



EPISODE 72: CREATING A NEW CHAPTER IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH DEBBIE SASSEN

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/72](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/72)

Maggie

Hello, everyone. Welcome. I have a very special guest on the show today. Her name is Debbie Sassen. And I've never asked her how to pronounce her last name, so I hope I did it right. I'll ask after the intro.

She is a Business and Money Mindset Coach. She's a former Financial Planner. And she helps midlife women in business to make more money and to grow their wealth, without burnout and without sacrificing their family. Her Coaching gracefully (I love that description) gracefully combines business strategy, money management and mindset work to help women dissolve the family of origin money story (and I'm going to make a note to ask her about that as we dig into our interview today).

And to help them dissolve limiting beliefs that keep women stuck in a cycle of under-earning, overspending, and under-saving. I'm gonna repeat that: under-earning, overspending, and under saving. I can already tell I'm going to have to have Debbie back just to talk about those three things as one topic, because I feel like that would be a very juicy conversation.

So too many women, and a few men also, never really learned how to understand money, earn abundantly and manage their finances and build wealth. And so that's what Debbie does. She helps mostly women, and occasionally some very smart men, manage their finances and build wealth in a very different way. And she believes it's time that we really change the narrative around money for women.

And I absolutely love that, as every day we try to change the narrative around marriage for women. And she believes that no woman should have to dim her light or her brilliance to build a





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solid financial reality for herself and her family. So I want to welcome Debbie to the show.

Debbie is a member of the Marriage MBA Program, she can talk a little about her experience with that. And she's a very unique member of that program, because she's also done 1:1 Coaching with me. And at this moment of history, she's the only person on earth who has done both programs.

So welcome, Debbie. Thank you for being here. I'm excited to learn more about what you do, and also about your experiences in Marriage Coaching. So welcome.

Debbie Sassen

Thank you. I'm thrilled to be here, Maggie.

Maggie

So before we get started, I just want you to tell us a little bit about the family of origin money story, because I think -- we should have heard terms like that. And it makes sense when you hear it, but just tell us a little bit about how you help dissolve that. I think that's really fascinating and I know that everyone wants to know more about that.

Debbie Sassen

So I do it in two ways. First of all, we have to -- and you know we talk about this in marriage -- is bring awareness to what's going on. And the way we handle money, whether it is being afraid. So many people are afraid of money or they're not even looking at their money.

They're stuffing their financial statements into their desk drawers or these days, everything is





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like electronic so they might not even look. They have inboxes with like 1,000 letters and emails in them and they don't even go back and look and we're gonna take care of it another time.

And money is something that people fight about. Like they remember their parents fighting about money, or money is -- we have stories in our head from also the television shows that we watched, in the movies that we watched, right? About how there's always the evil people, you know, are the wealthy, rich people. You know, I think of growing up with like Dallas and Dynasty, right?

Maggie

Oh my goodness, yes.

Debbie Sassen

Evil, scheming people who are the ones who are wealthy and money causes problems. And I love it when I'm working with, you know, my clients, I'll take out a stack of bills and sort of like hit myself in the head with a stack of bills. It's like oh, yeah, money like causes a lot of pain, a lot of problems.

Like a stack of bills or a handful of coins, doesn't kill anybody, doesn't maim anybody. Maybe I'll get scratched by it, but you know, like, really money doesn't cause the problems. It's always the way we think about money.

And we think about the people who have managed money, and our history. You know, so we go into the thought work, obviously, you and I come from that same background. And I use tapping in EFT to really unlock some of the money stories and the nervous system response that we have





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to money. So we focus on the like, woo woo level or the mind-body level, but also very much on the cognitive level.

Maggie

Yeah, so let's just mention. So EFT is also referred to as tapping. And it's used very successfully in the military, for PTSD and all kinds of science is now studying why you know, how it works and why it's good and all that stuff. So I love the intersection of like the woo with the science, right?

We do cognitive work, you know how our thoughts create our results, and all of the, you know, experiences of our lives. And I remember one day, I was reading some law of attraction book and I was like, wait a minute, cognitive behavioral science, the law of attraction, thoughts become things or thoughts impact our results. Like these things, I see them as like a circle, and they come around and they connect.

And sometimes they're like, in opposite sides of the spectrum. And then they come all the way around, and then the essence is so similar. So thank you for bringing that to us. I definitely, we'll talk offline about having you back to talk about that.

Debbie Sassen

Oh I can't wait. That'll be so much fun.

Maggie

So tell me a little bit about: why did you decide to hire a Marriage Coach? You know, why did you decide to focus on your marriage? And then a little bit about your experiences, you've experienced one on one, and now you're in the Marriage MBA -- a little bit about your





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experience, just overall in the experience of Coaching.

Debbie Sassen

First of all, as a Coach, I love being Coached, right? Because Coaching is how we really, you know, we do achieve things that we thought were impossible or that we -- it just, it helps us get to where we want to go faster, it keeps the path straighter, rather than, you know, it keeps us -- it pushes us, we can have a little shove to get where we want to go.

And also there's a lot of work that I find personally and also with my clients that we block ourselves from doing it ourselves because it gets uncomfortable. And since our brain is wired to keep us safe, and to keep us happy, and status quo. And you know, and have pleasures. So it'll be like, "Mmm, I don't really think that I want to go there and deal with that today. Like maybe tomorrow."

It's like looking at your bills and your financial statements like "maybe tomorrow," right? But I'm 57 years old and I'm in a -- I think you know, since I got into my 50s I think I'm in a mid-life, whatever you want to call the second half of my life, a transition period in my life. I'm the mom of eight kids. So we'll maybe talk about that when we talk about some of the skills I learned.

I spent two thirds of our marriage -- we've been happily married for 31 years -- but two thirds of that I was pregnant and/or nursing. So my body. I mean, I'm an earth Mama. I love being pregnant. I love giving birth. I loved nursing my children. Like really, it was one of the biggest highlights of my life, those 20 years.

But when I got my body back, so to speak, like it had kind of changed a little bit. And going into





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menopause, like things really changed. And as my kids were growing up, and now I have three teens at home. Out of my eight children, five of them are married. So and my three teens, one is in a dorm. Two of them starting this coming September will be out of the house until like eight o'clock or nine o'clock at night.

Like my husband and I -- I'd like to say that we are co partners of Sassen Family, Inc. Yes, you did definitely pronounce my name right, thank you. But we want -- I wanted for us to rediscover that partnership that brought us together 31 years ago. And it was time. It was time to like, well, the kids are wonderful. I love my children. I love my 10 nearly 11 grandchildren.

But where's the US because we spent so much time focusing on them and us as part of them that like, you know, we're going to spend the next 50 years of our lives together. So let's focus on building. And one thing that really attracted me to you -- there's a lot of things -- but you focus on helping women make their marriages better.

But you're not focusing on women who are considering divorce. I mean, maybe you are but the way I was introduced to you -- we like, we have a good marriage. We're like really good partners, for the family. And now we need to reclaim (I think that's the right word) but like, rediscover who we are as a couple. So that was what really attracted me to you and the work you do.

Maggie

I love that and you absolutely hit the nail on the head. I focus on helping women make their marriages better. And I always think about my programs as marriage strengthening programs, not divorce preparation programs. And I think that's a very important distinction.





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It's like, when there's a foundation of love, when you know you want to make it work, but there's just one or two things that if we let them sort of grow like weeds, they can become a problem. If we nip them in the bud, then they don't have to be a problem.

And I love something that you said. You said, "Where is the US?" I want everyone listening to us right now to take that question in and just look at, "Where is the US?" In all our family commitments, the things that we care about -- whether it's our careers, our work -- all the different things that are important to us. on that list of things, "Where's the US?"

I think that's such beautiful reflection question. I love it. I love it so much. So I always like to ask some of your favorite aha moments, things that you've taken from the Coaching container that have helped you move forward. And just tell me a little bit about whatever you want to share around that.

Debbie Sassen

Okay, so I'm going to answer that together with the second part of your question that I didn't answer, which was because since I am a unique being on Earth, that I did 1:1 Coaching, and now in your, in your Coaching program, the MBA program. Is that, I think, you know -- I think it actually ties very much back to money and your financial identity, and the way we grow up is: you can have a financial identity that is wired into your nervous system, right, and let's take an extreme example of somebody who's in debt.

So she will identify as a debtor, and she'll have a financial setpoint, you know, like, kind of like a thermostat, which is to be always \$10,000 in debt, \$100,000, in debt, whatever it is, she'll come





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out of debt. And that can be through Coaching, or maybe on her own, but then her financial identity hasn't changed. And she could end up very quickly back into debt if she doesn't work on that.

And with what you and I did, or what, you know, in working 1:1, my identity as a woman, and as a wife changed, but I wanted to keep that thing wired in. To make sure that the changes stuck. I think it's also kind of like having braces, right? You go the orthodontist, you get braces, they take them off. If you don't put on the retainer, your teeth are just gonna go back to what they were. So..

Maggie

I love that example. It's so vivid. I, when you were talking about that, I was also thinking about like weight and weight loss. Like, you can lose weight very quickly. There's lots of different programs that will help you do that.

But unless you do sort of the inner mindset work of becoming the woman who just eats differently, then it does just come right back on. And I think a lot of us have had that experience -- I certainly had that experience. And it's like, oh, I want to anchor those changes. I want this to be who I am now. I think that's so powerful.

Debbie Sassen

Yeah, and I actually specifically wanted to avoid the weight loss thing, because it's a very -- it's almost as triggering as money.

Maggie





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Right? Like let's trigger everybody today. If you're listening today, and we say something that's triggering, first of all, just take a deep breath. And just ask yourself, like, what is what is coming up for me?

Like, if this show brings up something that's coming up for someone, like, let's know, if that trigger is like, it's there to be held, it's there to be seen and held. What's happening? Is money bringing up something? Is weight loss bringing up something or healthy eating, whatever? That's such an opportunity for growth.

So that's what you do if you're -- if something comes up. Just take a deep breath, and just ask yourself, why is this here and how could this be for my growth? It's like, it's kind of paradoxical to think about loving on a trigger, like, no, that's annoying, right? It's like a trigger. But it's like, wait, it's here to show me where my growth is. And in that way, it's being of service to us. I love that you said that.

Debbie Sassen

Okay. And I love that you always asked me that question: where is my growth? Because our growth doesn't always feel comfortable. And that's why it's such an important question. Because that's again, with the things that we want to avoid, it's like, "Where's my growth? Ehh. Maybe it's like watching Netflix right now." But it's not. Sometimes it is actually.

Maggie

Sometimes it is right? Like sometimes our growth is to let things be easy. And sometimes our growth is to face things that are hard. And we want to just have space and I want this podcast to be a place where we have a space to hold all of it and say it's all normal, it's all part of life.





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And we can lean into sometimes we have to give ourselves a break. If we're overworking, our growth is to rest and turn on Netflix and do a marathon. And if sometimes we're under pressure, right, in our marriages or in a relationship, our growth is to get a little bit uncomfortable and plan a date night or plan a difficult conversation. And so space for the easy, space for the hard is all welcome here. So thank you for that.

Debbie Sassen

You're welcome. So one of the things I loved about the coaching was when you share the compound stress cycles. That was for me a huge aha moment, especially as a mom of eight kids like there's like the phone rings, there's requests, whether it's a new pair of shoes or can we come?

You know, we're Orthodox Jews, right? So my family often wants to come for Shabbat for the Sabbath. And there's a lot of family events, whether it's, we've had -- since you and I started working together, we've had two new grandchildren, and another grandchild is due, like, you know, God willing in a month from now, plus all of the Jewish holidays, and my husband, I celebrated an anniversary.

So there's a lot of family events, get together, which involve for my 20 plus family, you know, member of families, there's a lot of work, planning. And, and so that's once one or many stress cycles. And then there's business and there's fitting in my husband and me, our us time together.

I live in Israel. So especially at the moment, there's an additional stress cycle with the, you know,





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political and security situation going on here, specifically this week. So there are many things in our lives that can cause stress. And just realizing that all of these stress cycles can be open, and then thinking about and taking action on how to close them to release the stressor, you know, it was very important for me.

Maggie

I love that so much. So today, you all are getting a real behind the scenes on what happens in the Coaching because Compound Stress Syndrome is something that I talk about, really inside my programs, and I love that you're mentioning it. So we'll give everybody the gist of what it is.

So as I observed all my clients, I started seeing some patterns in common and I started thinking about what's happening, right? Why do we all feel overwhelmed so much of the time? And as I learned more and more about how stress works in the body, and if you all remember like fight, flight, freeze and appease are the natural responses that our body has when we perceive a threat.

Sometimes the threat is the email from the boss, right? Sometimes the threat is the phone call from the mother-in-law. Like the threat for us isn't lions and bears, right? The threat for us can be the text from the school teacher, right, about something going on at school.

And so as I started looking at how stress affects us, I developed this concept. It's called Compound Stress Syndrome. And the essence, the very basic of it, is that we have more than one stress cycle open at the same time. And if you have more than one stress cycle open at the same time, of course, we're gonna feel overwhelmed, because we haven't come back to center.





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And then it's like, there's one lion and then there's a bear, then there's a cheetah, then there's a tiger that we haven't recovered from the first lion before, and now there's something else, you know. And so that's something that I think it's so useful to understand and to start working through.

What are self soothing techniques? How do we come back to center and all those kinds of things? I'm so glad that that was powerful for you. And now everyone sort of got a little bit of a taste of what that's all about. So that's so good.

What else do you have? I know you made a little checklist. So what else do you have on your notes?

Debbie Sassen

I have notes, come on! I'll tell you why I love working with you. Because you work with Type A women. So I have my notes, of course.

Maggie

I know my people. I am my people and I know my people. Awesome. I love that. Bring it.

Debbie Sassen

Okay, so that was one thing from the learning. The second thing was the Soul Centered Communication.

Maggie

Yes.





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Debbie Sassen

Yeah. Which was, besides the -- I'm just going to go into the, like the "O," which is focused on one thing.

Maggie

Yes. Uncomplicated. Yes.

Debbie Sassen

Uncomplicated, focusing on one thing, and that has been key. Because I think especially as, as women, we tend to like, talk about something and then go off on all the stories behind it.

Maggie

Yes. I certainly have done that. Yes, sometimes on this very podcast. Yes.

Debbie Sassen

Besides bringing in like 30 years of history, no, I but really, it's like, recently, my husband and I, because I'm, you know, a money geek. We have something called our family emergency binder that we want to keep up to date with all of our financial accounts, and people to contact, and where we have our insurance policies, and blah, blah, blah. And we actually, on our anniversary, which was in February, we started updating it.

Now it's not the most enjoyable thing for a couple to do, is to like sit down and figure out like, who to contact if you -- I don't know, God forbid, have a stroke and somebody needs to, you know, like deal with the doctors and money and stuff like that. But it's very important. And





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you don't want to leave your loved ones even more -- speaking about stress cycles -- more stressed out by having to figure out where all that information is.

But neither of us really want to do it. So we're in cahoots with each other. It's like, "Oh, no, well, if I do this, so you get to do that." "If I do this, you get to do -- and we sort of, you know, but then I said, you know what, let's just put it into our calendars. Half an hour, once a week. We'll get as far as we can, until we do it and we'll both sit down together. He's like, "Great idea."

And we have our Thursday morning date. But that's when we take care of it a little teeny, tiny, you know, bite sized pieces so that we'll get it done together. And it'll, I don't know, maybe we'll bring like some bittersweet chocolate to it or something to make it fun at the same time. Rather than like, "Ugh! That thing we have to do."

Maggie

I love that so much. So we'll link to the Soul Centered Communication podcast episode in the show notes for this episode. And one of the things in Soul Centered Communication is to be uncomplicated. To take one thing at a time, just that thing, and then move on to the next thing. And I love this example that you've given that it's a short date, it's once a week, you get as far as you get, and that's enough.

I think one of the things I talk about a lot with my husband is: what is enough around a lot of different areas in our life? It's like, oh, this is enough, this is enough for now. Okay, we've made progress. And I think there's so much all or nothing or black and white thinking in our world. And I certainly have internalized it as being in our world.





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And it has been so powerful for me personally, over the last few years, I've really been questioning all the places where I want to get it all done right? Or I don't do any of it at all, right? And I love this example of: we all have to organize our finances. We all have to figure out stuff.

Whether it's the emergency binder, or whether it's figuring out what we're gonna save up for vacation, or what we're gonna save up for Coaching, or stuff like that. It's like, oh, we can just do a little bit at a time, and modeling that, and having such a great example of that, I think is so powerful. What a great way to implement being uncomplicated. I love it.

Debbie Sassen

Thank you. And I think that's going to take me to the next thing, which is, in one of our last sessions together, you and I, this was something that I brought from the money world and I brought it then to, to intimacy and sex and being with my husband was like scarcity and abundance.

Like, being able to really dig into that, like, what does that mean? And you know, where is our mindset? So that all or nothing thinking -- let me get my notes -- that Type A person with her notes.

So that's -- so just really trying to, to unravel what does that mean in an intimate relationship? It was like, where does scarcity show up? Where does abundance? Again, that all or nothing thinking that it has to be one way or it's not considered intimacy. It has to be like this, you know, what is pleasure? There's a right way, there's a wrong way.

Pleasure can be just a touch, it can be wearing perfume, it can be noticing -- and we've talked





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about this in the group -- is like my beautiful coffee mug and I just feeling it and feeling how it feels in my hands. So there is way more than one way, both in money and in a relationship, to be present, to have pleasure, to fulfill each other's needs and desires and wants. And it doesn't have to be all or nothing.

And it doesn't have to be like -- there's time, we can create time, we bench time. You and I talked about that, right? Time benched for me. And it's more relaxing when we A) schedule the time in for us and set an agenda. But also we can be in flow at the same time.

So that for me was very much -- especially as a mom of many kids -- is that time was something that was really always at a premium for the US. And so finding it now differently. And you Coach Type A women and I've always joked that my husband is like Type A+, like he's more Type A than Type B. And when I told him that he said, "No we're Type A+." So we've agreed to disagree on that one.

But like, it's not like the kids left home and we have more time, because I'm growing my business and he's doing a lot of community service and community work around our synagogue and he wants to -- he's in the middle of writing a book so it wasn't like all of a sudden we had hours upon hours that we could spend with each other, because we're growing and doing and and creating new possibilities in our life.

And so we still had to make sure to carve out time for us and for the us time and making it more abundant rather than going towards scarcity was something that was very mind bending, and mind opening up things.





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Maggie

Yes, yes. So scarcity and abundance take all these different forms and I think about -- I am preparing an episode now coming soon called Desire Versus Dependency. And when we're in a relationship from a place of desire it's really being in there from a place of abundance, right?

I -- my cup is full, and I want to share my full cup with you versus you come and fill my cup up. Right? That's such a scarcity - minded way of being in relationship. And so many of us go through phases in our lives where we just want somebody else to fill our cup.

And then it becomes like the cup with no bottom that it's just endlessly needing to be filled. It just never actually gets filled up, until we have that moment of awakening. And we're like, "Oh, when I fill my cup, it actually gets filled." It's like we're putting the bottom on the cup.

Debbie Sassen

Yes. And I think that that's very much also another reason why I came to you at this time in my life, because I spent so much of our married life, giving. Like being a giver, being the mama for the whole family. Like with love, and, you know, with like, desire...

Maggie

From desire. Yes.

Debbie Sassen

Yes. And so, I felt that I was showing up in our relationship as a taker. Like, it was always like, "What can I take for him?" and I didn't feel like I was giving mutually as I wanted to shift that. And again, because we can get into these well worn grooves in our life. It's not like I can like just





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flip the switches.

It's not always as easy as turning on the light switch and being like, "Oh, Hello. Today I'm going to be a giver." Like, those, that pair of shoes didn't feel comfortable for me, right? So the Coaching was able to, you know, through the Coaching, I was able to flip the switch, and towards more, let's say have a balanced relationship that way.

Maggie

I love that so much this idea of this giving and receiving. And I like to think about it like breathing, like inhaling and exhaling. Like we can't do just one. We can't just exhale. We can't just inhale. Right? We need both. And I think in our relationships, whatever is going on right now, for everyone who's listening, think about, are you inhaling? Are you exhaling?

Are you doing both? Are you doing more of one versus the other? Are you giving, giving, giving, but then not feeling like you're receiving? Are you receiving and not feeling like you're showing up, you know, with generosity and loving your heart to also give? Like, no judgment on either one. Like Debbie said, we get into these patterns, where it feels comfortable to be in one role more so than the other role.

And we just want to question it, if we're feeling frustrated, or if we're feeling if we're suffering in some way because of it, then we want to question it. If everything's working, you just keep on going with what you're doing. But when we're feeling suffering, you want to check in. And that's a great place to check in. And to make it super simple. It's like the inhale and the exhale, the giving and the receiving.





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And something else you said about: that it doesn't have to just be one way. Sometimes we want to be given to in very specific ways, or we want to give in very specific ways. And we have to check in with ourselves around: is that actually effective? Is it creating the relationship that I want?

And that just reminded me, in the show notes, I'm going to link to Rethinking the Five Love Languages, because that's a very in depth discussion about this idea of how we give and receive. And I did an episode on Self Trust that's really on: there is more than one way to do things. And we have to trust ourselves to find our own way.

So some of these things that Debbie's bringing up so masterfully -- if you want to go deeper into those, we'll link to those in the show notes so you can sort of think about each of these things. But come back to "Where is the us?" because that's the question for the episode today. That's so good. Where's us? Okay, tell me more of what's next in your notes.

Debbie Sassen

One of the other things, especially this is around, like, change of life and menopause that I learned, which was really so important for me, was the difference between Responsive Desire and Spontaneous Desire.

Because as I grew, as I changed, my body changed, my anatomy changed, like, you know, and we talked about, like, Responsive Desire is experienced more by women than by men. Although some women have spontaneous desire, or, like, I definitely felt like that's something that I had when I was younger.





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As a 57 year old woman, it's like, oh, it's completely changed. And, just knowing that that's normal was so important to me as a person, to us (like where's the us?), us as a couple. Like, I'm not broken. He's not broken. We're not broken. Like this is so normal.

And then once you know you're normal, you're like, oh, okay, now we can deal with this. And first of all, it's a stress cycle that's like, mostly closed.

Maggie
Right. Yes.

Debbie Sassen
As I say sheepishly, right? So I think that that's something that's very important to know. And just being able to, like, release pressure around that and always having to perform or to be or to think that I need to show up in a specific way.

And also through our coaching together, like when we started together, and we sort of looked at, where is Debbie's future self? Right? And it was like, and it really was getting back to that place of Spontaneous Desire. But then by the end of six months, it's like, oh, like, that was then. And that was good for then.

Maggie
Yes.

Debbie Sassen
And this is now. This good for now. And I think, again, that either/or, like, doesn't have to be all or





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nothing. Like you know, but like, this is also a part of life. This is also to be celebrated. And, and we did work around forgiveness, and we did work around approval.

And that was also like, you know, just even writing in my journal, you know, like, "I approve of myself." Right? That exercise from Louise Hay, right? It was like that was so cleansing, I guess, in a way, right? It was just so you know, like, to honor me, to approve of me, to accept me for who I am and where I am and where I'm sitting today. You know, to love my younger self to love my current self. And I guess I'm gonna love my future self also, right?

Maggie

You're loving her in advance already. Yes.

Debbie Sassen

Can I stay in the Marriage MBA for the next 50 years?

Maggie

You can return should you wish to do so. But here's something that I love about what you said is: sometimes our growth is to notice we want something to be different, and then go after it, right? Like signing up for Coaching is like, I want to create a different result. This is the result I want to create, let's do this.

And sometimes in the process of Coaching, we do change the result. We create something new, we're in a new place and that happens. But sometimes the growth is accepting where I am. And both of those are sort of equally amazing moments to have as a human. To create a result that we wanted and go for it and do it and do all the emotional internal work to make that happen.





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That inner work and the outer work. The inner work: our mindset, how we're thinking about things, questioning things, things like forgiveness, inner work. Outer work: going out in the world, and doing things like having a date night, planning a dinner with the Hubby, or your partner, those kinds of things.

And it's like sometimes that growth is to create that amazing thing. And sometimes that growth is to say, "This is who I am and I love and accept myself right now." Whether it's with your marriage, with your money, with your weight, with whatever thing is the most triggering thing, you know, for whoever's listening to us right now. It's like, oh, what if I accepted it first? And then we see where we want to go from there. I love that so much. So beautiful.

Debbie Sassen

And I want to just add one thing on top of that, is that what we talked about was -- we talked about the patriarchy. And I'm just going to say this: is that there's a lot of talk in the world about the patriarchy. And I don't like to make the patriarchy the scapegoat for everything that's wrong in the world. But I mean, it just -- I think it's used very loosely. And I want to be cautious about that.

Because we also do have to take responsibility for our personal individual results. But what you made me aware of was like that this is the water that we swim in. And I love that -- I love that metaphor and that statement. First of all, today, I live life as an Orthodox Jew, and we have a certain way that we approach marriage and intimacy.

And that's not how I grew up. I grew up secular. I grew up as a reformed Jew. So I was way more





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exposed to the waters that I was swimming in then. And again, as a child, when our slates are clean, and you know, we don't have the same filters that we have as adults, we just absorb everything that comes, that's happening around us.

But the books I read, the movies I watched, or the television shows that I watch (which are all and you know, written and produced by men, right?) And so, I guess we've all grown up with these waters of expecting that the Spontaneous Desire is the way it happens, right?

And realizing that, oh, that's not always the way it happens. So it's sort of, you know, understanding the global picture and how things have been presented to us over time. And, but what the reality is if it isn't very important.

Maggie

I love that you mentioned that. So with Spontaneous desire, if you think about almost any movie, or these cultural narratives that we have, right? The things we -- the stories that we see and that we, that we watch, and that we enjoy, right? We can even enjoy them. Nothing wrong with that.

But many of the things that we see, in our sort of modern history -- the producers, the writers, the directors, the people that were directing -- even if women were on screen, the people who were creating the stories were largely men. And a lot of men experience spontaneous desire, which is basically like, they're ready for sex anytime.

Like, you know, those images of like throw me against the wall, stuff like that, right? Like, those are a lot of the images that we see especially portrayed in media. But everyone on Earth has





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Spontaneous or Responsive desire.

And Responsive Desire, which is just I need my runway to be a little bit longer, you know, if I've been doing 54 things during the day, and I've been worried about -- whether it's children, work, responsibilities, family, you know, all of these different things that we have in our mind, I may need to switch gears and have a different experience of preparation to then engage in a healthy way for a sexual connection.

But we don't usually see that in media. Like Responsive Desire is not something that's necessarily easy to film, right? I don't know, I'm not a filmmaker, maybe I'm wrong about that. But no, and it's certainly not easy if you're not thinking about it. And if you're not wired that way, you just think everyone is wired the same way you're wired.

So even though I'm not blaming the men who did this -- they thought this was the normal way, because this is their experience, right? They didn't -- I don't think anyone purposely was trying to create harm by doing this. It's just welcoming different experiences. And seeing diversity of thought and diversity of experience helps us all, because we all have different experiences of these things.

And this idea of Responsive Desire and Spontaneous Desire -- it's a theory, it's a hypothesis, it's being researched. Like, maybe five years from now we'll name it something else and we'll find even more nuance to it. But right now, it's a very useful way to understand how we connect sexually.

And I just wanted to sort of make that explanation, especially if this is the first time you're





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listening to the show -- a little bit behind the scenes: there's a great book that I love by an author named Emily Nagoski that's called *Come As You Are*. I love that book. I highly recommend it. I often tell my clients and my students in the Marriage MBA, there's a book list and that's one of the books that's on it.

So that's really -- it will give you the basics of what we're talking about today, if you want to dig a little bit deeper into that. Okay, beautiful. So, Debbie, so rich. I love this conversation. So what's a fun memory that you have from coaching? Is there something that just made you laugh or that you just remember with some delight?

Debbie Sassen

I think the most fun thing about Coaching with you is your bell. I love your bell, I love it.

Maggie

Okay, this is a worldwide premiere. I've never rang the bell on the podcast and we'll try to do it away from the mic so it doesn't freak you out. Let's see -- I hope that's not too loud. So I ring this bell. I ring it when my client says something brilliant. I ring it when -- all kinds of situations, I just ring it.

Debbie Sassen

I think we're all like six years old at heart, right? We all want that. Like I don't know, our star charts or sticker charts or like bells. Like it's just like so much fun, to be rewarded for coming up with something brilliant. For, you know, having done something fun, exciting, new and different, you know, stretching me beyond what -- where I was the week before. And I just like that affirmation or confirmation that I'm like an awesome six year old.





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Maggie

That is so fun. I -- you know, I use the bell because I too love the bell and I went to a retreat with Lacey Sites. She's amazing. I have an interview with her on the podcast, we'll link to it in the show notes on Emotional Leadership.

And I went to this retreat and they had a little bell and we would sort of -- we had so much fun in the retreat, we would just all ring the bell at will and we just went crazy like children with the bell. And when I came back home from that retreat, I was like, "I think I need a bell in my life. I think we need to ring bells more often."

And it's such a beautiful example of like the power of Coaching. When we're in a new place, we get to share that with the people around us. In my case, I get to share it with my clients and with my community. And now it's something where my clients will say, "I think this deserves a bell ring."

Debbie Sassen

Yes. Yes. I do say that.

Maggie

I think we need to. Like that has happened quite often, and it's like, oh, when you internalize, like, I honor myself, I am proud of myself, I celebrate myself.

I think it's so important to celebrate. I think in our culture, in general, we overwork and under-celebrate. And those little moments of celebration, I have this theory that we don't fully own our





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growth, or our accomplishments, until we celebrate them. Like we can have them, but we don't own them until we celebrate them. So I love that, that was meaningful and powerful for you.

Debbie Sassen

It was great. I mean, I think we're just all like little kids in big people bodies, and we just want to be in the candy store. And the bell is just our candy.

Maggie

I love it. So good. Tell me what else is on your notes and then we'll go from there.

Debbie Sassen

So besides the fact that you're fun, and you have your bell, what also attracted me to working with you was really your -- you and I are in the same Coaching communities -- we have the same Coach. And just watching your growth and your warmth and non judgmental-ness, right?

I just felt like you were totally safe, very wise, very supportive. And I was very much drawn to you and the work that you do. And what really was the hook was I -- it was probably about six months ago, maybe a little bit longer, when I saw somewhere flashing up in my Facebook feed that you had been certified by Layla Martin from the -- how do you pronounce her...?

Maggie

She actually changed the name. So it's called the VITA Coaching Institute now. It's much easier to say. It used to be the Tantric Institute for Integrative Sexuality, which is quite the mouthful. So now it's the VITA Coaching Institute. And it's the Vital and Integrated Tantric Approach, but we can just say VITA.





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And so you were saying that -- so I did a 600 hour Coaching training with Layla Martin. She's brilliant. She has a fabulous YouTube channel with a lot of resources. I highly recommend her work. She brings sacredness to sexuality, which is what attracted me to her.

So I always sort of think about, like, if you love yoga, or one of those practices that brings you in sacred connection with your body. That's very much what I took and that's how I interpret her work. My interpretation is to be in sacred connection with your body through sex. So sometimes that's through yoga, through meditation, through different modalities that we use.

So I did a 600 hour training with her. It took me two years to finish it because I was, you know, working obviously, as a Coach the whole time. And I had to do my studies, you know, at night after Coaching or on the weekends and all that, but it was a really, really beautiful experience. And I'm so glad that that resonated for you.

Debbie Sassen

Yeah, I was like, I don't even know what the word tantric means. But it sounded like that little bit, which is also the mind, body part and the sacredness of it that I also bring into the work that I do through the use of the tapping in and getting in touch with the body.

So knowing that you had those two pieces together, and then finding out afterwards that you have a woo side, that was you know, I was like, it just felt right. And it was -- everything always has to be the right place, the right time, the right thing. And I was just like, yeah, I'm in. And I was ready for it.





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Maggie

I love it. I love it so much. What is one thing that you will take from our work together for the rest of -- that, you know, you're just gonna use for the rest of your life? What is the one thing that you're like, oh, I'm always gonna remember this? It might be the bell. But if there's something else that comes to mind, that is just like, oh, I know, this question. I think you mentioned the "Where's my growth?" is one of the questions.

Debbie Sassen

One thing? Like really, just one? I think the forgiveness and the approval. Because that's self love, self acceptance, self respect -- like it all, whatever we're doing in life when we can, when we respect ourselves and love ourselves, unconditionally, which is really, that's where my growth is for the rest of my life. That's where we all, you know, have our growth. But when we, when we're connected to self, that gives us the ability to connect with others more deeply.

Maggie

Yeah. I love that. It's so powerful. Yeah.

Debbie Sassen

Yeah. And I think also there's, like, there's a beautiful, like I said, you know, I'm Jewish, I'm orthodox, and so, the Bible is my guide to life and we have that statement, you know that you should love your neighbor as yourself, right? (Speaks in Hebrew) Right?

And you can only love your neighbor as yourself when you love yourself. Like you only have as much to give out as you have inside of you. The more you can build yourself, the more you can like -- the more you could fill up your own cup. It's always like put on your oxygen mask first, like





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fill yourself up, and then you have way more to give out.

Maggie

Okay, this is very important. But this is the first time that Hebrew has been spoken on my podcast so I want to ask you to repeat what you sort of said very offhand. But slowly, so I just -- for my own personal benefit, to enjoy the beautiful sounds. I love language. I'm one of those language nerds. So would you say that same thing you just said? But just slowly?

Debbie Sassen

Yeah. (Speaks in Hebrew)

Maggie

Beautiful. And then tell us that is Love your neighbor as yourself.

Debbie Sassen

Right. The (speaks in Hebrew) is you should love, right? (Speaks in Hebrew) Love your neighbor. (Speaks in Hebrew) Like yourself.

Maggie

Beautiful. Thank you for sharing. I love that so much. Okay. So next question. You've been in 1:1 Coaching now you're in Group Coaching -- I know a lot of people listening to us, they're like, "What Group Coaching? What is that?" Can you share a little bit?

Because I think sometimes people think, "Oh my goodness, is it gonna be a complaint fest? Is it just gonna be a group of women complaining about, you know, things? Is it -- will I feel safe





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enough to open up? Like, how will it be?"

Can you speak a little bit to just your experience of being in a group container and talking about something as precious to us, right, as our marriages. I know marriage is precious to me and that's why I do this work. So can you speak a little bit to that?

Debbie Sassen

First of all, you build a safe container. And I'm sure you've said it, but anything that's within that container stays in the container. Right? And through your example, you build safety, and you build that understanding.

And it's not a complaint fest, because since -- first of all, you are working with women who want to grow and develop and improve their marriages. So we're all there with a common goal and a common aim. You're not there to just like, complain and eat cookies together. Like we're there because we want more. We want a better relationship with ourselves and with our partners. So it's definitely not that.

And we always grow by watching other people being Coached. Because you might not even think that you have that issue. And then when you see somebody else being Coached on it, it's like, oh, yeah, I also had that, right? You know, or you might come with a question and someone gets there first.

Or they grow from you going through your question that day. And it just -- it opens your mind because, you know, let's even say the exercise that you gave us on naming your top three values. And that was hard, because there's so many of them.





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And it was also fun, because I took that to my husband. And then we did it together. And we talked about values. But someone can share her idea why she chose her three values. And like, oh, like, I never thought about it that way. So it's mind expanding to be in a group with other women. It's like the sum of the parts is worth more than the whole? I think I said that right. I think I got it right this time.

Maggie

Yes. Yes. Yes, absolutely. Yeah. I love that, and I love that you took the exercise to your husband and that you were able to share, you know, part of your own growth with him. And that's beautiful. Thank you for sharing that as well.

Debbie Sassen

We do that all the time. And that's also something that I really like brought into our relationship is -- is the little things like I mentioned. Just like folding his pajamas with intentionality. I told him this morning, like, "Oh, that's a new shirt. I really love this new shirt."

Like just little teeny tiny things. Making a salad for lunch together. Just being more intentional. Create our results. So showing up and saying different things, being present, has changed it. It's again, those little teeny tiny steps that create big results over the long term.

Maggie

I love that. I think marriage work is very much all about tiny tweaks that lead to quantum leaps. And it's like, those small things are the big things. And sometimes we just had to pause and think about that.





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So now we're gonna do something that's one of my favorite things to do on the show. I have written a book, as you all probably know, if you don't know by now. It's called The Questions for Couples Journal and I love asking my guests a question from the journal. So today's question Debbie is: what is a hobby or pastime that you love doing with your partner and what makes it fun?

Debbie Sassen

That's easy. We love hiking. Like we love nature. We love hiking. What makes it fun is being together, being outside, moving our bodies, being in nature, sweating. Like it's just like -- it's just it's a full mind, body experience.

What can I say? It's just like it's, there's so much connection when we're hiking, and we've done little hikes and we've hiked in Yosemite up Half Dome for anybody that's, that's a hiker, we've done that one together, it's just, it's just us, we just really enjoy it.

Maggie

So everyone's gonna be listening to this on audio. But I happened to be seeing Debbie right now and her face lit up with so much love and so much beauty. Just the memory of hiking with her husband, so beautiful. I just love it.

It was so beautiful to just see that. To see that memory. One of the things I like to do sometimes is remember things that really bring out that feeling, and then have that feeling in the present. And now I get to feel that way right now.





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So everyone listening, think of one of your happiest memories with your honey. And just like imagine bathing in it just for a second, just like really savoring it.

Okay, before we wrap up, is there anything else you want to add? And then tell people: what is the best way to connect with you and to learn more about all the things you teach around money?

Debbie Sassen

I love to hang out on Facebook. That's my playground. So you can find me on Facebook, Debbie Sassen and my website is debbiesassen.com. You can -- I have a bunch of blogs there. I think I'm going to launch a podcast in a couple of months on money.

And I have a freebie there on money mindset if you would like to, you know, explore your money mindset and download that. And I also have a Facebook group called Savvy Money for Women in Business.

Maggie

Savvy Money for Women in Business. Okay, so I'm gonna ask Debbie to send us the link and we'll put that in the show notes. So that if you want to join your Facebook group, you can definitely do that. Beautiful. Thank you for being here.

Debbie Sassen

Thank you very much for having me. I'll just say that anybody who's thinking of joining a program should do it. It's a really beautiful program. Again, improving your marriage, growing your marriage, growing yourself, your self trust, self belief. And since I like to do things and





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anchor them in -- if any of your students want to do it again, I say go for it.

Maggie
Do it again.

Debbie Sassen
Wire in your new marriage habits.

Maggie
Yes, yes, absolutely. Thank you, Debbie, for being here. Thank you everyone for listening. Remember, "Where's the us?" So good. We'll be back next week with more ways to make your marriage stronger. Bye.

