



EPISODE 70: RELATIONSHIP INERTIA

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/70](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/70)

Maggie

Hello, everyone and welcome back. Today is a very special day as my favorite person on earth is joining us for today's episode. And I know some of you will think, "Wait, is Oprah there." And no, it is not Oprah. She is my second favorite person on earth.

My wonderful husband, the love of my life, is here with us today with a topic that came up spontaneously yesterday as we were washing dishes, and making tea in the kitchen. He's already chuckling. So this episode is brought to you by the magic and wonder of hibiscus tea, which is what we were talking about.

My best friend Mary recommended this tea to me. Hi, Mary. I know she's listening now. And I love it so much, I looked up all the properties of this tea, and it's so good for you in so many ways. Feel free to Google it. And we are in Miami, so we buy Badia Tea, that's the brand of the tea. And it's just plain hibiscus leaves and we make it like iced tea.

So the hubby, who is the chef in the family, figured out the exact amount of tea bags for a pitcher. And I think his magic energy is in the tea. I always tell him that I can feel the chi in the tea, which in Chinese culture is like your life force. It's like we pour our life force into things that we create. And I just feel this positive energy in the tea.

So we were in the kitchen chatting about this in pajamas, and talking about the positive effects of tea. And the difference between drinking something that doesn't cause any harm necessarily, versus something that is actively optimizing the cells in your body.

And then the hubby said, "Yeah, it's like health neutral versus health positive." And I immediately said we need to record a podcast about this. And he said, "Yes." So here we are. Welcome, love





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of my life. It's so nice to have you back.

Mariano

Good to be back. I was not planning on being here, but happy to be here.

Maggie

That's awesome. Thank you for changing your schedule so we could record this podcast. So fun. So let's dive in. And let's start really with how this idea began. This idea of health neutral versus health positive. And as we discussed, this is like -- think about your mental health, your physical health.

My husband and I are both really in a time in our lives where we're really focused on our physical health. We're in our late 40s. One of us is in our early 50s. I'll let you figure out which one that is. And we're in the stage where we really want to be healthy.

And we're focusing on that and talking a lot about what that looks like for us in the next chapter of our life. And I just thought it was so interesting, the way you said that, "health positive." Can you just share a little bit about what was going through your mind and what your thoughts about that are?

Mariano

Of course, I mean, we were talking about, you know, you could have something like let's say a diet soda that doesn't do any harm for you. Although there are studies that say maybe it could be doing some harm, but assuming that they don't do any harm, you could have something like that.





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Or you could have a tea that actually has all these wonderful health benefits that, you know, are helping both of us. So it really wasn't that deep, it was just something that's neutral versus something that actually has a net positive effect.

Maggie

Right. So of course, he said that, and my brain went everywhere with it. Right? So it's like, what are some of the things, for everyone listening to us, that we could be doing in our life, where we sort of innocently do these things that don't seem harmful.

And yet, because they don't add anything to our lives, it's like, the opportunity cost, like what we talked about in one of the previous episodes that you were on. It's like the trade off is we're not getting the positive effect, the extra effect of the thing that could actually be useful to us.

So in this case, it was so clear with the tea. It's like you could have something whether it's soda or something else that is like legitimately harmless (The verdict is out on that, that could actually be harmful. We don't know, we're not scientists.) But if you think of something that's just not necessarily giving you anything bad, but it's also not proactively giving you anything good and thinking about that idea.

We then started talking about inertia. And I'm that nerd who likes to look up things in the dictionary and see what things mean and all that stuff. And so I looked up like what is the definition of inertia? And that's when I had this idea of like, we need to talk about relationship inertia.

What is it? And so the basic definition is a tendency to do nothing or remain unchanged. But it's also when we look at Physics, which I know was one of my husband's favorite subjects. He's





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nodding. Please confirm verbally for everyone who's listening.

Mariano
Accurate.

Maggie

Thank you. So in physics, inertia is a property of matter by which it continues in its existing state of rest or motion in the straight line. It keeps going in motion wherever it's already going, unless it is changed by an external force.

Mariano
Yes.

Maggie

Yes. So when I think about marriages, or relationships, it's like, okay, one of the things that I will always remember is one time I asked this question, I wasn't actually asking the Hubby, but he answered it so brilliantly. He said, "Do you want more of what you already have?" And he said, "Yes, with the double scoop."

And that little moment really just made me think about so many different things in my life, and in our lives. As we think about the life we want to create, the results we want to have in our relationships, in our marriages, and how we live our life. In this area -- in my health, do I want more of what I already have? No, I'm actively doing things to change it. That's why I'm drinking the tea. Right?

In any area of our life. In our career and our work and our business. Do I want more of what I





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already have? Keep going and then keep doing what you're doing. But if you don't want more of what you already have, we need to know and just have awareness around: inertia is what will happen. Unless we actively act upon it, we're going to keep going in the direction that we're in. So anyway, I wanted to just establish what it is. What are your thoughts when I just put it through that lens?

Mariano

One thing that comes to mind that, you know, for me, you know that inertia is not just that if you don't take action, or there's not something to change the direction, it's not that you stay in the same place, you could be moving in a bad direction, and it will only be getting worse if you don't take action? So that comes to mind is that, you know, that neutral. You know, if you're moving in a bad direction it can be harmful.

Maggie

Yeah. It can become harmful. And it's like, so one of the things I just thought about when I'm coaching clients is maybe something bothered you a little bit today. But what if it continued for 40 years, right? And it's like that drop of water, that drop of water, that drip of water that then creates like, you know, beautiful things in nature and all that.

If that's continuing to escalate, and you have more and more and more of that, that one drop of water today really was neutral, it was fine. It was okay. But 40,000 drops of water would actually then create a new thing that may not be the thing that you wanted, right?

And sometimes in relationships, we -- I don't know if the word settle is the right thing -- but we allow things in our experience that aren't what we actually want. And then we sort of let it go and let it go and brush it off and let it go and brush it off. And if we don't act upon it, it doesn't





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just remain, it gets bigger.

Mariano

Yeah, in my mind I think of a dam. Like the water is building behind the dam. And if nothing is done to relieve the water flow, eventually it will overflow or burst.

Maggie

So see this is why have you on. So tell me how a dam works. Pretend they don't know how a dam works.

Mariano

Well, I'm not like a hydraulics engineer or anything but I will try. I mean, you know, basically you block the flow of water. And then they usually have, you know, it's usually used a lot of times to generate electricity. So that water then is controlled in which direction it flows.

It flows through specific outlets that are used to then turn turbines into electricity, but it's all about controlling the flow of water. It's not about blocking forever and ignoring it. It's about -- so if you were to do that, and just block it then you know, eventually there might be too much pressure and water or eventually water might rise to the point where it overfills the top of the dam.

Maggie

Okay, I love this example of the dam because as I think about it in terms of sort of Coaching terms. It's like, first we need awareness of: where is the water level? What's happening with the water? What are we using the water for? Let's say the energy of our life, right? What are the energy of our life being used for?





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And then instead of piling things on, with no awareness, with no conscious awareness, if we kept doing that, the water would overflow, the dam would burst. Which is when we start feeling things like overwhelm in our lives or if we feel excessive resentment around things or like untreated or unaddressed resentment around things.

It's like that's the water in that dam that we haven't directed in a specific direction. And sometimes the direction might be forgiveness. Sometimes that direction might be changing what we're doing. It might be talking about things and making a new plan and like redirecting, "Oh, this dam was powering this electricity over here, but now we're gonna have it power this over here. We're gonna release the water in a different way." It's like, we're going to focus our attention in a different way. What do you think?

Mariano

Yeah, I agree. It's, you know, like, it's being intentional. But like, you know, think about what is it that you want to have? And are you moving in the right direction? Or if not, then what do you need to do to start going from inertia to, you know, guided direction?

Maggie

Yes, I love that so much. And one of the things you said, as we were talking about that really, you know, doing this episode together, was anything that you are not putting your attention on runs on autopilot. And I love how succinctly you said that, because whatever we do put our attention on, grows.

And it's like, I've never paid so much attention to how I'm eating and what I'm putting in my body. And even like, what I'm drinking, you know, in the middle of the day, you know, like, this tea





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that inspired the episode.

And it's like, oh, I'm putting so much attention on it and now I'm having a positive effect on my health as a result of -- just the act of the attention helps me make new choices and, and start thinking of what we're gonna talk about next, which is like, what is the result I want to create? And is this going to help me achieve that result or not? And so, for everyone listening, it's like are there parts of your life or your marriage that are on automatic pilot? If they are, is that creating the results that you want to have?

Mariano

Yes, correct.

Maggie

First of all, I love it when my husband agrees with me. It's so much fun. I'm just enjoying that for a second. Not that we don't agree often, but it's just kind of fun. It's like "yes" and I have nothing to add on that matter. Do you have anything to add before we move on?

Mariano

No, I think you got it.

Maggie

Okay, good. So let's talk a little bit about this idea of relationship ownership. Then let's say we've decided we want to make changes, we want to do things differently, or in whatever area of our life, we're feeling inertia around.

And as we were talking about that, I thought of like, what is enough? How will we know? What





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is enough? And then you said, "Well, yeah, we have to know our goal. And the result we want to create," which I'm talking about that all the time and all these different ways on the podcast.

It's like, what is the result that I want in my marriage? And will what I'm doing right now help me get that result? And if not, we just question it and see what happens. But what are your thoughts around especially, you know, being married, and you know, we love each other immensely, but we're also very different humans, when what is enough for one person isn't the same as it is for the other person? What do you want to share around that?

Mariano

I think you have to just find something that works. And maybe there, you know, there's things that you like -- you're not Siamese twins, you can do things separately. So, you know, like, I love kayaking, for example, you -- not so much. Yeah. So there are things that might go off and do without you. And if you want to, you know, watch an Oprah marathon, I may or may not join you. But you know, that's totally fine.

Maggie

I love that example. And one thing that we talked about, and I just want to put it on the podcast, as well is: for many people, when we find personal development, and we start really sort of having that personal inquiry about our life and being so much more intentional. And I know this happened, this happens with my clients as well.

And this certainly -- I'm that person, as everyone who listens to the podcast already knows, that I haven't met a workshop I didn't like. I did the strengthsfinder. And one of my top strengths of things that are inherently inside me is I'm a learner. So I love learning. And I know for some wives, they struggle with being really on this personal development path, and in really deep and





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profound ways it's meaningful to them.

And then having their husbands not join them with the same enthusiasm and passion and delight that they have. And a lot of people that I've talked to over the years, make that wrong, make it a problem, you know, suffer over thinking that it should be the same. And I think you and I really have worked out understanding that it doesn't have to be the same for us to be connected and feel good with each other and also for us to learn from each other and the different ways that each other learn.

So maybe I go to a workshop to learn resilience and problem solving or distress, you know, regulation or you know, things like that. And you might learn that in kayaking, right? And the skill might be the same and it's a completely different activity. So I'd love to hear how you reconcile when I'm not interested in something maybe that you want to do, or how you think about this idea that it doesn't have to be the same to be valuable for each person?

Mariano

Hmm. I think it's -- I have to think about it because it's kind of automatic for us. But I mean, you know, you marry a different person. Like you didn't marry a clone of yourself. It would be boring if you had all the same interests and did all the same things. You would not learn anything from each other. You'd have nothing to talk about other than repeating each other's thoughts. It's the differences that, you know, that help you learn from each other and grow with each other. It's just the way it is. Like, it's not a negative unless you make it negative.

Maggie

So I think that's really important. First is the idea -- I love that -- it's like, what are we going to do? Repeat each other's thoughts to each other? That would be so boring. So good. And it's not





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a negative unless you make it a negative.

I think that that is so key that there's this place where there's a choice and for us talking, it's a very automatic choice. We've been making the same choice for over 13 years. And it's, you know, now, it's what we normally do. And so it feels very, it feels very automatic pilot.

And because we want more of what we already have, we just -- that's something we just leave on automatic pilot. We don't have to do anything about that now. But sort of navigating -- I remember in our very first, like first and second year of marriage, I -- my thoughts were, "I just met the love of my life. This is a miracle. I need to do everything with him. I need to spend every moment that's available to me with him."

And I remember back then I was doing yoga and sort of other things. And I sort of stopped doing some of those things. And that wasn't very healthy or useful. Because I stopped engaging in things that were very meaningful to me. And I was trying to navigate, "Oh, I don't have to spend every minute with him." And it was, for me, it was definitely a learning curve. What are your thoughts about that?

Mariano

Yeah, of course, I mean, it's not like you know everything when you start? You know, definitely there's things we have to figure out along the way. But you're right, it's, you know, and obviously, like, as you know, I love to play video games.

It doesn't mean you have to sit there with me playing video games. It's not your thing. It's not a bad thing. But yeah, you have to find a way to give each other room for your different interests, as well as, you know, find things that you also share that you do enjoy and spend time together.





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You just don't want to be like roommates that just completely have different lives, either. You have to find your balance.

Maggie

Yeah, I think that's so important. And we talked about that in so many different ways and sort of so many different angles. And on the podcast is: where are the places where you can cultivate connection, and where are the places where you can cultivate independence? And it's like a dance.

I think about it like a dance. There's an ebb and a flow. There's like a dip and a curve. And sometimes we twirl and sometimes we move in different directions. And then we meet again. And thinking about it like a dance, there is a flow and emotion that's involved in that. And there's also sometimes we stumble, and then we start again. And then we lose time with the music. And then we start again.

That idea that we can bring that spirit of experimentation to how we design our lives together, that also includes honoring our passions and prioritizing our passions as well. And I think that's really important even when we think about relationship inertia. It's like, we will always have things in our lives that will be in the energetic state -- I don't know how to say that -- in the state of inertia, right?

Let's just make up some words today, we will always have some things that do run on autopilot, right? But when we are honoring our priorities, honoring our values, honoring our passions, then there will also always be new things that we're discovering.

Whether he goes to kayak in a new place he hasn't kayaked before. Whether he plays a new





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video game that has a new, you know, level of thinking that's required. He likes to play a lot of strategic games and stuff that, you know, require him to think at a different level about different things that he's doing. And then we bring that new experience to the relationship. And then that also brings variety and interest to the part of our life that we do share together.

Mariano

Yes, totally.

Maggie

So good. So another thing that we talked about was: know your target. What is the goal? What is the result that you want to create? And when we think about relationship inertia, we sort of touched upon it a little bit, but if we want to create a thriving marriage, whatever we look at that isn't thriving is the place where we want to focus to not be on autopilot. Like that's the thing that we want to do on manual instead of autopilot. Maybe we put something else on autopilot so that we can put our attention on putting that on manual. What do you think?

Mariano

Yeah, yeah, you can't do all the things, all the time. That's why we have automatic pilot. You know, built in so once we have something working well, then you can just -- you don't have to spend time thinking about that and changing it and instead focus on where you could improve, or where you do see an opportunity.

Maggie

What is one of the things that -- I'm always asking him sort of behind the scenes, we do a lot of things automatically that are very natural, intuitive to us that, you know, we're very happily married people. And I'm always wondering, "Well, you know, what is that? What is this?" What is





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one thing that you think -- either you do automatically, or we do as a couple automatically -- that really helps us in the thriving?

Mariano

Wow. I could say, you know, there's things we laugh about that other couples would argue about? We could disagree and find that hilarious.

Maggie

Yes. This is very true. Is there anything that comes to mind that you want to share? And it's okay if it doesn't.

Mariano

No, not at the moment.

Maggie

Okay. So yeah, we laugh. I was analyzing us one day. This poor man, it's like he lives in my little lab. Let me test this on you. But I was analyzing this and I was like, "Oh, I think that we laugh about things that other couples argue about."

I can see how other couples will argue about a variety of things that creates more disconnection and more upsetness. And I can see how we will just, you know, incessantly make jokes and like, from a loving place, right? Not diminishing jokes, but genuinely like loving laughter around certain things. And why do you think that's important?

Mariano

I mean, obviously, less conflict and a lot more laughter and joy in the relationship. Those will be the reasons.





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Maggie

Yeah, I think one of the things that I noticed is when couples are struggling, and if there's a lot of arguments, that you're constantly recovering from the last argument. And so we're not constantly recovering from things. We're like at good and better, and not necessarily going down and up, and down and up.

It's much more like a steady wave, if you imagine a wave. And in some ways, it's a little bit more calm, and it's a little bit more relaxed. There aren't these heightened moments of, you know -- I don't know, wild passion, let's say, even though we're passionate people, and we have a lot of fun, but it's very steady.

And one thing I read recently, that really struck me is if you in the past had had relationships that were traumatic, or that have a lot of emotional intensity in them. When you're in a healthy relationship, for some people, it can feel boring. Like it can feel like, "What's missing? There's some kind of emotional intensity that I'm not having."

And that's that person who like picks a fight for no reason or, you know, it's like, "Oh, I better do something." And it's like, oh, no, calm is actually good. Calm is a great place for you to be. Do you have any thoughts about that?

Mariano

Yeah, I mean, there's such a thing as being addicted to drama that, sure, you know, conflict and stuff, gets your blood pumping. You have all these hormones going. I guess you can get addicted to that, just like you get addicted to just about anything. You know, the physiological response.





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And if you don't have it -- yeah, a lot of times like that, where people compound infatuation and love and think it's the same thing. And then oh, I'm not feeling that at all, you know, like, I know this person better. So now I don't have anxiety as to whether they're gonna call me or not, and now it's boring. Like, that's, again, that's a thought. Not a useful thought. But it's a thought that many people have.

Maggie

So as you all know, I teach how thoughts create feelings, create actions, create results, and I use this in my own life. And I talk about it all the time. And sometimes I'll be saying some random thing. And my husband will say, "But that's a thought, right?" I just love that. I just wanted to mention. Please confirm. He's nodding. Please confirm so everyone listening knows that is true.

Mariano

It is true.

Maggie

Okay, and then the last thing that we wanted to talk about, and something that my friend Lacey Sites calls "havingness." (And I interviewed her and another podcast episode, we'll link to that in the show notes.) But I love how she talks about havingness, which is being in the having, of the result you wanted to create.

So for us very specifically in our marriage is being in the having of the relationship that we always wanted, or, you know, in my case, I sort of craved it, but I didn't know if it was possible. And something that my friends who know us well and spend time with us, that they always remark on is how much we enjoy our life.





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We really savor our life. We also sort of grew up with -- we're the children of immigrants, we grew up with not a lot of resources and, you know, had all kinds of struggles in different areas of your life. And now we're two adults who, you know, I have my own business, my husband's an executive and we're able to enjoy things that we maybe didn't have growing up or that we didn't have in other chapters of our life, and we take nothing for granted.

And I think there's something around that savoring that we, I think do very naturally. But now I'm paying attention to it. And I'm like, whoa, there's something about that savoring that adds so much joy to the different experiences we have. And then wondering if you have any thoughts around that being in the havingness of what we've created?

Mariano

I'm still wrapping my head around the "being in the havingness" but to me, it's just being present to the moment, to what you have or what you're experiencing. Yeah, there's a lot of joy in the every day, if you pay attention to it.

Maggie

Okay, we're gonna repeat that. There's a lot of joy in the every day if you pay attention to it. And I think one thing that I can say, you know, about you specifically, is you're very much in the present moment. You don't spend a lot of time worrying about the future or fretting over the past.

You, I think, isn't that -- what's your opinion? But I think that's one of the keys to how joyful you are. You're a very jolly person. And you find the beauty in every moment. And I always, you know, enjoy and I'm delighted by that. But that present moment awareness seems like it's such a





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powerful contributor to the joy that you just experience on a daily basis.

Mariano

Yeah, I agree. I mean, when I was younger, I definitely had that bad habit of ruminating and obsessing about choices I made, or, you know, things that should have gone differently. And instead, you know, find the joy in where I am.

Maggie

And I know at some point, you read some books and did some things that really helped you sort of shake out of that. Well, what do you think is the most important thought or question you ask yourself, or awareness that you had when you had that moment where you're like, "Oh, I don't have to be ruminating. I can make a different choice." Do you remember anything that pops out of your memory around, "Oh, I had this thought, and that really helped me. Or I had this shift in my awareness that really helped me?"

Mariano

The first major one I can think of was, you know, I grew up, you know, like you said, children are refugees, and I was refugee myself. It's like, you know, oh, looking back on the things that were lost, that were stolen from us. The family farm that's been in the family for hundreds of years that, you know, now we lost. You know, like, my future was stolen from me.

And just all this negativity about my circumstances now are not what they should have been, and comparing what I have to what I would have had, and yeah, that did not bring me a lot of joy. And I went on a vacation by myself to Disney World. And I spent half the time with the parks and half the time going to like nature preserves and going canoeing and hiking.





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So I spent a lot of time by myself just thinking and I just had the realization -- without reading any books or anything -- that wait a minute, I could choose. I could choose to be that or I could choose to be happy in my life here and be a happy American.

I could be a miserable refugee or happy American, you know, it's my choice. And that was the big breakthrough. I mean, you know, I've had others since then. But that was the first major one that I realized I had a choice. I was not a victim of my circumstances.

Maggie

That is so powerful. That is literally that like everything that I'm about, as you know, very intimately. It's like the idea: what do we want to choose? What choice can we make here? No matter what our circumstances are, where is the moment where there's something where our choice can impact what we're doing?

And very often, when we don't think we have a choice, look for the smallest choice that you can make. Because if you notice, in this, this beautiful story that you just shared, you made one choice. Like I could just look at this differently, right? That's like, if you want a healthy marriage: perspective, partnership and pleasure. The very first thing that we do is perspective.

The Marriage MBA is the Marriage Mindset Breakthrough Activator. It's like, when we change our mind, we open ourselves up to change almost everything else and definitely we can change our experience of the circumstance. Sometimes we can't change the circumstance, but we can profoundly impact our experience of it. And I think that's so powerful.

Mariano

Totally, I agree.





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Maggie

Yeah, so good. Okay, anything you want to add about relationship inertia, before we go on to ask you a question from The Questions for Couples Journal?

Mariano

No, I think I'm ready for my question.

Maggie

Okay. So here's the question. So if this is the first time you're listening to the podcast -- welcome. If you've heard interviews before, at the end of every interview, I like to pull a question from The Questions for Couples Journal. We will link to it in the show notes. I'm very, very proud to be the author of this book, to have a book that helps couples get closer.

It's filled with 400 questions and some of them are fun and light hearted like the one I'm gonna ask now. Some of them are a little deeper. There's sexy questions. There's future-focused questions. There's past questions. It's really fun.

So, and this is one we have not asked each other privately. So I don't really know if I even know what your answer is gonna be, which is kind of fun. So think of a role model that you had growing up, and why did you look up to them?

Mariano

Okay, the one that comes to mind is Mr. Kowski, my math teacher in high school that I took -- well computer and math teacher -- that I took Calculus with, Abstract Algebra, Computer Classes, and then we, you know, like he hosted us that we went on math and computer





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competitions, State and National. And he made it okay to be a nerd. You know, like, he liked all these nerdy things.

And, you know, there was a group of us and we even -- he organized like, we go play beach volleyball together. A bunch of nerds playing beach volleyball, but, you know, made it cool to be a nerd. Which, you know, until then I don't think it happened. So that definitely, you know, to be able to accept yourself for who you are, and whether society judges that as being negative or not, that's irrelevant.

Maggie

That is so beautiful. And I just want to give a shout out to anyone who's listening to us who is a teacher, was a teacher, or teaches in any way. The power of teachers is incalculable. We've all had a teacher in our life that just shaped our thinking in such a powerful way. And what a beautiful way to think about this teacher who was an influence of showing you that there was an adult who was a nerd, who was happy, and who, you know, enjoyed his nerdom.

Like he wasn't ashamed of it. He wasn't trying to hide it. He's like, "Nope. Let's take it to Abstract Algebra. Let's not just do regular Algebra." That's the part that cracks me up. It's like never in 1000 years, would you find me in the same room with an Abstract Algebra textbook. Like unless my husband owns it, right? But for some people, that's fun. And that's beautiful.

Okay, on that note, thank you everyone for joining us today. I hope you really think about any part of your life right now where you have something on autopilot. Think about what you might want to take off of autopilot and put on manual. That's like, I think -- do that for your Coaching homework for the day.





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