter is and describing it that way. So suspending yourself importance really means that you, you put yourself, you know, you put your ego in the corner and say this is about you, what do you have to share? What do you have to say? And I think you made such a great point just to step back for a second about the whole notion of kind of pre-planning this out. Because if somebody feels surprised by your need to talk about something important, sometimes they can be caught off guard and they're going to get defensive. But if you can say hey, we're going to have this, I'd like to have this conversation with you. I think this is important that we discuss this. Can we do this at such a time you know and sit down and do that, then they're much more likely to be receptive to that and then you can go in and say okay, not about me. This is the, you know, put myself to the backburner right now, and here's what I want to do for you is just let you say what you need to say or be what you need to be.

Maggie

I love that so much. And I like to... the way I like to describe it is engaging with curiosity. And when I'm coaching someone, and we're trying to approach having a difficult conversation, or maybe where two partners disagree or they have a different value around an important decision or something like that. I, what I guide them to do, is think of themselves like a detective. You're just collecting evidence, you don't have an opinion about the evidence in this moment.





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You're just collecting it, right? Later, you can decide what you want to think about it and what you might want to do about it. But in this moment, you're just like listening, like you said, with full attention and full focus to what this other person is sharing. And then at another time, you can decide what you want to do about those things. But if you can stay in curiosity, first of all, the other person is more likely to open up wider or deeper, right? And so, sometimes we think of putting ourselves last, although I think that that's a great way to describe it to me, I know my listeners, and I know somebody is gonna think... somebody's defenses are gonna go up with that. It's like, really, you're putting the relationship first, or you're putting the goal that you have first. You're prioritizing this thing that's close to your heart first. And in order to do that, you shift out of something being urgent in the moment to you, to the long term quality of the project, or the relationship or the person. And in order to do that, engaging with curiosity, or that sort of detective vibe that I like to call is really a way of entering suspended self importance. What do you think about that?

Adam Brady

Yeah, I love that. I love that whole curiosity aspect of just basically being an open receptacle for whatever's coming, so that it can be allowed in, and the way that I think of it -- not that you shouldn't, have your ego at all, but our tendency to be defensive about something that might not gel with us or feels a little bit off of how we would have interpreted something, that comes from our ego interpretation. So if we can, if we can at least down regulate that a little bit. So it's not the first thing that we go to. And we can just say, whatever you've got for me, let me hear it. Let me be open to that and just be a sponge, so you can absorb it, rather than, you know, there being some type of barrier there that prevents it from getting in and is like, okay, my personality or my way of thinking about it, or my interpretation just for a little bit, just say, okay, I'm just gonna put you over here. And right now, you just allow us to open the floodgates. And let me let





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me hear what you have to say.

Maggie

Yes, that's so good. So one of the tools that I teach is something called emotional weight loss, and it's no complaining and no defending. So in a marriage, if you have complaints and defense, and you remove those two things, it's like when somebody goes on a diet and removes flour, and sugar -- when you remove those two things, you find what actually does need to be dealt with. So we'll link to the emotional weight loss episode here to go into that. But basically, the idea is: instead of defending, we get curious, like, that's literally how I teach it is, that's what you put in his place. That's exactly perfect for this. Let's talk about attention. And really, like we kind of talked about it before, but let's talk specifically about it now. Attention is like being fully present. I like to think about it sometimes as listening with your whole body, to be engaged with your whole body with the other person. Tell us a little bit about how you like to think about attention and holding space.

Adam Brady

Well, for me, attention is kind of like a flashlight beam. And you can, if you've got like one those big Maglite flashlights and has the adjustable bezel you can swivel it and it'll allow the beam to be really tight, or it can widen up and I liked to... like you can focus your attention really powerfully like a laser beam, or you can open it up and let it be very broad. And I think in the experience of holding space, you need to open it up and just be aware of everything that's going on. What are you feeling in your body? What are you hearing? What is the, the tone of this person's voice, what subtle energy cues might you be picking up from them, their body language, all of these things to being as attentive as possible in the moment. When we when we practice yoga, I often tell my students that it's really about having an in body experience.





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Because most of the time, we're trying to you know, our mind is going to the past or the future, we might be caught up in emotions or sensations and all of these different things where we're rarely ever localized right here, right now and feeling our body. And our bodies are really, you know, this great, intuitive instrument to pick up on energy and clues and signals that are coming from the immediate area and vicinity of this person that we're with. And we can start to feel that and pick up and if you're an empathetic person or you're very highly sensitive, you're going to feel these things, if you turn down your internal dialogue a little bit. And that voice that is you know, saying you know, trying to reason out, okay, my next response to this might be or whatever. If you can just turn down the volume on that, then you're going to be able to hear and catch more of those little clues. And you know, like the things that Sherlock Holmes might say, oh, that I see that now. I feel that. I can catch that. Because if you're talking to yourself, you're going to be drowning it out. So one of the one of the clues to being more attentive is to try to power down your internal dialogue a little bit and just listen and be that good listener. It's so vitally important. I don't know if you're familiar with the book, *The Five Love Languages*. My thing that with my wife, I always, I always tell her, I said, you don't have to give me any other gift than other than your full and undivided attention, because that's what makes me feel loved. And that's, that's that power of being a really, really good listener, just drop what you're doing, put your phone down, be totally present with me and hear what I've got to say. And then I know, I've been heard, and then I feel loved. And that I think is such a valuable, valuable gift of giving somebody your full, undivided, and complete attention that, you know... I'll never forget the first time I met somebody early on in my path as a seeker, I guess you could say, who was very, very attentive, like that. And more, my certainly more involved than me at the time. And, and she just, you know, she just stopped whatever she was doing, and just looked at me, and it is almost disarming, you know, because we're so, we're so not used to in our society of somebody dropping everything to just be present with you, and one person at a time and do one thing





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at a time and put all of their attention on you. It's almost overwhelming. So you kind of have to get used to that in the beginning. But when it is, it is the most rewarding feeling. And that's really what, what your goal is, is to have that kind of attention, that quality of attention that is completely encompassing, of all of your being.

Maggie

So one thing I want to point out is many of my listeners are recovering perfectionists, and they'll hear this and they'll say, well, what if my mind wanders? Or what if I do it wrong? And that's when we just want to come back to: do the best you can from where you are. Let that be okay. Right? And let's honor our partners when they're doing the best they can from where they are, and let that be okay. And I think that might be a theme we repeat a little, a little often in this episode to just be. These are skills that you practice over time, and they become easier and easier over time. So if any of the different ones that we mentioned feel a little challenging, or they feel like oh, I don't know if I could do that 100%, do it 10%. Like Adam said in the beginning, just being on the path, is the right way to go. You're still making progress just by walking the first step. So that's so good.

Adam Brady

Yeah. And, one of the things I like to say is that we're all doing the best we can from our own level of consciousness. Yeah. There's no rushing, there's no forcing, there's no, there's no comparison, as we'll talk about later, there's no judgement. It's, it's just do what you feel is right for you. And you know, one of the bylaws, if you will, whenever we teach meditation is to always be comfortable. Always listen to your body and do what feels comfortable for you. Don't force, don't stress, don't strain, don't create any additional tension that you're essentially trying to dissolve. You just do the best you can, be very comfortable with yourself and forgiving and just





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say, this is where I'm at. And it's great. And I'm fine with that.

Maggie

Love it. And this is the perfect segue for the next principle of holding space, which is practicing acceptance. And acceptance is something I talk about incessantly with all my clients. We have a podcast episode called using acceptance to make your marriage stronger so I'll link to that in the show notes as well. It's just something that, we are in a society for a variety of reasons where we just argue with reality a lot, and we think things should be a different way, then we hold on to that thought, and sometimes it's very difficult to let it go. So practicing acceptance as part of holding space is so important and like you say, just to accept the moment as it is.

Adam Brady

Yeah. acceptance is one of those special superpowers that as you continue to develop it and as we talked about, you don't have to get it right immediately. It's tough. And because our culture does the exact opposite. I mean, we fight against everything. And acceptance is really being comfortable with this is how things are right now. You can't make a change. And you can't see things differently until you take the first step of saying, this is what it is. And these are the circumstances, this is the situation we're in. And then from there, once you've accepted, it's very empowering because it's kind of like the law of least effort where by accepting you stop fighting, you stop trying to swim upstream. And it's a more economical way to use your energy by allowing things. Now that doesn't mean passivity, it doesn't mean that you give up on something that you want just for the sake of accepting everything. There are things that we still want intentions we want to fulfill, but when we accept things, acceptance as a practice is just to allow this moment to be as it is, knowing that every moment that led up to this goes back to the very beginning of the universe. And if you're gonna fight against this moment, you're fighting





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against the entire universe so good luck with that, because it'll take a lot of energy. And I know I don't have it. So I, there's just times when you have to, you know, I'm a martial artist, and you know, one of the things that we say in in like, in like Gung Foo, is whenever somebody pushes, you pull, whenever they pull, you push, so you don't fight force to force. You try to find that blend of riding the energy, so you're not, you know, driving two semi truck trailers together. You're trying to find that, that way to flow and be in that space and adapt to what's happening. But you have to accept before you can start to do those things.

Maggie

I love so much the idea that allowing this moment as it is, gives us so much power (which it does) and that when we try to argue with the moment as it is, we're actually not just pushing against this moment, but this moment goes back to the beginning of the universe. And so it's like this tidal wave that we're trying to like, hold down. I will forever just remember that title, tidal wave, like, from the beginning of all things, fighting against. So good. And one thing I want to mention about acceptance, because I think this is really important too, and I know some people get confused around this is. It doesn't mean condoning behavior, it doesn't mean agreement. So whenever I talk about acceptance, I always like to clarify, accepting something doesn't mean you agree with it, it just means you are acknowledging like, Adam so brilliantly said, this happened in this moment. Then you decide what you want to do about it. As opposed to saying, this should not have happened and I'm just going to go around in circles thinking about all the reasons why it shouldn't have occurred, and then stay stuck, really, because I'm not moving forward when I'm doing that. And when we accept we say this happened, you pause, and then we see where we go from there. To clarify that, okay. Non judgement, I call these spaces like, this is a no judgment zone. Like, that's how I like to introduce my coaching calls. So tell us a little bit about non judgement, from your perspective?





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Adam Brady

Well, non judgment is that... I consider this to be another one of those great superpowers that you can cultivate with time and practice. And basically, non judgment is what allows you to see the world outside of your preconceived notions. Outside of, you know, whatever belief patterns you have about something or someone and it basically frees you of that burden of having to evaluate something and make a value judgment on whether it was good or bad. You just witness it, which you know, we'll come to shortly but, but just practicing non judgment kind of strips, often strips the emotional charge out of a situation, because you can just see something as it is, rather than the way you interpret it to be. And you know, if you're familiar with the great book wrote by Marshall Rosenberg: Nonviolent Communication, in his steps to having that type of communication with others, the first thing you have to do is recognize the difference between an observation and an evaluation. Of just seeing that this is what happened, as opposed to your interpretation of what happened. So for example, if somebody were to say, you know, the observation or just an observation is: you've been late getting home from work three days this week, that's an observation, just a statement of a fact. Now and evaluation would be: you must be cheating on me because you're late three days a week, you know, so jumping to conclusions and going there. And I always like to say when it comes to judgment, it's a loser move. And I don't mean that as the fact that you're a loser if you judge somebody, I mean that you can never win. Because you can never really be in the shoes of another person. We are all here doing what we're doing in this moment based upon all the choices we have made. And if you were in another person's shoes, and gone through everything that they had gone through, chances are you would have made the same choice that they did. So you can't ever, until you really know what another person is going through -- which we can't ever do. We can only...we barely know what's going on with ourselves most of the time to try to assume that you know, oh, here's this





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person's situation and therefore they're good or bad or you know, whatever interpretation you want to put on that. Then I think you're just limiting yourself and really defining more your need to to place a box around another person rather than just allowing them to be who they are. And that's really important. It's very empowering just to say I'm not going to judge you, I don't need that burden, right? I'll just let you be who you're going to be.

Maggie

So one of the things that we talk about a lot in coaching and in my coaching programs is separating out facts, from our stories about the facts. So just like you said, it's like this happened at three o'clock. It's a fact. It was at three, we could film it with a video camera, we could say it happened, right? You came through the door at that time, that's the fact. Everything else is our Story, or our thoughts about that fact. And we can choose thoughts and stories that empower us, or we can choose thoughts and stories that disempower us. And when we take the moment to separate out the facts from the story, and just be present, like first accept that the fact that is the fact that occurred and not argue with it, and then decide, is this a narrative or a story that I want to keep? Is this is this a thought that I want to keep having or not is so, so, so, so powerful. So when we're not in judgment with another human, like in a conversation or in a yoga class, or in a staff meeting, what we're doing is really being really present, I call it get really factual, and I challenge my clients a lot. It's like, let's get really factual about this. Hold on. There's a lot of story in there. Let's take a step back. Right? And in that moment, we're just, again, engaging that detective or curiosity vibe of let's just collect the data. And then later, we can assess what story when attached to that data. So I love, I love that you present it, and I really learned this way, as a student, sometimes I not only need to hear something like 20 times, I also need to hear it 20 different ways. And eventually, I'll like, oh, I got it now. So I love that you explain it. From your perspective with your meditation background and your yoga background and your martial arts





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background. And we come to the same place. I think that's so, so powerful for all my listeners to sort of hear that from all these different angles. So thank you. Thank you for that.

Adam Brady

You're welcome. Just one more thing I wanted to add, as I was hearing you talking about non judgement, it made me think of, I think one of my favorite quotes. Dr. David Simon was a co-founder of the Chopra Center along with Deepak Chopra, and one of the things he liked to say was that reality is a selective act of attention and interpretation. And every time I say that back to myself, and like, it's just so powerful to recognize that how we interpret the world like first, you know, reality is a selective act. So we selectively choose what we're going to pay attention to - what are you looking at? And then how are you... what's the story you're telling yourself about what you're looking at? How are you interpreting that? And that's what becomes our story, our reality that we individually live. And that story, that interpretation, is the judgment. So when you take judgment out of it, you can just be attention, and just notice things and just be aware of things. And as we keep coming back to, this doesn't happen overnight. This has been a long journey for me where I continue to do this and try to be more present in everything that I'm doing. And I try to take my story out of it every now and then just so I can see things as they are -- unblemished without our you know, preconceived notions changing them.

Maggie

Absolutely. And the way I like to think about it, as we will always have human brains and our brains will always have wacky thoughts. And so just accept that along with accepting everything else around us. And always just go through the path of turning towards these principles, turning towards these, these things that help us more deeply connect with the people that we love the most. Right? So just normalizing that it's okay that we fall in and out





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of non judgement, it's okay that we fall in and out of attention, we just keep coming back to it again. Which, also brings us to having compassion for ourselves, right? When we fall down for ourselves and for others, which is the next principle of the art of holding space is practicing compassion. And I love how you call it loving presence, because I call it that too. And I think that loving presence is so powerful. So tell us a little bit about compassion when we're holding space.

Adam Brady

Yeah, I think that's really kind of like the grounding concept that's underneath all of this is that you want to mean... the purpose and the deeper meaning of the word compassion is to eliminate the suffering of another. And it's the recognition that we all suffer. And I mean, the groundwork of compassion is, you know, that recognition of existential suffering. That we are all in this very similar boat together, as different as our lives may be. We all grow older, we all face illness, we all eventually pass away and you know, so do our loved ones, and that creates discomfort. That creates suffering in us and we're all going through this together that, and when we understand that then we can have more compassion for each other, we could recognize that, oh, what this person said or did caused me pain. However, if I understand their story, if I can look at it with non judgement, I can look at that, and I can have compassion for them, I might not have agreed or would have enjoyed having that happened to me what they said or did, but I can, I can then recognize that this is a person who's suffering and that they need love and compassion. And then then once we understand that, we can also use that compassion towards ourselves. And that's so, so very important is to have that loving compassion, holding yourself in a space where you honor that place within yourself where you know that you're not perfect, yet you still love yourself and accept yourself. And that way, you can be more authentic for the other person, when you're holding space for them. You recognize it, I accept myself and I'm going to be compassionate towards myself and not beat myself up. Because that doesn't





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that doesn't help me. It doesn't help me be a better listener or, or space holder for you, as well.

Maggie

One of the ways I like to think about it is just gentleness, right? We live in a world that sometimes feels very harsh. We have deadlines and pressures, and you know, these things that feel very tough or rough, so to speak. And it's like, what if we brought gentleness to it. So when people ask you, well, how do I do that? What does that mean? Imagine you're having a conversation with someone, but something that's very intense, and you brought gentleness to that conversation? It would completely change how you show up for that experience? Yeah.

Adam Brady

And kind of like I mentioned in that portion of the article is coming into it by saying, how can I help? How can I serve? Those are those the... that's the internal dialogue of the spirit. The ego, it's internal dialogue is what's in it for me? So can you switch over to how can I help you? How can I help lighten your load or your burden a little bit? That's where coming from compassion really has it's greatest power.

Maggie

I love that you've made that comparison of spirit and ego. So to me, I always like to sort of summarize and say, well, what would you be my hack, a shortcut if I didn't know what to do? And I just did one thing? Am I coming from spirit, or soul or hearts? Or my highest loving self, whatever we want to call it? Am I coming from the best part of me? Or am I coming from ego like the needy part of me? And immediately we can tell -- usually, we can immediately know and usually we can say, oh, maybe I'll try the other one. Let's talk about witnessing because I think it's a very interesting way to describe witnessing in combination with all these other





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principles. So tell us a little bit about what you mean when you say witnessing.

Adam Brady

I'm... it's similar to the idea of attention that we're just watching the conversation, we're watching our reaction, our feelings, our thoughts that come and go, you know. Something that one of my teachers said to me one time is during a conversation we are so caught up in listening to what the other person says sometimes we can also, though, switch our attention over to what am I saying as I say it, and just being more attentive and noticing, witnessing. What am I saying right now? Where's it coming from? And so many times, just through the act of consciously speaking to another, listening to another, you have insights, like I just said that and wow, that just downloaded all this information about myself like a whole... it just like, buried treasure just came right to the surface of a little bit more, knowing who I am, because I didn't know why that came out just now in the way that it did. And just being able to witness what's going on and be a fly on the wall. To be present to whatever the exchange is. And if you can, you know, and we talked about it in Vedanta, which is the, you know, the older spiritual philosophy behind yoga and Hinduism, there are these different states of consciousness. And we're typically just familiar with the first three which are sleeping, dreaming and wakefulness. But then as you practice meditation, that takes you into the fourth and the fifth state it's called cosmic consciousness, where you're just the observer where you're observing yourself having the experience. And so you're kind of just like this, if you can imagine just pulling yourself out above and looking down over the whole thing and just watching it unfold. And being present to that situation, as you just witnessed what the other person is saying, what you're saying, what you're feeling, what you're thinking, what the feel of the entire environment is, and that's... All of these principles kind of thread back into each other like a tapestry. So you know, at the same time you're witnessing, you're not judging. You're cultivating awareness and building on





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that compassion and accepting and just everything flowing back and forth through this whole process as you just watch and be aware of what's happening.

Maggie

I love that you said that it was a tapestry, because even as you said that, what I thought was, oh, they all go together. And if I just fully engaged in one of them, I almost like, they all sort of also come together with each other. So if I'm just fully witnessing, but I'm not even thinking about the other ones, then my attention is there. And if I'm truly witnessing, my compassion is there and there's no judgment, because I'm just watching like the watcher, right? And I think that's an interesting thing to think about that they all go together and we grow them together. But also, just picking one of these to sort of take on, I like to say, like, you put it on like a sweater, and just really lean into the one that calls to you the most. The other one sort of just will grow along with them, almost automatically. What do you think about that?

Adam Brady

Yeah, I think they're all intertwined. And completely like a spider's web, you plug in a strand, the whole thing shakes. And in Vedanta, there's this story of what's called Indras Web. That it's this web, where at the intersection of all the other strands, there's a little jewel. At every intersection, there's a jewel, and every jewel reflects every other jewel. So you know, it's all connected like a hologram, like one piece contains the whole thing. And in my mind, all of this, the whole idea coming back to like more the 30,000 foot view of holding space, it really all comes down to having the intention to cultivate these, and to just say, I intend to hold space, I intend to use this time, this environment, as a place to create safety to create attention and suspend myself importance of practice acceptance, non judgement, compassion, witnessing, and just let them all flow spontaneously and organically together. Because the intention itself is enough, that





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organizes it all together. You just have the intentions, I don't know how it's going to happen, I just intend that I'm going to hold space to be present, and live from compassion and just let this situation blossom and flow as it is meant to.

Maggie

I love that so much. And when I was thinking about when this thing is you were talking about something that just popped into my mind as someone asked me, you know, so I coach people, and sometimes they're having difficulties in their relationship, and they might cry, or there might be emotional intensity. And somebody asked me, how do you do that all day? And he was my answer, Adam, I said, you know, I am a witness, not an accomplice. So when people talk to me, or they tell me something that's close or tender in their heart, I'm witnessing them, right? With loving compassion, and all these practices we've talked about today. But it's like your best friend, or you know, your bestie, or your family member or your cousin, right? They're the accomplice, they're in it with you. They're like riled up, right? I'm sort of across the street, just looking at what's happening. And that allows me to have a different perspective about it as a coach and all of those things. And I think it's an interesting thing, when we think about going out into the world and practicing this, whether it's in a marriage, whether it's with our teams at work, whether it's in a conversation with teenagers, or at a sports event, or like, you know, if we're if we're a coach, or you know, coaching soccer or something like that. It's like, oh, whatever the witness, I'm not the accomplice? Just that one movement away, allows you to just have more emotional space around the whole situation, what do you think about that?

Adam Brady

Yeah, and allows you to lessen the emotional charge of what's going on. So you mean, because if you're coaching, if you're helping and supporting somebody, the risk is that you get tidal





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waved with the emotional energy, and then you just kind of need to go, you know, rinse yourself off afterwards, because it can be so overwhelming. And like I, I'm a big, big, big Star Trek fan. And you can almost compare it and compare the witnessing, and the emotional response between Mr. Spock, and Dr. McCoy. There's, you've got one guy that flips out emotionally every time he's like, "Oh, my gosh, Jim, how do we do this?" And then there's Spock who just sits back and says, "Fascinating." He's, like, "Fascinating? This is fascinating for you, we're all about to die, and you're in the backseat of scratching your head saying, isn't this interesting?" But that's kind of the idea of cultivating that witness where you can be really, really curious about what's going on and to make it clear, you can't until you know, you build on some of these skills. It's difficult to do so. You shouldn't feel bad, like, oh, I can't witness this right now. Because I'm too caught up in these things. Once, I mean, these things take practice for me. I've been on my path of seeking and exploration now for, you know, close to 30 years, I'd say and I feel like there are days where I might see an inkling of being able to do that without getting caught up. But then every now and then, you know, I mean, you know, my wife and I have differing opinions about something, and I'll try to just, you know, sit back and witness and then all of a sudden, this little voice inside me says, "Oh, you need to say this." I usually pretty quickly regret that. But it's just, it takes time and practice. And you know, knowledge builds this experience up and the more you do it, the more you feel comfortable with it. And then after a while, it just kind of becomes a little bit more natural and organic for you.

Maggie

So first of all, you get the award for best sci fi analogy ever used on the Marriage Life Coach Podcast. So I'm a total sci fi geek. And so now, you know, I already loved Adam's work before... I will now be fangirling over Adam forever so all my listeners can know. I love the idea, even if just a visual of my inner McCoy or my inner Spock, like which one to engage with now. It's so vivid,





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right? You can immediately, you know, connect with that.

Adam Brady

And the funny thing is, that's just a kind of, that's one of those experiences where I just witnessed myself saying, like, wow, that really works, doesn't it? I never used that before. I'm like, hey, I'm gonna have to write an article about that.

Maggie

Yes, please do and send it to me. So I can share it with everybody. I absolutely love that. So Adam, it has been a total, total delight to have you here. I'm going to look up a question in The Questions for Couples Journal just to ask you a random question. But while I look it up, please tell everyone what is the best way to connect with you. If people want to hear more of your wisdom, just tell us how to find you in the world?

Adam Brady

Well, there are a couple different places that you can find me. I'm relatively new to Instagram, and I've been playing around with that. And I've got all things martial arts, yoga, Ayurveda, meditation, it's really my go to type of content there. And that's my business name, which is revised_reality. And then my actual website is revisedreality.com. And just in case you're curious what revised reality means, that was something that I heard David Simon say one time again, where he said, reality is subject to revision. Which in my way, like, I'm a big fan of The Matrix, and the whole idea that this world we live in, we're creating it on our own and we have the the freedom to, you know, with more skill and more awareness, we can kind of rearrange our own reality to work better for ourselves.





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Maggie

I love that so much. We can revise our own reality. That's what this whole podcast is about is revising. Like, if your marriage isn't where you want it to be, let's revise that reality.

Adam Brady

Yeah. And the other the other way you could... like my, my articles, this article that we were talking about today, holding space. I'm a regular contributor to the Chopra blog on chopra.com. And that's, if you're not familiar with Dr. Deepak Chopra, that's his site. And I've been a contributor there for like, I think since 2014. I'd have to count but I'm like, somewhere up in like, the 65 to 70 article range there. And I just like, they just give me more topics to write about, and I'm like, okay, sounds fun. And I'll just like, I've really enjoyed writing recently, and it's really helped me develop my writing. So I'm just happy to be a part of that. And very grateful for that. So a lot of my other articles live on that site.

Maggie

That is so wonderful. And you know, as everyone who has listened to this episode can see, Adam is so thoughtful. And I love that mix of fun with deep like, we went so deep today. And then we also talked about Star Trek, we just mixed it all in. Like I think that just brings so much richness to this type of work. So thank you for your thoughtfulness. I'm gonna ask you for special permission to ask you two questions instead of just one.

Adam Brady

Okay. Sounds fun.

Maggie





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Okay, so the first one is kinda serious one. And the second one is a kind of a whimsical one. So the first one is, how do you stay focused on your top priorities?

Adam Brady

Do I stay focused on my top priorities? For me, it's definitely my biggest passion is meditation. I, you know, I, I teach meditation, I've written a book about it. And I'm really, really passionate about the power of meditation to be that primary lever for realizing your reality. And I've done it for so long now it's become my lifestyle that I can't imagine what my life would be without it. To be able to settle my mind and to be able to have the clarity to see where I want to go and what I want to do, and then have the intentions behind the changes that I want to make and stay focused. That's the most important thing for me, if I could teach everybody in the world to meditate, oh, my goodness, I would just I think it would make the world a better place.

Maggie

That is so awesome. Do you do guided meditations? Is that on your website?

Adam Brady

Mmm. Not so much. I have done some, but I am... the purpose behind when I wrote my book, *The Path to Stillness*, was largely to take somebody as a newbie meditator and then make them self sufficient. So I mean, and that's another article on the Chopra site of meditation one on one. I think it was the difference between guided and self practice meditation. They're both good, but they have different, you know, they get to you in different ways. So I'm kind of one of these guys. I mean, I have a few on my youtube channel I think which is also out there but...

Maggie





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Okay if anybody by popular demand. Like, oh, he asked me. By popular demand, we might get a guided meditation, so..

Adam Brady
Okay.

Maggie
Okay, so the second question is kind of whimsical. It's your favorite deli names a sandwich after you, what are the ingredients and what is it called?

Adam Brady
Oh, wow. Okay, so I'm a pescetarian. So tuna fish. I love tuna fish. Good tuna fish would definitely be on it. Smoked cheddar cheese. Let's say spinach, tomato. And maybe like some pesto dressing. And what would we call this? Hmm. I'd have to think about that. Let's see. What do I call a sandwich named after myself?

Maggie
Let's just call it a Brady. Brady, give me a Brady.

Adam Brady
I want to call it... I want to call it deep thought.

Maggie
Oh, that's so good.





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Adam Brady

Especially if it's shaped... especially if it's like a hoagie or a submarine. You can kind of like see it's a submarine so it can go deep.

Maggie

Deep thought. I want a deep thought. Thank you so much for saying yes to this and for just being amazing.

Adam Brady

My pleasure. This has been a lot of fun. I am so grateful and honored that you sought me out and you liked my article. I never know... before they redid the Chopra Center site, I could always see how many hits the articles were getting. So now I don't know and that they'd have to run reports to tell me so I was like oh, well, I just hope that people are getting something out of them. So I'm really grateful that it helped you and helped some of your listeners.

Maggie

Absolutely. Absolutely. Thank you for being here. We will be back next week to help everyone have a stronger marriage and hold more space.

