



## EPISODE 92: DEAL BREAKERS

**THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/92](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/92)**

Hello everyone. Today, we're going to talk about deal breakers and we are going to dive right in. First of all, I'm going to talk about deal breakers mostly through the lens of marriage and relationships, but also I really invite you to think about work situations, friends situations.

Whenever we want to live a more powerful, more loving life, we want to be super clear on our yeses and our nos. And just the act of thinking about what your deal breakers are in different scenarios. I believe will just help you participate in that scenario, guide that situation from a much more powerful, more clear way.

So think about wherever you need to be more clear as I walk you through the examples today and insert that situation and see what comes up for you. Now, I'm not going to give you my personal list of deal breakers or a neat little big box wrapped in a neat little bow of exactly what to do.

What I'm going to do is invite you to think about different things, to take into consideration different factors that I'm going to lay out for you and then decide what if, from your inner discernment, from your inner wisdom, what you want your deal breakers to be in different scenarios.

So I'm going to give you some specific things to consider and also think about how in different chapters of your life, you will have some things may be a deal breaker before, and they may not be a deal breaker now. They may be a deal breaker today and five years from now, they may not be.

So we just want to allow for the fact that as we evolve, as we have different interests and chapters in our life, things will change in what we think is important and what we prioritize. And





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we just want to incorporate that into all of our thinking about deal breakers as well.

So before we dive in, I want to share some behind the scenes, some fun stuff happening in Maggie land. So, my hubby has been doing a big IT project for his office. He's been working a lot of wacky hours and as I was writing up the notes for this episode, we went to breakfast together on a weekday.

And I have to tell you, it felt like a teenager skipping school or something like that, which by the way, I don't remember ever doing, I don't think I ever did. I was totally that person who checked all the boxes and went to all the classes. So it felt really scandalous and also really delightful to go to breakfast and to share about our days and do something new and something different, which I highly recommend.

Every relationship needs a mix of routine and adventure. Now for us, an adventure's just going to breakfast on a Tuesday, but anything that is a mix to your routine, that adds something new and different is always just going to help you keep your relationship fresh.

So one of my podcast episodes that has been so popular, I've gotten so many downloads on it, is How to Keep the Spark Alive. We'll link to that in the show notes. I talk about that in that episode a little bit more in depth.

So, if you're interested in that, definitely check that out. And as you're going about your week, this week, just notice what is something you can do that's outside of your normal routine. Something small, look for it, see what you find something that could be a connection point, something that you can enjoy together.





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And I also just wrapped up enrollment for the next round of the Marriage MBA. I am so excited to welcome the new students. They're amazing. There's also returning students in the program, which is so much fun. And I am just so excited about the depth of the work that we do there.

I always tell all my students that I am so grateful they come with such an open heart, ready to just look at what's going on in their relationships and ready to work through things in such a really deep and powerful way. We do amazing work together because of that open heartedness that they have.

So if you are loving the podcast, you're following along, you are picking up what I'm throwing down as the tumblers would say, definitely find out for the next enrollment. If you want those details, go to [maggiereyes.com/group](https://maggiereyes.com/group), and all the details will be there.

If you're listening to this in November, 2021, when this episode first comes out, then you want to make sure to get yourself on the wait list for the next round, that will be opening up at the end of this month. So time is of the essence. It will be for the January round of the Marriage MBA, all of the details will be on [maggiereyes.com/group](https://maggiereyes.com/group). And that link will also be in the show notes if you want to check it out that way, and let's dive in.

I wanted to do an episode on deal breakers because I think it's so important to have clarity on what they are. And I'm going to challenge you to think really deeply about what yours are and what they could be, and to really think about how to tune and attune your intuition, to discern the difference between a frustration that can be managed and a boundary that cannot be crossed.

I'm just going to say that again because I think it's so important. We all have frustrations,





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whether it's in a marriage relationship, whether it's in a work situation, whether it's a colleague, a friend, or a family member, there are certain frustrations that can be managed. And there are certain boundaries that cannot be crossed. And sometimes just having clarity on which bucket you want to put that situation in, will help you then manage that situation differently.

So, as I frame this episode and think about having a conversation with you all about deal breakers, I know some of you are thinking about how to stay in your marriage. Maybe you occasionally fantasize about leaving or you know you have affection for your partner, you know you love, but the experience of being married isn't as delicious as you would like it to be.

And you're trying to figure it out how to make it better because you love your partner so much. Now my philosophy on that is always, let's find out the best relationship you can have with this human and then decide if you want that. That is the lens through which I look at things.

And I know some of you are just going through a rough patch and you just need to regroup and reset. And some of you really just want to go from good to great. Things are working, but there's some tweaks you can make. You can make things a little bit better.

As you listen, I invite you to think about what area of your life defining a deal breaker could be useful for you. What specific issue in your marriage, having a little bit more clarity around your yes and your no, what you're available for and what you're not available for, it could be useful to you.

And so it might be something happening in your marriage. It might be a job or a friendship or some other situation that lingers on and you don't have a clear resolution and clarity can be very useful. So think about that.





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And as you know if you've listened to the podcast for a regular basis -- and if you're new here, welcome -- but I teach that one person can change a relationship and I've seen over and over again, that one person can change the nature of how that interaction and the relationship takes place.

Now, what happens is that change reveals both the strengths and the weaknesses of the relationship. So many of my clients are in relationships that have so many hidden strengths and we bring those out into the light. And sometimes what comes to light is the weakest point in the relationship.

And whether those weakest points are worth working on, which is a very personal decision for each person, for each of you listening right now. And I've had clients in very similar situations going through similar challenges. I just listed out the facts of the challenge.

It could be very, very similar where one of them made one decision to go in one direction and another one made a completely different decision to go in a different direction. And what I want to do is to help you determine what are the strongest points or the weakest points -- what's worth working on from your unique point of view and what isn't.

And I love to help you restore any relationship that you feel is worth restoring. I don't like the word saving. I try to avoid it, but let's think about saving for a moment. What makes a relationship worth saving? What qualities and characteristics make the trade-offs worth it?

These are not always easy questions to answer, which is why so many of us avoid them sometimes for years. And as we talk about deal breakers and as we talk about restoring







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situations and how to work through something, I read today, a post, I think it was on Facebook by Adam Grant. He's an author of some really interesting, fascinating books, a thought leader that I love just hearing his take on different things.

And he was sharing that when someone leaves a job, it usually takes about five years for them to restore the sense of satisfaction that they had in the old job to experience that same level of satisfaction in the new job.

And he was quoting some research that had been done around that. And it really got me thinking about when we leave a relationship, because we think something is going to be better. Something is going to be different. Sometimes, the highest and best outcome for a relationship is to end it, is to leave. But sometimes we don't factor in all of the challenges that we will also have to face no matter what.

And today is a day to just factor in all the challenges you'd have to face no matter what. Whatever decision you make, whatever deal breaker you decide. So when I think about saving a relationship, saving a situation, with any relationship, right? A marriage, a family situation, work situation, anything like that, what makes it worth saving? What qualities and characteristics make the trade-offs worthwhile, right? Just want to really go back to that and really dig into that.

So for me, my personal experience, wasn't in my marriage. It was in my career and I probably knew a few years before. I'm sure that I knew a few years before I became a Coach that the career I was in, although it was a great job, a great career, I had lots of fascinating adventures, but it wasn't the place where I could thrive the most.





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It wasn't the place where I could live my most fully self expressed professional self. And it took me several years and multiple jobs to figure out why that was and where it could thrive and what mattered most to me.

So, one thing I want to say is that if you're in a situation where something has been going on for years, whatever that may be, this is not the time to beat yourself up over that. This is the time to say, "Okay, here's what doesn't work for me. Here's why it doesn't work. Here's what I want instead." Then see where you land and where your partner and lands. Once you have clarity, right?

Now, the goal of my work is never to help you stay in a relationship that doesn't serve you. It is to help you remove the emotional and mental barriers to clarity. To help you make decisions from, a word that I love, equanimity.

It's to help you make decisions from equanimity, from a place of grounded centered love for yourself and for your partner and for your family, because anger and resentment, which are two of the emotions that come up the most in different Coaching scenarios that I work on through every week with my clients and my students, are very rarely useful places to make decisions from.

Anger and resentment, usually not useful. They're useful to slow us down, to help us notice what's going on, to determine why are they coming up and to solve for that and see what that solution is, but they're not useful to make decisions from.

So I want to be super explicit as someone who helps people who want to stay married, have better marriages, that sometimes the highest and best outcome for a relationship is for it to





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end. And in my role as a Coach, I have no judgment either way on the reasons you might want to stay or the reasons you might want to go.

What I want, what my goal is for you, is to be clear on what those reasons are and for you to love them. And for you to feel like the wisest part of you is making them, not your cultural programming, not your family or your role models or your religious background that may or may not be true for you now, or any kind of programming that we've had growing up.

What I want to help you do is uncover the highest and wisest part of you and have that part of you make any important decision that you're going to make, whatever that decision may be. So that's my goal.

So several years ago, I attended a training with relationships psychologist, Esther Perel on helping clients overcome infidelity. So she was giving a training on that and it was amazing. I'm going to do a whole other podcast just on my learnings and takeaways from that training. It was so good.

And one of the thoughts that she shared in that training, that really shifted something for me in my own mind and I really hope it shifts something for you. I share it a lot with my clients and my students. And it's always something that just is so thought provoking, is there is no wrong reason to stay married.

She just said that offhand. And it really struck me. There's no wrong reason to stay married. And then when I came home and I thought about it and unpacked it, I found, of course the corollary, which is there is no wrong reason to leave. There's no wrong reason to stay, right? There's no wrong reason to want to separate or get divorced. There's just no wrong reason. There are just







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your reasons and your judgment or your acceptance and embracing of your own reasons. That's it.

So that's the lens through which I look at a lot of things. Assuming that there is no wrong reason, what do you want? What matters to you and is that happening in your marriage right now? If it's a career situation or a family situation, what matters to you and is that happening in that relationship right now?

And if it isn't, is your partner willing to explore that with you and are you willing to do the work to create it? So when I think about deal breakers, one of the places I take my brain and I invite my clients to pick their brain is what I call scope. So I want to talk about scope for a second. In terms of scope, I look at frequency and intensity, and I love thinking about frequency and intensity as clarifiers to help you know where you stand on things and how to prioritize them. And to also help you determine how much work is involved in the decision you make and are you willing to do that work?

So let's say that you argue. Are you arguing once a day? Once a week? Once a month? Once a quarter? Once a year? That is frequency and frequency matters. Of course, your course of action is going to be influenced, right? Your decision-making for something that happens once a year is going to be very different than for something that happens once a day. So something like arguing, right, we want to look at how often is it happening? And we probably want to have to happen less.

Sometimes it's a sexual situation and maybe it's the opposite. It's not happening as much as you would like, and you want to have it happen more. We still want to check: what is the actual frequency, right? That's frequency.





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Let's talk about intensity. When you have a breakdown with your partner, what is the intensity of that breakdown? Is it the silent treatment for a month? Does it knock you off your center for weeks at a time? Or is it something that you repair and reconnect the same day, that afternoon, the next day and then it's over? What is the intensity of the interaction? And really I want all of us, including me, when I teach it, I learn it again, to really understand intensity. And here's how I want to explain it to you today.

What is the emotional wake of that interaction? So I used to work in the cruise industry and if you listen to the podcast, you're going to have seagoing analogies. You're going to have examples of things that happen because I spent so many years in that industry and I love it so much. Plus I think it's so fun.

So if you are on a ship and you're looking over the back of the ship and the ocean, there is a wake, it is where the water was displaced due to the engines and the presence of the ships. I love looking at the wake whenever I take a cruise.

Now, in an emotional or relational breakdown, what is the intensity of that wake? How long does it last? What is the impact? We want to look at that when we think about anything related to deal breakers. We want to think about minimizing both frequency and intensity for any part of that situation that's in our control. What is the part that's in our control? And is there anything we could minimize there?

We want to explore where our partner lands with this. Are they interested in minimizing frequency and intensity too? If they aren't, then that's important data to have. One of the things that I teach about thriving in all of the things I teach is to help you thrive, to have maximum self





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in your marriage and maximum self expression as a human on earth.

And one of the critical components of thriving is partnership. So episode one of the podcast, we'll link to it in the show notes, I lay out how to have a better marriage and the ingredients that I have seen over and over again is perspective, partnership and pleasure. You need to check how you're looking at things. You need to be in partnership with each other, and you need to have pleasure, fun, enjoyment. If it's a sexual connection that would go into the pleasure bucket, but there's also just enjoying each other's company, laughing. All of those things.

You can have a relationship without perspective or partnership or pleasure, but it will never thrive without those three things combined. They're absolutely essential. So when we think about deal breakers and you think about, well, this is important to me. Is it also something your partner is willing to prioritize? Important data to have? So think about scope, see where that leads you. See what you uncover there.

And then another way to think about deal breakers are, what are your values and desires and what are your partner's values and desires? And do they match with yours? This can be both very simple and very complicated at the same time. Your values and desires don't have to be an exact match, but you want to look for places where they overlap and then determine, can we harness those? Can we focus on the places we have in common, the things we value together?

Next, as you consider how to think about deal breakers, I invite you to notice always, what is working? What are all the things that are actually going well and running like a well oiled machine, and then for what is not working, what would the solution for the things that aren't working be? What would resolution look like?





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So often we go into all or nothing thinking when something isn't working the way we think it should. And so often the fix or the way forward can be simpler than we imagine if we allow ourselves to look for the middle way. So if we were looking for a resolution, right, think about something that isn't working right now in a relationship, in your marriage, at work, in business, with a family member, identify the thing.

And once you've identified it, ask yourself, what is the middle way here? And just see what comes up. Just notice what becomes available when you look for something other than it has to be this one way that's the only way and anything else is the wrong way, which by the way, is a patriarchal mindset, a patriarchal structure that doesn't serve us in the 21st century and beyond when we want to live in a collaborative marriage, in a collaborative world where we help each other think about ways differently.

So in the Self Trust episode, we'll link to that in the show notes. I talk about that in depth, this idea that it has to be one way, it doesn't, okay? Now, as we think about deal breakers, I was writing up the notes for this episode and I saw something by Jada Pinkett Smith and it fascinated me. I want to share it with you.

So she was talking about her marriage with Will Smith, and I always find their relationship so fascinating. I've seen several episodes of their Red Table Talk show, and I'm just always fascinated when they're on together. And she was talking about deal breakers and she said she had none.

She said, they are a ride or die family. And that there was just no scenario where she wouldn't be willing to figure things out. Now I'm paraphrasing what she said, of course. And she may have changed her mind, by the time that you listen to this, but she said this at one point and I was





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fascinated by it.

So what I found fascinating is even with all the thinking I do on marriage, it never occurred to me that you could just decide to have none. You can decide there are no deal breakers here, we're just ride or die. We're going to figure it out.

I personally think it's super healthy to know your limits. And I actually encourage most of my clients to really identify what their deal breakers are and what happens most of the time, because people are coming to me who want to stay in their marriages, they just want to be happier in them. That might be you.

And because that's a dynamic that I see most often, what happens is when we identify the deal breakers, what we see is most of the things that are creating distress in the relationship are not actually relationship ending scenarios. They are not actual deal-breakers.

And it's like, if you're not going to get divorced over this, then you need to figure out how to live with it, eliminate it, work through it, minimize it, manage it, whatever it may be, or think about it differently, or handle it in a way that is sustainable over time. And then that opens up so much freedom and so much power to just look at the situation differently and find resolution.

So I just love how Jada expanded my mind, right? And I love expanding your mind, right, with all of these ideas. And I love inviting you to think about them anyway. To find freedom in knowing what your deal breakers are and what they aren't. And to also decide if you want to be like Jada and say, "Well, there aren't any." Great. If that's your choice, you are already in a different place, thinking about deal breakers just from listening to this episode. And I love that.







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Okay, now I'm going to give you an example from a friend breakup that I had, where the deal breaker just actually happened very suddenly and how I experienced that and how I process that. And I think it might be helpful to have a concrete example.

So on the episode for self-trust, I talk about one of my client's deal-breakers that she gave me permission to share, and it was super, super simple. She said, all the things that she had to clear up on her side of the table, she did. And once she did that, she cleared up everything that she needed to clear up. And she just decided I don't want to be loved like that. And a deal-breaker can be as simple as that. How does my partner show and express love? And do I want to be loved like that?

If it's your manager at work, how does my manager at work assign the work, give feedback, do the things, the tasks of the day. And do I want to be in a work situation that is like that? Right? I think that's so powerful.

Okay, so that's one example. Now my friend situation. So this is someone I absolutely loved so deeply, they were like family to me. And one day I noticed that I was always checking on her. I was always seeing how she was doing and was always making myself available to her. And I was always initiating contact.

And I noticed through Coaching my clients on overfunctioning that I was overfunctioning. And I decided to just stop doing that. And I really think about overfunctioning as doing all the heavy lifting in a situation. And I noticed and I thought, "No, I feel like I'm, over-functioning a little bit here. I'm going to stop that. I'm going to just let her check on me and respond, and that'll be that." And it really wasn't a big deal in my brain.





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I just made that decision that, “Okay, she’ll check on me. We’ll go from there. We’ll rebalance the scales a little bit.” And I, at the time that I made that decision, was not planning on ending that relationship at all. I didn’t really think about it as a deal breaker. I just thought about it as my availability has changed, the way I’m thinking about things has evolved. And I think I need to manage this relationship differently.

So my original thought was we might not talk for a week or two. It would be fine. We’d regroup and move on. What ended up happening and that I was completely blind to, until it happened, was I was overfunctioning and here, I thought we might not talk for a week or two, and then we’d just move on.

But the person actually reached out to me four months later, she sent me a note and I replied, and it was a completely just different interaction, right? Something changed inside of me. My thoughts about how I wanted to be loved and cared for by my friends evolved, right? And I was no longer available for the way that our relationship had been structured before.

And at the time she was not really interested in investigating why or what happened. She never asked me, and it was really fascinating for me to experience because we had a beautiful relationship that really served us both powerfully for many years. And I still feel sad and I still miss her sometimes. And I really only want what’s best for her. And at the same time, I don’t want to go back. Things can end and it’s okay that they end.

And one of my hypotheses is what if we measure the success of a relationship based on its quality instead of its length? And that was a very high quality relationship. And I am very happy that I was in it when I was in it. And I’m very happy that I’m out of it now. And I just want to give you that example, and model that for you, what that could be like.





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So what I found when I really opened myself up to thinking about it differently is, I had other people in my life who deeply wanted to connect with me, who would check on me and I'd check on them. And I really deepened relationships that I wasn't making time for. And it was really such a blessing to see that and experience that where the thing I so deeply wanted was available to me, it just didn't look the way I thought it was going to look.

So often we think about what we want and we think, 'Well, if this person doesn't give it to me, then I can't have it.' And what I want to invite you to consider is, what if you can decide the thing you want and have it no matter what, and then decide what relationships you want to be in and what role each of those relationships plays in your life? It's a different way of thinking about it.

And as we think about deal breakers, which I think it's useful and important to think about this thing that really matters to me, does it have to come from this person or could another person fulfill that need or that role in my life? What does that look like? And if so, then how do I want to think about this relationship with this person? Okay?

Lot to think about y'all. I think you need to listen to this episode and then go back, take some notes, write some things down, especially if you're going through something where you really do need to think about what your deal breakers are.

This is when to just journal on and be with, and I'm going to give you to round out before we wrap up the episode, five questions to journal on, to get even more clarity. These are the types of Coaching questions that I ask my clients when we're on calls in the Marriage MBA, these are the type of things that I will give sometimes for homework to just think on.

So here you go, get ready. If you want to write something down and you want to get something





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to write something down, this is the moment to do that. Okay. Here are the five questions.

What do you want for yourself? What do you want for your relationship? Does your partner want those things too? So often we forget to check in. It's like, what do I actually want? What matters to me? So what do you want for yourself? What do you want for your relationship? Does your partner want those things too? If you met your partner now, would you marry them today? Why or why not?

That question always gives such a rich answer anytime I've ever asked it, it has brought so much clarity so many times. If you met your partner right now today, would you marry them? Why or why not? Okay, next.

If you knew everything would work out either way, which option feels better to you and why? Imagine, assuming everything's going to work out either way, then what do you want then? Lovely place to take your brain? Okay. Are there boundaries you haven't set or options that you haven't explored that you need to try before you make a decision one way or another?

That's very often the point at which someone comes to me for Coaching, because it's like, "Oh, I'm having all these thoughts. I'm thinking about taking all these actions. There are some things I haven't explored yet. Let's explore them." If that's you go to [maggiereyes.com/group](https://maggiereyes.com/group) and get all the details for the Marriage MBA. We'll help you walk you through things. Okay?

The last one are you ready to leave right now? Why or why not? That's also a question that is so rich whenever I ask that question, we just see where you are today, right? And all you need to decide sometimes, is just where you want to be today. Tomorrow you decide tomorrow.





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There's an episode we did called The Five Star Millennial Marriage. And one of the things we talked about in that episode is the difference between today's problem and tomorrow's problem. And if you want to think about that, we'll link to that in the show notes.

But it's something that my husband, the engineer is very methodical about his thinking, I'll want to do something, let's say we're working on a project in the house or something. And I'll be thinking about the pillows I want to buy, or the curtains or whatever it may be. And it's like, first, we need to paint the room. Right? The curtains are tomorrow's problem.

So it's like, are you ready to leave right now? Why or why not? And are you working through today's problem or is this something that's really tomorrow's problem? And you can leave it in tomorrow. You can get to it then. Okay.

These are the kinds of questions that for sure will bring you clarity and really help you identify your most immediate next step. And of course, as I mentioned before, if you want in-depth support, I definitely invite you to apply for the Marriage MBA. Just go to [maggiereyes.com/group](https://maggiereyes.com/group) for all the details for that.

I would love to hear your favorite takeaway from this episode. If it's something that you want to share publicly, share it on Instagram and tag me at TheMaggieReyes. If it's something that you want to share privately, go to Instagram, find me, TheMaggieReyes and just message me. I'd love to hear what your thought process is or anything that you uncovered from listening to these different frameworks around deal breakers. Bye everyone.

