



EPISODE 90: CHOOSING YOURSELF FIRST WITH ANA VERZONE

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/90](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/90)

Maggie Reyes:

Hello everyone. Welcome to the podcast. I am so excited to have Ana Verzone on the podcast today. She is an absolute powerhouse, an amazing human. We're going to have so much fun, and it's just going to be an amazing conversation. So, first I want to introduce you to her.

Dr. Ana Verzone is a Master Certified Life Coach. She specializes in helping women really discover their power and live their truth, and the way she likes to describe it is creating lives of true freedom inside and out. She is the founder of something called Freedom School, she's going to tell us what that is, and the host of the top rated Rebel Buddhist podcast.

Ana -- this is not in her bio, but she recently went viral on Elephant Journal, and was amazing. I was just reading through my Facebook feed, and there was this amazing quote and I loved it, and I was like, "Oh, this is so brilliant," and who was, it was Ana. It had been shared like thousands and thousands of times. So she's a regular contributor there as well.

She describes herself as an undeniable, multi-passionate, and a nerd, as do I. The nerdiness has come together. She has a degree in psychology, multiple graduate degrees, including a doctoral degree, Dr. Ana Verzone, and her academic background is really focused on the science of resilience and post-traumatic growth, and she brings so much warmth and so much depth to any topic that she talks about. I am so excited. Welcome, Ana.

Ana Verzone:

Thank you so much, Maggie. I am so excited to be here because, as many of your listeners probably know, our relationships permeate all aspects of our lives. So I think it's really important to talk about all this.





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Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, I love it so much. So, before we dive into a little bit about your evolution over the last year-and-a-half and some of the adventures that you've had, tell us about the Rebel Buddhist podcast and Freedom School, like what are those things? Describe them for us, and we'll definitely link to them in the show notes.

Ana Verzone:

Oh yes. Yeah. So my Rebel Buddhist podcast is where I teach people how to avoid unnecessary suffering. So, you know, while I'm a Life Coach, I kind of joke that I'm also a death Coach because I really look at prioritizing life and creating the most fulfilling life through this lens of "we're not here forever," and we don't have time to mess around with unnecessary suffering, putting all our time, money, and energy into things that don't matter, and it's like really getting clear about what it is that really matters to us and then also learning the skills that we need to not get in our own way, right? Yeah, and the Rebel Buddhist podcast, I really teach on a lot of those topics that I really dive into detail with within Freedom School.

So Freedom School is my membership program. It's an ongoing experience. We have different topics every month. Everybody gets Coached live weekly, and then folks from there often graduate and go off and do my Adventure Mastermind, which is a six-month Coaching experience where we have adventures on retreats together.

For a long time, I was a climbing guide, so I really value experiencing these adventures and translating it into how we deal with difficulty in our day-to-day life. So that what once scared us, like for me, the fear of heights can become something super fun and exciting, like rock climbing. So, yeah. That's how I put it all together in my own little, multi passionate way.





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Maggie Reyes:

I love it so much, and what I love is that you mix the science with the intuition, with the Buddhist principles, and you've created this like prism that you can have all of these different aspects of the science and the Buddhist principles come together to like what I call "truth with a capital 'T.'"

When it's truth with a capital "T," it's just wherever you go, you're going to find the same core answer because whether we look to science or Buddhism, or even adventure, or the adventure of our own selves and facing our fears, it's always going to come out, that truth with a capital "T," and I just love how you do that.

Ana Verzone:

Thank you, and that's so, right, right, because most people actually in my programs aren't necessarily even Buddhist. They just are using the tools, because Buddhism has been studied scientifically, the different meditation practices and a lot of the different Buddhist psychology aspects at like Stanford and Harvard and Yale. There's so many studies that show how mindfulness and so many other compassion, self-compassion, how all of these things can really help us. So, yeah. Thanks for acknowledging that.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. Love that so much. So tell us, before we got together today, we talked a little bit about what you wanted to share today, and we worked together over the last few months on your relationship with yourself and your relationship with your marriage, and I would love to hear what some of your favorite takeaways were, what some of your favorite things you want to share were, just wherever you want to start with that. I just can't wait to hear what you want to share.





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Ana Verzone:

Thanks, yeah. I mean, it's so rich, right, but I would say if I was going to spend this whole time talking about one thing, it would be where I really learned to choose me. Like I had spent so much energy, like I came to you because I knew, just as you all have heard me say, like I really want to prioritize not suffering unnecessarily, and I knew that my life is so precious. I cleaned up so much of my life, right? My thoughts about being a parent, my relationship with my parents, my career, and this marriage stuff was just, I felt so stuck, right, and I was just like, "What is it? What is it?" Like I had this stuck-ness in it.

So I knew I needed a Coach because all good Coaches have Coaches because we all have our blind spots, and this was mine. Like I could not let go of how I felt I had been wronged in my marriage, and all the blame and resentment and pain. I really was like, "No, if you took this and showed it to a thousand people, they would all agree this was messed up," right?

I really was seeing it as like this truth, but I also knew deep down, you know, spiritually and even cognitively and rationally, that that wasn't all true. So, I had moved through Coaching to stop seeing me as, "Oh, poor me. I had this messed up thing and I have a right to be angry" to, "Where was my role in this, and what can I do? What do I have sovereignty over?", right? And then I was thinking, I kind of let a lot of those things happen in my marriage. I didn't ask for what I needed from an empowered way. I didn't create what I wanted myself.

I was really wanting it to come from outside, and through Coaching, I realized, "Oh." Even though I really wanted this to come from my partner or my husband, it didn't have to, and, "What would my marriage be like if I was meeting my needs and what I wanted? Then what role?", because I would have to do that in any relationship, right, whether I was by myself, whether I left him and





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met someone else, or became a nun or whatever.

I would still have to like meet my needs, and, “What if I did that now? And what would that mean for my marriage and my relationship?” So that was huge. Just starting to be like, “I can choose me and not be around as much as I currently,” or as I was at the time, “and everybody would still be okay.” My daughter would still be okay. My husband would still be okay. My family would be okay. Just like all these stories I had about why I needed to suffer sort of started to dissolve.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, and what I can see throughout the course of your whole life is you always create your life. You design it. You’re a mountain guide and a PhD, and a nurse, and a Master Life Coach, and a Rebel Buddhist. Like you’ve always had this tapestry of the way that you created your life, and then it came to your marriage and it was like, “No, it has to look like everybody else’s or it’s ...”

Ana Verzone:

Yes-

Maggie Reyes:

Right?

Ana Verzone:

I had to design it-

Maggie Reyes:

And that just isn’t you.





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Ana Verzone:

Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah.

Ana Verzone:

So, because I'm an academic, I have to clarify: the clinical doctorate, not a research doctorate, okay? I just want everybody to know that.

Maggie Reyes:

Yes, yes-

Ana Verzone:

Because I'm an "apply it" kind of gal. So-

Maggie Reyes:

Love it.

Ana Verzone:

So, yes. My marriage already didn't look like anybody else's. Everybody would always say, "How can you 'let' him do that?", "How can you stand being apart from each other so much?", and yada yada. So we already, before we even got married, had an atypical relationship, but we both prioritized freedom, right?





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Like, so I refer to, and ironically it was creating some of our issues, and so well, but this is such a pattern. We already know we do this, right? Like what we love becomes annoying, but you know, it was really like, we can go constantly redefine that we. It doesn't have to look like even what we thought it was. Like we already thought we had this unconventional thing going, and then, man. It just had to become more unconventional.

Maggie Reyes:
Yeah.

Ana Verzone:
If we were open to it, doing that, to evolving. Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:
Yeah, that's so powerful. So when you say "choosing you first," for people that are listening, thinking, "I should probably choose myself first. I have no idea how to do that," what are a couple of ways, in a grounded way, that you can share any examples around what does that look like? Like on a Tuesday?

Ana Verzone:
I had to let go of needing everything to be right because I thought it reflected something about me and who I was. Like I would, you might remember. I would get so upset when like my husband would forget that my daughter had Zoom school, or he would bring her late or forget her jacket, or like all these things where I was like, "Oh, we're going to be that family," right?

And then it was like, "Oh, well. I guess they were that family, and this is me." It's funny, like this





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is what went viral on Elephant Journal, right? It was this statement of like, “What is the most relaxing thing we can do? Let other people be wrong about us.”

Maggie Reyes:
Yes.

Ana Verzone:

And I was like, “I’m going to choose me and not care, like even though my husband could change those things, I’m just going to let him do that.” I remember you saying, “It’ll be okay. He can talk to the teachers about bringing her late. He can go run back and bring her the jacket.” Like let him kind of deal with those consequences, right, instead of me feeling this heavy weight of having to be the one to do it all the time.

So, part of that on a practical level was just like, “This is what you are in charge of. Are you okay with that? Can you do that? Okay, great. I am now letting go,” and really actually doing that. If he was like, “Oh, I didn’t get a babysitter,” because one of his things was, I was also like, “You have to do childcare.” So he’s like, “Oh no, I didn’t find someone,” and I was like, “Oh, I’m going to go for my walk now.” Like, “Oh, well. I don’t know how you’re going to deal with that, but you’re going to deal with it. Ciao,” right?

And it may sound sort of flippant right now, but I mean, I had really been shouldering that burden for like seven years, and it was such a relief to find finally be like, “Oh. I’m going to let you be in charge of this,” like it’ll feel good for him when he pulls it off, right, and figures it out and that’s his jam, and it also is an act of expressing faith like, “I know you can figure this out somehow. I don’t have to be the one,” right?





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Maggie Reyes:

Yes. Yes. I think that that is something, there's so much there because it's a theme that comes up all the time whenever I'm Coaching, which is allowing our partners, or sometimes our coworkers, or sometimes our children or our friends, to just experience the consequences of their decisions or the consequences of their actions, to allow them to experience to their own consequences.

Like we don't have to jump in, and we think we're being loving or kind, or generous, or helpful by jumping in, but then we are, in some ways, robbing them of their own resourcefulness. Like they never get to build a resourcefulness muscle if they never have anything to be resourceful around. What are your thoughts about that?

Ana Verzone:

I think that's huge because I have a tendency being a very independent woman, like I've been in very male-dominated professions, whether as a climbing guide or in the medical field, having to show I'm as strong, if not more or as competent, if not more, than my male counterparts, and I have a tendency to emasculate, like, "I got this. No, I can do this," "No, I'm better at this," "No, I'll pay for it."

Like I just don't want to deal, and so I just do it myself, and not just with partners, but with everybody in my life. I'm learning that keeps people from being able to express their generosity to me where I'm like, "Oh, I'm good. I don't need anyone," and then it's like, "Oh, well then I guess you don't need me." Even though it doesn't mean that I have to need them, I can provide opportunity to receive. I can provide opportunity for the people in my life to show up and to demonstrate to me that how much they care, right?





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And I think a big part of the hesitancy towards that is we can sometimes have a fear of being let down, but then when the request is coming from a place of empowerment instead of needing, then even if it doesn't happen, it's like, "Oh, well. That doesn't mean anything about me," right?

Maggie Reyes:
Yes.

Ana Verzone:
And so I think there's a different way in how we approach that request and the expectations of the request.

Maggie Reyes:
And also just thinking about how, one of the things that happens in Coaching is we discover something about ourselves and we always want to look at it through the lens of compassion and through the lens of acceptance and the idea like, "Oh, I did this thing. I didn't accept help." This isn't a reason to beat ourselves up for everybody who's listening. This is not what we do. We see, "Oh," and why was that?

So in my personal case, you know, I grew up with a single mom. I very much grew up with a narrative of "if anything is to be, it is up to me" kind of thing, and it was absolutely an appropriate response for a chapter of my life, to go and do things, to power through, right?

Like it was an appropriate response in a certain chapter, whether it was in the medical field or as a climbing guide. It was appropriate to show you could carry the thing up the mountain or





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that you could do the charts, or whatever the thing was.

It's kind of like for so many things in our lives, that thing that is a useful muscle, that is a coping mechanism. That is the absolutely appropriate thing to do in that moment. When we start over-relying on it is when we have sometimes make adjustments.

I just wanted to give that added layer of nuance because it's like, yes, some of us want to handle everything and want to take command and take control, and at the same time, it's like so much compassion and so much love for, "That actually was the right thing to do," which is why we started doing it, and now what got us what got us here won't get us there, and now we adjust and we see how we navigate that. What do you think when you just add that layer?

Ana Verzone:

Yeah. I feel a sense of deep self-compassion, and I think that's a big part of the work, is like, "Oh, this is why I do that," and, "Come here. Let me hold you" part of it, right? "Come sit here." You know what? I got you now. It's okay. Even if that person flakes, we're going to be okay, right?

I think with all thought work and with all of what we're trying to do as Coaches, that self-compassion element is so key, because I think if we don't do that, it's all kind of fake, right? Like changing our thoughts and like going to a different belief. It's like, if we haven't first cradled that tender part of us, that is the reason we had the limiting beliefs to begin with, is the reason that we had all those protectors up, right, that transitioned to the more helpful thought and relief is temporary.

Maggie Reyes:





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Yeah.

Ana Verzone:

Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

I love the way you phrased it. "Cradling that tender part of us." I think that's so beautiful. You know, you know this for a fact that one of the things I give for homework the most often is gentleness-

Ana Verzone:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), mm-hmm (affirmative).

Maggie Reyes:

And it's just, "Okay, we're here. We're in it. We're doing the things we need to do," and also gentleness. So, so, so important.

Maggie Reyes:

So choosing yourself first I know led to some big changes, some big adventure is in your life.

Ana Verzone:

Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

One of which is in progress at the moment. Tell us a little bit, if you want to share, about that





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“aloha, Hawaii”-

Ana Verzone:

Yes.

Maggie Reyes:

Feeling and adventure, and just anything you want to share about that is so amazing.

Ana Verzone:

Yeah. So, you know, I sort of mentioned like what did I do on a day-to-day basis to choose me, but on a bigger picture, I was really struggling with being happy in Alaska in the winter. I grew up in California. I'm in California girl, and even in California, I noticed how I would be happier like when I lived in the desert, right? Like out in Joshua Tree when I was a climbing guide out there.

I moved to Alaska and before I had a kid, like I could be really, I kind of could manage the winters because I'd be out backcountry skiing all the time and doing stuff in the sun when the sun was out, and then when I had my kid, just my choices for what to do were changing, and they were often more inside instead of outside. So I wasn't getting the light exposure I needed, and I just was, I was just shutting down. I could see myself really shutting down over the years.

Then I finally got to a point in 2020 where I could see like some mental health challenges really popping up, and I was like, “Oh, I wish I could move to Hawaii,” right? I mean, I think this was right when I started Coaching with you.

Maggie Reyes:





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Yeah. It was.

Ana Verzone:

And you were like, “Why couldn’t you?”, and I was like, “Well, because my kid’s in school and...” yada yada, right? Like I had all the reasons. Very rational reasons that I’m sure everybody else would come up with.

As I went through the Coaching process, I really saw like, “If I’m going to be authentically me, if I’m going to be happy in this marriage, this is one of those things that I want to change. Sure, I could do all my thought work and take all my supplements and sit in front of a happy light for an hour a day, and like do all that, or I can move to Hawaii and figure it out.”

So for us, COVID was a blessing in that way because my kid had online school, and so we did that. I said to my husband, “Look,” I mean, there’s a long story of other compromises, I tried to make like moving to a house with more light in Alaska, and all this stuff that he was like resistant to.

So finally I was like, “Okay, well this is what’s going to happen. I’m going to buy a place in Hawaii and we’re going to figure this out because I can no longer do winters in Alaska, and I don’t know what it’s going to look like, but what I do know is I’m going there right now and you can come,” because he wasn’t working-

Maggie Reyes:

He’s invited. Yeah.





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Ana Verzone:

He wasn't working at the time due to COVID. So he was like, "Okay," and I was like, "You've got to be kidding me. I could have done this like so much longer ago."

So anyway, so then we all go and after a few weeks, well just over those few weeks, I'm improving, improving. Then I was like, I was so much happier and such a happier partner, such a happier mom. Like I was still working full-time, mind you like, and ... it was just really eye-opening for me to see in real life how when I fill my cup and say "yes" to me, that I am a better mom and partner, and I mean, just financially making more money too.

Like I had more energy, I had more ideas. I was just more creative, like able to really take leaps and bounds in the ways I thought as well, right, because I wasn't exhausted and bitter and like, I don't know, hating it so much.

Maggie Reyes:

I think there's, first of all, so amazing, right? Not all of us need to move to Hawaii. I always want to say, like this is a very unique-

Ana Verzone:

Yeah-

Maggie Reyes:

Thing for Ana, right, but what is that Hawaii feeling? What is that "aloha" moment, right, of, what is the thing you wish you could do and why aren't you doing it, and how close can you get to doing it? So I know now you go back and forth, but in the beginning, you're just like, "Well, I'm just





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going to go there and then we're going to see. Oh, now I'm going to go back. Oh, we saw, and now we see what's possible," and it was really an exploration of that.

So for everyone listening, what is that thing that's in your heart that you think, "Oh, I wish I could?" Well, how could you? What would that look like in maybe a small, simple way, right? How could you experiment? How could you go in that direction? Just start thinking about that today.

And as you were talking, what I was thinking about is one of the things that one of our mentors says, Brooke Castillo talks about discomfort a lot and how discomfort is like the price of your dreams is to just experience discomfort. And I was thinking about how you have discomfort either following your dream or burying your dream.

Like you have the discomfort of telling your husband, "I want to do this thing and you want to come?", and that's uncomfortable the first time you say all those words, you know, that come out of your mouth. You're like, "What have I said?", right? Or, you have the discomfort of having this longing in your heart. Either way there's discomfort. We cannot avoid it, and I think the sooner we realize that, the easier it gets to choose, then we can choose, "Well which discomfort do I want?"

Ana Verzone:

Yes. Like if you're going to be uncomfortable, let's do the discomfort where we get to hang out on a beach.

Maggie Reyes:

Right?





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Ana Verzone:

In my opinion. Because I remember thinking, "I just need to be somewhere where it's easier to be a human being, where I can not have to put on, like spend 20 minutes layering myself with clothing, like all this time putting on like spikes on my shoes just so I could go for a run." I just, for all that I wanted to spend my time doing on this planet, it wasn't like getting dressed, right?

Maggie Reyes:

Right.

Ana Verzone:

Or like-

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, that was -- yeah.

Ana Verzone:

Staying warm or like, just all those things. It's like, I could appreciate, just like you said, like, "How can we start doing that now?", right, and it was like, "Okay, well I can do shorter trips or I can ... try to be outside more," and all those little things so that I don't have to wait, but it was really in like, "I get," I mean, y'all, this was a big deal for me, to be like, "I get to inconvenience my family in order to be happy." Whoa.

Maggie Reyes:

Yes.





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Ana Verzone:
Like I am still tripping on that. Like-

Maggie Reyes:
Yes.

Ana Verzone:
“I get to make my kid a little uncomfortable and I get to make my husband a little uncomfortable in order for me to be happy,” and I have that right. Like other people do it to me all the time, right?

Maggie Reyes:
Right, and here's-

Ana Verzone:
Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:
Yeah. Here's the thing: I think about it in the context of soul-centered communication when we say we're loving towards you and to the other person. We're not above them. We're not below them. They're not above us. We're equal. So you're equally important as your daughter. You're equally important as your husband.

Ana Verzone:
Exactly.





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Maggie Reyes:

You're not now suddenly a queen of the universe. No.

Ana Verzone:

Exactly.

Maggie Reyes:

Just equally, right?

Ana Verzone:

Yes. Yeah. For so many years, my husband would be like, "I'm going to do a month long expedition in Nepal," and I'd be like, "Okay," and then I'm like, "Wait a minute. Why am I tripping so hard on being like, 'I'm going to go to Hawaii for 10 days every month?'" He did it all the time, and I didn't even, on the other end, be like, "That's crazy." I mean, I ended up being bitter because I wasn't doing my part equally for me.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, and it's so critical to just ask for what we want. Like you said earlier, even if we don't get it, just asking for what we want, we start connecting with, "Well, oh. I could have this and I could have that. I could get so close to what I originally wanted," and sometimes we get more than what we imagined, but it starts with asking, which I think the hardest ask is the first time that we say, "Oh, I could ask."

Ana Verzone:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. I mean, I love what you said about





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"it's not like you walk around like queen of the universe" because ... Yeah. Everything I did was to be like, "Well, I can handle it. So I'll accept the discomfort so that they don't have to be uncomfortable," right? That was my default. "I'm so strong. I'm so capable. I'm so resilient. I'll take it on," and to be like, "Oh, I get to," here are again with the pattern, right, "I get to trust in their resilience and their ability to show up while taking care of my needs too." Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

Yes. So what were some of the things, whether it was a specific mindset or a question that we talked about, what are some of the things that helped you in Coaching? Because a lot of people listen to this podcast and know about Coaching and have heard of Coaching before, and some people listen to this podcast and are like, "What the heck is a life Coach? How does that work?" So when you think about the mindset that allowed you to say, "I'm going to pursue this. I'm going to listen to this intuitive hit in my heart," what were some of the things that helped you be able to say those words out loud?

Ana Verzone:

Well, this may seem unrelated, but it was the first part of the journey for me, was really understanding that I could redefine the role of my partner in my life. So it was like, "What if he wasn't the person that did all those things for you, and instead was this other person that he's really good at, that he does naturally?", and all of that, and just really look at that and being like, "If I changed my manual for my husband," right, "if I changed who I thought he was going to be once we had a kid," because we discussed this.

It's not like we never discussed this and he thought he could show up in a certain way. Then it ended up not being that way. So it's like we had to have another discussion, another, well, not





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just a discussion, another whole reevaluation. When you said, “What if he wasn’t that role for you and he could be this instead?”, and I was just like, “Oh.”

So then I just dropped all those expectations and I’m like, “Okay, this is your job now,” right, and I can make the request like organizing the babysitters and dropping her off to school, and he can choose to accept that or not, and he has, which is great, but ultimately, that allowed me to be like, “So then, wow. So then what role do I want to have?”

And then I started being like, “Oh, I want my daughter to see me model this,” and, “I want to have this role in my life where I’m not like the naggy wife, but I’m like the woman who also does cool shit,” right? Like-

Maggie Reyes:
Yeah.

Ana Verzone:
Which I’ve always done, so I think that was the other hard part, was relative to other people, I had a lot of time to myself and did a lot of adventurous things, but we all make our own barometer, right, and my definition of “freedom” is a lot different than other people’s definition of “freedom.” So for me, I did need more. I didn’t just want “a weekend with the girls” kind of thing.

Maggie Reyes:
Right.

Ana Verzone:





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I wanted to be able to do my own expeditions and my own longer trips and my own business goals, right, that took more time away from the family.

Maggie Reyes:

And for everyone listening, I love how you said, “We all have our own barometer.” So if you’re listening and you don’t need to go on an adventure in Nepal or, you know, on a trip to Hawaii, but you might need a night to yourself with some candles and some books. You might need a weekend with your family.

Whatever it is, whatever that thing is that you’re longing for, what we’re inviting you to think about today is to stop longing for it and start walking towards it. Sometimes you walk gently towards it, right? Some of us, I tend to be the person who’s a little bit slower and walks gently in the direction of things, and I was like, “Okay, I’m going now.” Like I very clearly remember-

Ana Verzone:

I’m kind of a quick decider.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. We talked about it and I asked something like that, like, “Well, why can’t you?”, and then the next week you’re like, “Okay, this is what I’ve organized.” It was -- so for everyone that, you can all go at your own pace, right? You can go quick or, it doesn’t matter.

Just walking into the direction of those things that are the longings in your heart paradoxically makes you more fun to be around, helps your relationship, take the pressure off your relationship, and helps your relationship actually thrive, and something that I say very often in





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my social media and whenever I'm talking about this is nourishing yourself isn't taking away from your relationship.

It's actually helping your relationship, and this is such a beautiful and vivid example, that nourishing yourself actually helped you feel better with all of these things that were creating so much stress for you.

Ana Verzone:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), exactly. Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. I love that. So I think those were like the most important things, but is there anything else you want to share before we start wrapping up for today?

Ana Verzone:

I really just feel like I also had to face some of the discomforts during our Coaching, about like really owning how I contributed, and I just wanted to let everyone know that even though it can be hard to see those things, you know, it is so empowering in the end, right? Like I saw how I didn't ask for what I need.

I saw how I didn't make clear requests with boundaries and I didn't, and I was very busy. I ended up, instead of addressing those things, getting busy and just filling my life with busyness so that my relationship was just another busy thing as opposed to a priority.

So when I saw that and took ownership over that, kind of felt like puking at first, but then you go,





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“Okay, this is where the self-compassion comes in again,” right? It’s like, it totally made sense I did that. I was scared to put a boundary because what if he didn’t do it, and I would then have to choose to leave, right? What if? What if I make this request and he says no? There was so much fear from that, and then I have so much compassion now for that part of me that didn’t want to be abandoned in that way or let down in that way.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, and that fear, that sensation is a real physiological sensation in our bodies that we want to be present to that, like you said, we want to cradle that tender part of us. That’s why we want to go at whatever pace we feel we can go.

Sometimes we go quicker on certain things and sometimes we go slower on others, and I think that’s so important. I think whenever we talk about something like personal responsibility or how I contribute it to something, I think it’s important to be explicit that that has no relationship whatsoever with any kind of “blaming the victim” narrative at all, right? Like-

Ana Verzone:

Oh, absolutely. Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

I think it’s important to say, we can look at our lives from a place of power and say, “What is the life I want to have, and how did I contribute to the life I’m having now, and what do I want to do next?”, without the blame. Like blame is not the point here. Do you want to speak to that a little bit?





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Ana Verzone:

Yeah. I mean, there were some times in our relationship where I, in hindsight, was like, "Wow, if I had created a clear boundary, this would not have happened." Parts of me came out that were just so horrible that I was ashamed of. Parts of my husband came out that, you know, he is ashamed of that he's shared, that he wishes he never said or did, and yeah. The point isn't like, "Wow, you did this," or, "I did this, I allowed this to happen." Not at all. Like there's still things that he said and did that I'm like, "That is not okay"-

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah.

Ana Verzone:

And vice versa, right? We can be like, "That's not okay," and it's important to ask like, "And how the hell did I end up there anyway? Like, whoa."

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah.

Ana Verzone:

So I can learn about my blind spots and about, you know, where I tend to not want to look.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. It's so beautiful. So before we wrap up for today, if someone is listening to this and they think, "I think I want Coaching. I think I want help. I don't know what this Coaching stuff is, but it sounds like it works," what would you tell someone who's just thinking, "Will this work for me?"





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How would you speak to that?

Ana Verzone:

Oh. Well I would say there's probably just one type of person for whom Coaching doesn't work, and that's someone who really wants, wants, to stay stuck in their old story, because you can help Coach them and then they go, "No, no, but," and then they're kind of like stuck in this thought loop, right?

So if you want to stay stuck, Coaching is not for you, right, but if you're willing, if you're willing at all to try new things, right, Coaching is absolutely going to work, right? Because like I said, I think it is so powerful, because here's the deal: like me being Buddhist, right, and studying a lot of the Buddhist practices through a scientific lens, we know that these things work.

Like this is why it's part of a whole spiritual tradition, right? Like mindfulness of your thoughts of your emotions, a clear understanding of phenomena, and what is actually good or bad. Is there's such a thing, and like really explore all of those things that we do in the type of Coaching we do. Not all Coaches do that, but-

Maggie Reyes:

Right, yeah.

Ana Verzone:

It is a universal truth, right? So-

Maggie Reyes:





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Yes.

Ana Verzone:

So it's like, it works because you're human and you have a human brain. So if you have a human brain, it's going to work. The only reason it wouldn't is if you don't want it to, and there are people for whom they don't want it to. They really want their old story to be true, and that's okay. That's a mindset that's not quite ready for Coaching yet.

Maybe there's some other things that can be helpful like therapy or something like that, but I feel like Coaching the way you and I do it with our training really contains universal principles of how our brain functions, and how we create suffering, and how we create our realities, how we create happiness and joy and freedom, and this life that we want and the relationships we want.

So, yeah. In my mind, it's like, "Go for it." It works, and I feel like it's like vitamins for me. I always have to have a Coach, right? I worked with you for like half a year.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah.

Ana Verzone:

Like I've never done that with a specific Coach over that much time, and it was amazing just to have that time to be like, "Oh, this is for me, for me to create my best life and for me to work on letting go of the crap that doesn't matter anymore, and really making the most of this life." To have that time is such a gift. Thank you, Maggie-





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Maggie Reyes:
Love that so much.

Ana Verzone:
Thank you for giving me that.

Maggie Reyes:
Thank you, Ana. Thank you for being here. Thank you for just showing up for the work. I think it's so important, and I tell my Marriage MBA-ers now in the group program, I tell them, "Coming with an open heart is the only requirement," right? Because when you come with an open heart, you can go so deep into your own experience and so deep into your own power, and everything else we figure out together, right? So thank you for always coming with an open heart. Tell people what is the best way to find you.

Ana Verzone:
I think the best way is just on my website. So it's anaverzone.com. "A-N-A-V-E-R-Z-O-N-E" dot com, and you can always listen to the Rebel Buddhist podcast too. I would love to have you there.

Maggie Reyes:
Awesome. We will link to your website and to the podcast on the show notes for this episode. Thank you for being here. Thank you everyone for listening. Remember, today's homework from the podcast is choose yourself first. Bye everyone.

