



# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Maggie Reyes:

Hello, everyone. Welcome back to the podcast. Today we have a very special episode. I always feel like every episode is special. It's kind of like every present under the tree. I'm recording this around the holiday time. Every one of them is special and this one is really, really special.

I have a very special guest, and we're going to talk about this interview series that I'm doing on The Marriage Mindset Makeover. And I asked a few of the members of that program to tell me their favorite parts, the things they learned, the things they love the most and several students in that program replied and all of their answers were vastly different. And I am fascinated by the different things that people have taken away, and I'm so excited to share that with all of you.

So today we have Kirsten Parker. She is a Decision Coach and I've never met a Decision Coach before, so I totally want to know exactly what that's all about. And she signed up for The Makeover. I think she might have been engaged or had just gotten married, so she's in that early stage, and she'll talk about that when we dive in, of marriage.

So she wanted to like get herself, starting setting herself up for success and I'm so, so, so excited to welcome her and to just share her brilliance with all of you and also to share her insights on what she learned. So welcome Kirsten. Hi.

Kirsten Parker:

Hi. Thank you so much for having me. I said in my email, I would try not to fan girl too hard, so I'll just say it is my deepest pleasure to be here.

Maggie Reyes:





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Ooh, “My deepest pleasure.” I love that. I have to say, I think that fangirling is just loving another human, and I love it. I’m a fan of people, and of humans and of my clients. I think all my clients are superstars and I’m so excited to see them.

And I think about, I’ve sort of met actors and TV shows that I like whatever, and I’m so excited to be in the same room with them. And I think that not to fangirl to me, but just to have the idea that we can express loving enthusiasm as hard as we want. Why not?

Kirsten Parker:  
Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:  
Okay. I just wanted to put that out there because I feel like that’s something that it’s like, “Oh, this would be inappropriate”. Right? If we did something too intense, right?

And I had Emily Nagoski on the show to talk about a book that I absolutely adore, and I refer to a lot in my Coaching called Come As You Are. And she’s one of my heroes. And when I had her on, if you listen to that episode, we’ll link to it in the show notes, I totally fangirled shamelessly.

And I was like, “Why not hear two women talk to each other and love each other?” Right. So I just wanted to say that, because I thought that would be fun, but welcome. Tell us first, what is a Decision Coach, talk to us about that?

Kirsten Parker:  
I will love to talk to you and thank you for that permission because I will just fangirl, then. I will





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

a fangirl with enthusiasm because I really do think it is loving and it's also soul connection is, I mean, we'll talk about this I know, but you say things how my brain needs to hear them and I'm just like, "Oh my gosh, I'm not alone. Oh my gosh." I'm so grateful that you're bothering to say these things. So that's my fangirl.

So yeah, I'm a decision Coach for overthinkers and that's the language I speak. I speak overthinking. And I know that that's why we get along, and this is our language, because I work with people who are very big brained; their brains have gotten them a lot of success and a lot of achievement in their lives, and sometimes they use their brains against themselves instead of for themselves.

So I help them clean that up, so that they can do all the things they want, achieve all the things, but have more ease, have more simplicity, trust every decision they make, and empower themselves to make more powerful decisions more quickly so that they spend more of their life in purpose and in calm, than in pre-regret, over angsting about whatever they don't know, catastrophizing about what could go wrong, fear of people's opinion, if the FOPO right? Fear of what everyone else is going to think about it. I mean-

Maggie Reyes:

I've never heard, "FOPO" before.

Kirsten Parker:

I wouldn't have either, but I'm obsessed with it

Maggie Reyes:





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

FOPO. Fear of other people's opinions, is that it?

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. Fear of people's opinions. It's from a great audible book called *Compete to Create*. But I can't believe that it's not just in our normal language, because it dictates so many of our decisions. So that's really what I people with.

I really help fellow control enthusiasts like myself, who want to take responsibility for everything that we do, and we want to maximize our agency, and we want to maximize our efficiency, but not for the sake of just doing more and getting more done. We really want to choose what matters, and make it easier to focus on that and not live in overthinking agony.

Maggie Reyes:

Ah, that's so powerful and it's, it's really overthinking. A lot of us who get a lot done on the one hand. We think we're very thoughtful people and we get a lot done because we're so thoughtful, but it's almost like the light and the shadow of that.

The light of that is, we think about big things and get big things done at work in our career, in our businesses, whatever we do. And then the shadow of that is then sometimes we second guess the question to a way that is in our detriment.

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. And we tend to get so focused on stuff that is of our own choosing. Sometimes we love our job, we love our relationships, but when problems come up and decisions come up, we take them on one at a time, which means we repeat the same stress cycles. I know you talk about





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

stress cycles a lot.

Maggie Reyes:  
Yeah.

Kirsten Parker:

So what I do is help people zoom out and look at their overall decision making systems so that they can feel grounded in how they're approaching everything, and systems simplify things. So we just-

Maggie Reyes:  
I love that.

Kirsten Parker:  
Update the system.

Maggie Reyes:

I love that so much. Systems do simplify things. And that's why we try to give different frameworks and things to think about, about your marriage, both on the podcast and then in The Makeover. So, you had like your top three things that you loved the most. Tell us first what they are and then we'll go through them one by one.

Kirsten Parker:

Well, unsurprisingly, they were all on day one because day one was decisions day.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, right? Decisions Coach liked decision day. Okay. We like it.

Kirsten Parker:

I can do this. I can do this. But it's everything I needed to hear. So my three favorite things were the vision question, "Who do you want to be as a wife?" The Drama Triangle and Empowerment Triangles. And then, one of my favorite concepts that you teach: requests versus demand.

Maggie Reyes:

Yes. They're so good. I mean, let me see. None of those things are things that I sort of made up; they're just things that I sort of curate together through the lens of marriage, right? So I get excited about those things too. Not that I couldn't get excited about something I made up, but I'm like, "Yes. Oh that's so juicy."

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

It's so awesome.

Kirsten Parker:

And again, you don't have to make them up. You just need to say the words because I can hear it 10 different ways, but I need to hear how you say it.

Maggie Reyes:





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

I love that so much. I feel that too. There's things that I've heard before sort of said differently, and then it lands. And one of the things I try to do on the podcast is say similar things sometimes in different ways because I'm like, "Oh, maybe you don't land differently if I give it this interpretation or this approach?" Beautiful.

So let's start with the first one decisions day: the vision. And we do that in The Marriage MBA too. We actually do a vision and values exercise, because I think it's so important to really get clear on that, and figure out what that is and also make it really, really simple. So we do a sort of a simplified version of it inside The Makeover. So, tell me why that was impactful for you?

Kirsten Parker:

Because having somewhere we're going, makes getting there so much easier.

Maggie Reyes:

Yes.

Kirsten Parker:

And it's exactly what I teach. I do vision and values too, but it's like all of us teachers need to remember that we're also students and it's so easy to get stuck in struggle and problem focus. And it's like these vision questions, I'd never asked myself this.

Who do I want to be as a wife? It's like, oh this is such good information to have to know what decisions I want to make, to make this answer into a reality, because you forget that, I want to be a nice wife. I want to be a loving, supportive, accepting wife. And it's like, "Oops, that's not who I'm being. Oopsie."

Maggie Reyes:

Right. That's not who I'm being. This is so interesting to me because I've thought about this from





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

the point of view of, it's kind of like we go into the most important relationship in our life a little bit on autopilot. Whereas we don't do that with jobs.

Again, jobs or businesses or whatever, we'll have quarterly goals or we'll have yearly reviews or we'll have some kind of framework, right? Some kind of system that allows us to determine how we focus our work or what the revenues going to be or you know, which bridge we're building, whatever it is that we're doing.

And then we go into something like marriage, and it's like, I remember when I was getting married, there was all this stuff about the wedding, and I had a beautiful wedding and I got all into all the little knicky-knacky things and I am all about it.

We gave away Christmas ornaments as our favor, I'm all about that. So it's not to throw shade on that. But it's like, there was so much detail available to me immediately about all of these types of choices, and at no point was there like, "Well, what kind of wife do you want to be?" Right?

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah, and it's like, approach goals are so much more useful than avoidance goals, but avoidance is what pokes at us. So it's like, well, I know what I don't want to be. And I know how I don't like to feel, and all that busyness, I mean, we got married very quickly.

We got married a year to the day after we met. I bought your book before we were even engaged, because we were engaged for like five weeks or something. It was very fast, but even without all that hubbub, we eloped, and we didn't have all the distractions, it just didn't occur to







# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

us to ask that question.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. And I think that as a culture, as a society, that is not something that is a society is an expectation that we would have those kinds of conversation. What kind of family do we want to be? One of the things I talk about in The Marriage MBA is like, what kind of marriage culture do we want?

Because they come from an HR background. It's like, what is the culture that we're creating? And are the things that we're thinking and feeling and doing contributing to creating the culture that we want? But first we have to ask, what do we want it to even be like?

And so often, unless you've listened to a podcast like this one, or do one of these programs, where would you ever have a space to stop and ask such things? Right? It's one of the things that sort of riles me up a little, it's like, well, let's make that space now.

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. And it's so easy then to just let problems reveal what you want, which is it's like that adage of like, let's prioritize your wellness now, so that you don't have to prioritize your illness later. And I love that you point out we do this already with other things. We do it with our careers. We do it with our money. We do it with so many areas, but marriage just gets left out and I thank you for creating this space.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, absolutely. Okay, what's the next one that you-





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Kirsten Parker:  
The Drama Triangle.

Maggie Reyes:  
Yes. Oh good.

Kirsten Parker:  
The Drama Triangle was so helpful because I am a Coach. I'm also a smart person, so I know when I'm making myself a victim to something. I know when I'm deciding I can't be okay until you are different, and this is different and everything's perfect forever.

But where I would normally go when I noticed that was just judgment about it, which isn't helpful and doesn't solve anything and feels terrible. So having the Empowerment Triangle as somewhere to go, it sounds so simple, but it made all the difference.

Maggie Reyes:  
So I love that so much. So I learned about the Drama Triangle from my very first Coach, her name was Christine Kane and she taught it to us in sort of the Coaching program that I did with her. And it's from a psychologist named Stephen Karpman, so later I sort of looked it up and all of that.

And it's this idea that we can have different roles at different times, and sometimes we're in the role of Victim, and sometimes we're in the role of Rescuer, and sometimes we're in the role of Villain, and we can fluctuate throughout the different roles, right?





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

And when I first learned it, I didn't learn the other one. I think the first one existed for several years, and then other people got together and developed the idea of like, well, what would you be stepping into if you were stepping out of that one?

So when I first started it, it was just step out of it. Goal number one: notice that you're in it, and if at all possible, what can you do to step out of it? And then another group of people, and similar people sort of came up with similar ideas and it's kind of been sort of consolidated a little bit, and the Conscious Leadership Group has a nice sort of definition that I like of how they approach it, which is, I think it's: the Coach, the Challenger and the Creator.

And I'm not going to go into a lot of detail about all the roles now, but I talk about it in one of the workshops, and then we talk about it in The Marriage MBA too, just to have that lens to look at things through.

And what I find so interesting is especially overthinkers and overachievers, we tend to take on the Rescuer role quite a lot. And what does that become when we... So again, the light and the shadow of it, the shadow of it can be the Rescuer, but the light of it can be the Coach, the mentor, the person who helps things happen, but doesn't do everything; they just help the things to occur. And that for me was really mind bending when I saw that.

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. It gives you something to do with your impulse to control.

Maggie Reyes:

Yes. It gives you a place to go in your brain. Absolutely.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. And one of my other favorite things that you teach is Soul Centered Communication, so solution focus is the heart of that or the beginning of that, at least. And I love solution focus. It makes so much sense to logic brains like us, who also want to feel good. We love solutions. Problems don't feel good.

But having a way to get there faster and easier make the difference in whether it's just a concept that's so sounds good, or something that you can actually live in. Because that's what all of your stuff really makes a difference for me is, it's nice to talk about, right?

It's lovely concepts, but in the moment of feeling awareness, "You're being a victim right now," or you're being a whatever, can you practically do anything about that? And that's what I noticed right away when I was doing The Marriage Makeover is like, "Oh, I can do this. I'm doing it right now."

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. I love that so much. I always ask myself, "And what does that look like on a Tuesday?" I just ask myself if you listen to the podcast and you sort of see, I'll say a concept and I'll be like, "Okay, and then what are we going to do with this awareness? How do we approach this now?"

Even inside The Makeover, there's some journaling prompts and at the bottom there's like, activating awareness. We have an awareness. How do we activate it? What do we do with the thing we have now seen?

And for, I think people who do a lot of self development work or just of like to think about their





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

thinking and stuff, sometimes I have certainly done this where I'll go in circles thinking about the thing, but how have I activated that? And so to me I'm very mindful to, as often as possible, as simply as possible bring in, "This is one way, this is another way."

So for everyone listening today, for example, if you think about a Victim, a Rescuer and a Villain, you don't even really have to know all the details of it. Just think about what those three words mean to you. Just locate yourself this week.

Is there a place, after you listen to the podcast you go about your day, "Oh, was I being a little bit victim here? Was I being a little bit rescuer? Am I the villain in this scenario?" Just to have that awareness with loving compassion, right? It's not about beating yourself up about it, it's just having awareness around it.

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. And then in the moment of awareness, what I experienced was I got mad about the same stuff I get mad at, like whatever the dishes, the shoes, and then I remembered I had another option, and I didn't do it against myself. It's not like you shouldn't care about this, or you shouldn't feel this way.

It's like, "Oh, this is my opportunity to get into solution focus and choose what I care about." I mean, it's all like decision day, right? It's like, what do I want to choose to care about right now? And do it from a place of empowerment and have this input.

Maggie Reyes:

Oh, it's so good. "I get to choose what I care about," is so incredibly powerful and so important





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

in our marriages. I know that you're familiar with this because in *The Makeover*, there's a little bonus training called *The Anger Scale*, and one of the things in *The Anger Scale*, I also have a podcast on it, so you just look up, "The Anger Scale podcast" and we'll link to it in the show notes.

But the idea behind that is, how angry do I want to be about this? Is it a one or is it's 10? How much do I want to care about this? Is it a four or is it a seven? Because then we can decide how we want to approach it, what action needs to be taken, if any at all.

And I think that for some of us overthinkers, and people who get a lot done just on Earth, we get a lot done because we have a high sense of urgency about a lot of things. And that is both kind of the light and the shadow, again.

It's like that heightened sense of urgency, we get a lot done, and also it can be this place where we care about everything as if everything is equally as urgent, and equally as like the shoe and the much, much bigger thing that actually probably matters more.

So, just training our brain to be like, "How do I want to care about this?" I think is really so important. And I love that the way that you said it, I think see it lands in a different way even.

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. I sent so many clients that podcast because it's so helpful. We need to know that there are options that we're just, and you talk about this a lot too, right? The world has outgrown our biology, so we don't have a stress scale internally. We're not like, "Oh, this is just a text message." Or, "This is just a shoe on the floor." This is not infidelity, right? We react to it with our animal, ancient biology. So, we got to use our brains as our superpowers.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Maggie Reyes:

And it's almost like we have to retrain our brain to say, "The shoe on the floor is not the same thing as missing my recital," or whatever. We have to retrain our brains and how do we do that? Okay, here's a simple way: get a scale of one to 10, assigned it a number. This is a completely arbitrary framework, right? It's just like in the moment, will this work and help you? Try it.

Kirsten Parker:

And it's another thing that you don't think about in advance, just like the vision, right? You don't decide in advance, "What do I want to be a 10 in anger about?" Because anger's useful, emotion has efficacy, but we let our reactions, and our habits, and our biases decide for us usually.

Everything's a 10, or everything is eight to 10. There's no other the option. And it's like, this is where we, you create that space to think in advance. This could save a lot of time and stress.

Maggie Reyes:

I love that so much. So tell us the third one.

Kirsten Parker:

Request versus demands. I got to say, I re-listened to the podcast on request versus demands a few times and it was like, "Ooh, I feel like I should get this. I want to get this. I want to get behind this," but I really needed The Marriage Makeover to let it sink in.

Maggie Reyes:

I love that. Okay, tell me more. What was your resistance? Because I'm sure someone listening right now is like, "That sounds like a good idea." So first let's tell everybody what a request versus





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

a demand is. You tell them from your perspective and I might chime in. How did it land for you?

Kirsten Parker:

Well, the way that you teach it makes total sense. I just didn't like it.

Maggie Reyes:

Tell me why you didn't like it?

Kirsten Parker:

You can make a request of someone where there's no emotional price to pay if the answer's no, or you can make a demand and if they say no, then there is a high, emotional price to pay. And I could see myself doing that all over. All over.

Because I live in the place that I work, because I work at home. So my brain loves making up rules about like, "Well, I can't work if everything's dirty and everything's messy, and there are piles." And my husband's a camera operator and he literally has piles of equipment. And my brain was just making demands all the time about how things couldn't be and had to be. And I didn't see any other option.

So that's why, I intellectually understood the idea was a good one because I was perpetuating my own suffering by creating these impossible problems to solve. But I was like, "Wait, really? I have to accept the possibility that I might not be able to change this? I might have to just deal with this?" That's a hard pill to swallow.

Maggie Reyes:







# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

I love it. Bring all the resistance, bring it. It's the best. And what did you find? So, you listen to it and you're like, "Okay, we'll come back to that." Which is fine. I do that too sometimes I'm like, "Wait, I need to think on this. Let me come back." And then you did The Makeover and how did that help that land?

Kirsten Parker:

Well, what I realized was I was only giving myself two options in my mind, I was giving myself the option of being totally dependent on him being how I wanted him to be, and things being, "How I needed them to be," or totally isolated. I'm okay solving problems and doing things for myself.

But I was making it this terrible condemnation in almost, like, "Okay, if I can't control you, if you're not going to acquiesce to my demand, then I'm just on my own." And that was a really unattractive option because I was like, I got married so I didn't have to be alone. This doesn't feel good. So I really needed to see that that's what I was doing in my mind. Does that make sense?

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. It was a sort of all or nothing thinking. It's either he does it exactly the way I want it, or I have to do it on my own and there's no other thing and-

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. There was no request. The request, how to work that into our lives and our partnership, there was some resistance to that because it does mean giving up some control, which we didn't happen the first place.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Maggie Reyes:

Right. It's an illusion, but yes, but solution, right. Yes.

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. And then giving myself more options, like, okay, so it comes back to choosing what to care about, but not making it the all or nothing that you said not making it like, "It either has to be exactly how I want, and you have to do what I want, or I have to feel alone in this, and it's up to me to deal with the piles and not have anything the way I want it to be." There's so much room in between those two options.

Maggie Reyes:

"I have to be alone in this," I think is a thought that a lot of us think in a variety of ways. And to me, one of the things I talk about, in The Makeover I call it, "Always be friending," and in general I talk about always cultivating team, and it's like, how do we recruit our partners to be on our team as we figure this out?

That doesn't mean they're going to do exactly what we say, and that doesn't mean that we're going to do exact through what they say. It's just like, if we're both on the same team, how do we want to handle this? If you work from home and maybe you have to do calls and meetings and you can't have like the grippy thing from the camera in the background, "What is the middle way?" Is the question I like to ask a lot?

It's like, what is the middle way? How do we approach this to get other in a way that works for both of us? And I think we forget that step. Listening to a podcast like this one, I know everyone listening, you're adding that step in, but so often we do go to that place where it's either, it's the





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

way I exactly the way I want it or I have to do it by myself, and there's no like, "Wait, what if we're a team in this?"

And I always say, and if we can't be a team in this, that's data we want to have. There are some places where our partner can be a team and they're amazing, and there's some places where our partner's just not suited to help in that area. And that doesn't mean your whole relationship is doomed either, we just want to see where can we be a team, and where do we need to really hire an organizer or do some other thing that may have nothing to do with the partner.

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. And another thing that we leave out, I think, is that going back to the original vision. Because in all of this problem management getting into solution focus, one thing that's really easy for me to do is forget who I want to be in making a request. I don't want to be a person who can only have things one way or I'm doomed for a miserable day.

I don't want to be that person, and I don't want to be the person who controls how my husband exists in his home. It's his home too, just because I live and work here doesn't mean he counts less in the space.

So I think that that's why this day had such a big impact because all the concepts support each other, and they're simple enough that I can remember in a moment of frustration, A it might not be the best time to make a request out of frustration, but also there's an option to consider, who do I want to be? How can I be the person I want to be in how I look at this situation? I can make a request, I don't have to do everything on my own, I don't have to accept everything as it is and just roll over.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Maggie Reyes:  
Yeah. So powerful.

Kirsten Parker:  
I mean, it's related to, I know we're not talking about day two but day two as a teacher for everyone listening, I mean the desire versus dependency, the idea too really plays into requests and demands for me I think, because how can I make a request without making myself dependent?

Maggie Reyes:  
On the outcome of the request?

Kirsten Parker:  
Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:  
Yeah. Okay. So tell everyone in your words, what you understood from desire versus dependency. Because it's a concept I teach on day two of The Marriage Mindset Makeover, which all of you should sign up for immediately upon listening to this podcast.

Kirsten Parker:  
Obviously.

Maggie Reyes:  
Link will be on the show notes. But tell them what desire versus dependency is.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Kirsten Parker:

Well at its most fundamental for me, it comes down to remembering you have options. You can choose the option to move closer to desire than dependency. And for brains like mine, we go to A and B thinking, black and white all or nothing thinking all the time. It's just simpler.

Our brains are like, "Well there are only probably only two options. That's the most obvious." So, knowing I have somewhere else to go when I feel that urgency, because you can tell, you can tell when it's rising and you're like, "I'm not going to be okay if those dishes don't get done," but letting yourself have that other option to go to is so important. And it's so valuable and we skip it. We forget.

Maggie Reyes:

Okay. I want everyone to remember all the important things. That's what I want. That's my goal. Okay, I love it so much. So what has been the effect you've told us, you've practiced all these things, you have felt more calm and you have felt more sort of centered in the person you want to become then you are becoming that person. What has been the effect in your relationship of using these tools?

Kirsten Parker:

We have way more fun and way less fights.

Maggie Reyes:

"Way more fun, way less fights." I think I should like maybe rename the podcast. It's not The Marriage Life Podcast, it's Way More Fun, Way Less Fights.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Kirsten Parker:

Well, the thing is, I think the universe is like a trickster because it sent me this most perfect, amazing person. It would be so easy to blame all my problems on him if he was like selfish, and thoughtless, and terrible, but he's not. He's so fun, and loving, and unconditionally supportive and amazing, which is just funny because then I'm like, "Oh there's still all these issues, I wonder if I have something to do with this?"

Maggie Reyes:

Let's check. Let's see. And my husband, I think of him every once in a while I will read something on Tumblr, I have a secret Tumblr. Not so secret, I guess, as I'm telling everybody, but they have this saying the Tumblrs. I think of it as a group of people, even though it's people, that a person can be a sweet cinnamon roll, too good for this Earth. Have you ever heard that saying?

Kirsten Parker:

No, but I'm obsessed with it now.

Maggie Reyes:

Okay. So they say this of characters on TV or whatever it's like, "Oh, so and so is the sweet cinnamon roll too good for this Earth." And that's how I think about my husband. He was the sweetest cinnamon roll, too good for this Earth.

And I remember, I think it was our first year that we were married and I don't know, something happened. I was going to say he did something, but it was like something happened, I don't even remember what it was.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

And I remember having this thought of, “Is there a bone in my body that wants to be mad about this? I feel like the part of me does, but I can’t get myself there because he’s just so noble.” And it was a fascinating thing to experience.

Kirsten Parker:

That’s trippy. Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

It’s trippy. I was like, “Is there, can I find? No, it’s not there. Okay. We’re just going to move on.”

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. And that’s been so much our experience too, where we just get so much more quickly to the baseline we want to land over and over again on, which is Team Sausage Muffin. That is the name of our team. But we are on the same team. Okay.

Maggie Reyes:

Wait, “Team Sausage Muffin?” Come on. That’s awesome.

Kirsten Parker:

It’s because we have the same favorite joke, which we found out by accident. But in one version it’s a sausage, in one version it’s a muffin.

Maggie Reyes:

You have to tell us the joke. Come on.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Kirsten Parker:

Oh, okay. So, I think he asked to tell him a joke and I only know one joke. So I said, "I only know one joke and it's dumb, but it's my favorite one." And he was like, "Okay, hit me." And the joke is two sausages are in a frying pan, and one turns to the other and says, "Man, it's hot in here." And the other one says, "Oh my gosh, a talking sausage." It's my favorite joke.

Maggie Reyes:

Love it.

Kirsten Parker:

It doesn't matter why. And he burst out laughing inappropriately. It's not that funny. And I was like, "What's happening right now?" And he was like, "That's my exact favorite joke, except with muffins."

Maggie Reyes:

So good.

Kirsten Parker:

You're all welcome.

Maggie Reyes:

Team Sausage Muffin has arrived. We're keeping this forever. I love it.

Kirsten Parker:

And we want that to be our baseline where we remember, we're not actually against each other,







# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

neither of us is ever doing something to make the other person's life harder and miserable. So, the difference that we feel, that I feel, but we both feel, I mean, there was such a difference after the day you told us to thank people, thank your partner all day. That was literally the only homework, that made such a huge difference. I was like, "Oh wow, whoops. I guess I haven't been doing this." So.

Maggie Reyes:

Everyone listen up. Go thank your partner for something after you listen to this episode. Do two things: sign up for The Makeover and thank your partner for something. Those that's your Coaching homework from the episode. Okay.

Kirsten Parker:

Their response will be telling.

Maggie Reyes:

Yes.

Kirsten Parker:

But we do. We have way more fun, and arguments happen, friction happens because humans are different. And I always say, failures, and feelings, and surprises happen, that's part of the deal. And I think that you do a really good job of not painting this rosy picture like, "As long as you work on this stuff, you'll never experience any negativity for the rest of forever," but we get through those things with so much more on the same team.

It's like, I think before we would go to our islands more often, and then we'd have to do the work





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

of solving the problem of whatever it was, and then do the work of coming back together on our team. And now we just stay on the same through the problem solving, which feels so much better, and is so much less work.

Maggie Reyes:

That is such a beautiful way to say it. “We stay on the same team through the problem solving instead of making each other the problem.”

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. And I think that the surprise for me in that was that he didn’t have to do anything for us to experience that. You are so powerful in your own mind with how you experience your relationship.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. And I want to clarify that cause I get questions about that a lot. So, it’s not that he’s not doing anything, it’s that he’s responding to you. So he’s responding to whatever it is you are doing, and when what you’re doing is saying, “Thank you. And you’re amazing. And can we have a team meeting and call it Sausage Muffin,” then he’s responding to that, as opposed to him responding to you being angry and upset about some thing.

Kirsten Parker:

Exactly. What I meant is he didn’t have to become a different person.

Maggie Reyes:

Right? Yeah.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Kirsten Parker:

My animal brain always is convinced, he probably could.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. Right. So we always want to see that little bit of nuance, because I do think it's an easy thing to sort of... I don't know, I think nuance is important. To say there is a dynamic between the two people where we want to see our partner's responses, and where that our partners can meet us and where they can't.

And like you said, I never like to sugarcoat that part. There will be parts where our partner cannot meet us, for whatever variety of reasons, and then we just have to decide how we want to my and what we want to do, how we want to handle that. Right? Yeah. I love that.

Kirsten Parker:

It's not about going into a bubble and like pretending.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, there's no pretending. That's literally one of the emotional weight loss tools; there's no pretending. We don't do that. Yeah. Okay. So tell me, is there anything else that you want to add before we start wrapping today?

Kirsten Parker:

Just that everyone should join The Makeover, if not The MBA. I think something that really has been sticking in my mind since I listened to your interview with Tamara Lee, it's an amazing episode, because money. But something that she said was that she can tell someone's priorities,





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

looking at their bank statements, like where you're spending your money shows what-

Maggie Reyes:

Truth bomb, yes.

Kirsten Parker:

And wherever, like spending your time or your money, whatever, wherever you're investing your resources, I think that was such a game changer thought for me because I was like, "Of course my marriage is important. It one of the top three important things in my life." And it was just very helpful to be able to ask, what am I investing into it?

Maggie Reyes:

Yes. I love that so much. So Tamara Lee is a Money Coach, and we talked about cultivating a relationship with money and I love just her take on how we're in relationship with our money. It's like we have a relationship with it. It's not just a thing we have in the bank. It's like, how do we think about it? How do we feel about it? What do we do with it? How much attention do we pay to it? Where do we focus it? Right?

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

So we'll definitely link to that episode in the show notes too. I love that so much. That's so good. Okay. I'm going to ask you a question from The Questions for Couples Journal. That's always super fun. For me, I hope it's fun for you.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Kirsten Parker:

Which I purchased before I was even engaged by the way.

Maggie Reyes:

That is amazing. I love it so much. Okay, what is your favorite gift that your partner has ever given you?

Kirsten Parker:

Oh yeah. They love this question and the cheeriest part of my brain is like, "Himself."

Maggie Reyes:

Okay, wait, we have to pause on that because I met my husband on Christmas Day, so totally I'm like, "God sent me a gift."

Kirsten Parker:

You have the perfect love story. Right?

Maggie Reyes:

Christmas love story. So I'm like, yes, it is. The best present is always him, but I still like flowers and things in blue boxes, like, yes it is him.

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. I think, the thing that comes to mind the first is he gave me for Valentine's Day, which I actually have never been like a Valentine's gifty person, so I didn't get him anything, but he gave me this necklace from my favorite jeweler, a local jeweler called Mae Mae, for anybody in LA.





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

They're also online.

But all of their jewelry is very meaningful. And he gave me a confidence necklace, a necklace that meant confidence, because it was right at the beginning of, this fiscal year I had just started a big business Coaching program, it was a huge investment, I was really taking a lot of scary leaps in my business and he just has unconditional confidence in me. Like he reflects everything that I want to believe about myself, just perfectly. And I think that is a really special thing that he gave me. Because-

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, that's so beautiful.

Kirsten Parker:

Because, yes, it's confidence and it's a cute necklace, but it's also this reminder that, "Whenever you drop your belief, I'm just going to be here saying exactly what you need to hear so that you can keep going." And it's so lovely to be able... I mean, I'm giving myself gratitude too, because it's so lovely to be able to receive that and not just think like, "Okay, I'm responsible for this ship on its own."

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. That's so... Yeah, he is steering the ship with you and when you need a break, he's going to come and help with the navigation.

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah. And it like for independent, hard working overachiever people, letting yourself actually be





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

vulnerable and feel supported is not the most fun, comfortable thing at first. But when you let it in, it's like, "Oh, this feels nice."

Maggie Reyes:

Right. And sometimes it does get more comfortable, and it gets better, and it gets easier. And sometimes, it's a little bit uncomfortable anyway. I just want to normalize all of that, right? Sometimes it still a little, feels like a stretch every time, and you can stretch farther, and you can stretch more, you can stretch in different interactions, but sometimes it's like, "Oh, I allow my partner to help me with this, and this and this," but this other thing could still feel like a stretch. And it's just like, that's okay. It's okay too.

Kirsten Parker:

It's just human. Just human.

Maggie Reyes:

Human. Okay, tell people what is the best way to stay in touch with you to find out everything about just changing your decision making paradigm, tell us all the things?

Kirsten Parker:

Well, all the things are, you can go to Instagram @KPCoaching. KP's my initials. And you can go to my website, [kirstenparker.com](https://kirstenparker.com). I have replays of master classes on there that you can download, and they're so good.

I mean, I model a lot of my stuff after you, Mags. So I try to give my best stuff away for free, so you can go to [kirstenparker.com](https://kirstenparker.com) and you can look at when the next round of The Decision





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Master's Program is coming up, where you can take all of the decision mastery tools, and master them in your real daily life and end overthinking forever.

Maggie Reyes:

And it can be any kind of decision; decisions at work, decisions about home stuff, it's just really finding a place of peace around the decisions that feel overwhelming in your life, would that be accurate?

Kirsten Parker:

Yes. Really knowing that you're rooted in who you are, you have full permission and clarity on what you want, and you can trust yourself to make things simple, to not limit yourself from how far you want to stretch and trust yourself to survive any surprises, and failures and feelings along the way.

Maggie Reyes:

I love that so much. I want to talk about one last thing before we leave, because I think it's really valuable what you said that you try to give away your best stuff. You just give it away, right? And on the podcast, obviously we talk about really deep stuff all the time, right?

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

And here's what I want to tell people that kind of like we're Coaches. And so, we have similar mindsets, and similar values in our businesses and stuff like that. And for someone who's







# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

listening, who's like, "What do you all mean by that?" It's like, I'm going to teach you the whole thing.

And Soul Centered Communication is a podcast episode on the podcast you can get for free, I teach it inside The Marriage MBA that you pay thousands of dollars for, and I go into slightly different tandems and directions about it, and I might go a little bit deeper into it, but what's the difference is the Coaching support.

Our brain united with your brain, where we join your team, and we help you figure stuff out, right? As opposed to in the podcast, or in a masterclass, where we're just like, "Here's a really good thing. Go use it. Good luck."

Kirsten Parker:  
Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:  
Right? And I want people to just treat, if there's people who, for different things, you need a little bit more of guidance, and a little bit more of, now both of our eyes are on it, and we can troubleshoot it together. Let's figure out where you got stuck. Let's help you do that.

But one of the things I like to do is sort of demystify, like what happens in Coaching? What is that? Listen, we're going to talk about soul centric communication, and when you get stuck, we're going to Coach through, "What were you thinking? What was going on? How can I help you? What got in the way?" Right? And I just love that you said that because I think for some people, they've heard this before, or it might be familiar. For other people, it's like, "Oh, that's the





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

difference.”

Kirsten Parker:

Yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

Do you have any thoughts on that, that you want to share?

Kirsten Parker:

So many, but yeah. You said it perfectly, but yeah it’s really the difference between listening to a podcast, which can be so valuable and exactly what you need to hear, versus that in depth, and the consistency, and the accountability of really, when you decide I’m going to invest in this thing, which is exactly why now I’m joining the Marriage MBA, which I’m so excited.

But it’s really noticing, “Okay, how do I want my resources to reflect my priorities?” And it doesn’t have to be, I mean, that’s something that you and Melanie Childers talk a lot about on your interview is, it’s not like there are secrets. We’re not holding secrets back to like, “Here’s how to regulate stress, and consciously engage with fear.”

I talk about all of that stuff for free, and if you want help implementing it because life is busy, and it’s hard to be consistent, and deeply integrate things from within your own mind when you’re trying to run the rest of your life, hire a professional and they can help you. And that was the beauty of doing The Marriage Makeover, because I got so much value out of it and I’m like, “Okay, now I’m ready for the next level, because this is great. Let’s keep it going.”





# EPISODE 97: MAKING POWERFUL DECISIONS IN YOUR MARRIAGE WITH KIRSTEN PARKER

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/97](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/97)

Maggie Reyes:

I love it. On that note, I think that's a perfect place to end. Thank you so much for being here, thank you for sharing your experience. Thank you for being so incredibly articulate. I heard things in a different way, just listening to you, which was really powerful and beautiful.

I love that so much. So thank you so much, and we will link to your website and to your Instagram on the show notes, so everyone can stay in touch with you. Bye everyone, thank you for joining us.

