



EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

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Maggie Reyes:

Hey, everyone. Welcome to The Marriage Life Coach podcast. I have a very special guest with me today. Her name is Serena Hicks, and we're going to talk about her experience in The Marriage MBA. We're going to talk about the patriarchy. We're going to talk about when leaving is the best answer in a relationship.

So it's going to be fun, it's going to be deep. It's going to be, I think, very revelatory, and help you think about relationships in a very different way. And I'm so excited to dig in. But first, I just have to tell you a little bit about Serena.

So she is a business Coach who's going to tell us all about what she does in her business Coaching. But before she did that work, I have a high school crush on her because she worked at MTV News, which used to be the coolest place to work on earth back in the day.

Serena Hicks:

It did – used to be.

Maggie Reyes:

You used to be. I'm not saying it isn't now. I'm saying when I was a teenager and growing up and a young adult, it was the coolest place, to me, in my mind. And so she worked at MTV Networks. She worked with a lot of superstars that you probably know and love.

She has worked on projects, has won daytime Emmys, and done private events for people like Martha Stewart. So she is just someone who was a legend in her field, and then decided to





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become a legend in Coaching. And now she's doing that. So welcome, Serena.

Serena Hicks:

I'm dying, you guys. Excuse me while I collect myself. Maggie, that's the best intro ever. Hi, everyone. I just want to say thank you. And something that's so funny, because we certainly talked about it a little bit in group, is I love you. You're, "She was a legend in her field." I was like, slightly known for being a lot.

And I think in my romantic relationship, and I just want to tell everyone, I was talking, spoiler alert, my ex and I split, about going into dating and being a lot. And Maggie was like, "Serena, that is not a flaw. That is a feature."

Maggie Reyes:

Yes.

Serena Hicks:

And I'm so clear, based literally on that conversation, you were having none of that old story. I'm like, "Oh, you're right, for my dude it is such a feature. He will not be bored."

Maggie Reyes:

Yes. Yeah, so my husband, I mention him a lot on the podcast, he's a computer engineer and he always says, "It's a feature, not a bug." And so it's something that we talk about in our house, when we find something like that, that bothers us about ourselves or that other people are bothered by, it's like, "Wait, wait, hold on. Let's clarify. This is a feature, not a bug. It's not an





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actual problem to be this way.”

Serena Hicks:

Hm-mm. I’m fun for some people.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. So tell us a little bit, before we dig into to the relationship stuff, what you did with MTV and what you do now.

Serena Hicks:

Yep. Okay. I actually haven’t told this story in a long time. I got hired by MTV news for the 2000 presidential election. And what was fun is I was undergrad at UT Austin, University of Texas. I’m a Texan native.

And I remember getting interviewed, and I had my best express outfit on when I went to the interview to be on camera. And they did not hire me on camera. But we’d gone through three or four rounds. And I baked cookies and wrote a handwritten thank you note, and just told the truth.

We talk, you and I, about authenticity. I was like, “Guys, I am a truck driver’s daughter. My mother works in the medical field where she’s an occupational therapist. You can never not work if you’re an OT. I want to live in New York. I want to work at MTV. If you ever, ever have any opening, I will drop everything and show up.”

And they ended up hiring me to be the only staff production assistant, which is low man on the





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totem pole, but it was paid, and it was on just the best team, a few weeks later. And-

Maggie Reyes:
That is amazing.

Serena Hicks:

It was so fun. When I showed up, I was MTV New York City. It all worked out. But at the beginning, so many of my peers, they were not delighted to meet me. So many of them have an MFA from NYU in film, and I literally hadn't completed my undergraduate degree.

And what's funny is, my boss was like, "Dude, anyone can be a production assistant. It just means 14 hour days, do what you're told." But she was like, "I hired you because you hand wrote a thank you note and explained you were all in and you just needed an opportunity." And she was like, "Most people don't do that." And it was the beginning of everything.

It was so fun to work there, Maggie. I need to just authenticate that. It was so fun to work for Betsy Forhan at MTV news in the 2000s.

Maggie Reyes:

Thank you, Betsy, wherever you may be, for that chapter in Serena's life and for giving her a chance.

Serena Hicks:

Truly, Betsy. She is a queen.





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THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Maggie Reyes:

Right. I used to work in HR, and I would have what I would call these wild card candidates, where I'd go to my internal business partners and I'd say, "Listen, this isn't really what you asked for on paper, but you really need to talk to this person. I really think this is the one."

And my wild card, people almost always turned out to be the most amazing hires. And I just, hearing that story, just remember that time. It's like, how could we be a Betsy for somebody? How could we have that energy where we're just open to giving someone a chance, in some way? Maybe in our Marriages, sometimes, right?

Serena Hicks:

Yeah, it was-

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, go ahead.

Serena Hicks:

It was discernment. In hindsight, Betsy's so much smarter than she looks. She's a stunning, beautiful, platinum blonde, but she was not kidding. And she was right. Number one, I thrived in that environment. I thrived working for her.

But what she recognized was a chutzpah, a willingness and an eagerness in me, where she was like, "I can train that to do the logistical nonsense." That part, that magic. And I think that especially everyone listening to your podcast in your world, Maggie, we're here for inclusivity and





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feminist equanimity.

And Betsy was so clear. She was like, “Someone who has this level of chutzpah and wants to be bad ass, and they’re willing, then I’m willing to give them a chance.” She could’ve fired me if things didn’t work out.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, we give it a chance and then if we have to take an action, we take the action. And then the other thing, though, about is how you created your own opportunity. And that’s such a good reminder for all of us, including me, that when a door is closed in front of us, or when we really want something really badly, how can we create the opportunity for ourselves? We don’t have to wait for somebody to open the door.

Serena Hicks:

Hm-mm (negative).

Maggie Reyes:

We keep knocking, we go by the window, we bake the cookies, right?

Serena Hicks:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). It was a whole thing.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, it’s like, how bad do you want it? Are you willing to bake some cookies to get it?





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Serena Hicks:

And FedEx them, which was the equivalent of my entire semester's... I had my own job to pay for stuff undergrad. It was like a billion dollars to FedEx cookies to New York City from Austin, Texas. I still drive by the little place where I remember FedExing, and I remember thinking, "Here's all my money." It totally worked out, totally worked out.

Maggie Reyes:

Oh, God. Okay, so you had this really amazing, adventurous career and you did all these amazing things. And then you became a Coach, and tell us what you do now.

Serena Hicks:

Okay. So I spent 10 years in New York City, and I sure as shit came home to Texas burnt out, exhausted, bitter, angry. And really long story short, it took me a long time to really collect myself and get my footing in Texas. I literally was doing social media marketing as a freelance consultant for small businesses.

And I realized some people just want to shoot themselves in the foot. And at the time, I was Coaching with the amazing, our beloved Melanie Childers, who's also been featured on your podcast. Basically, she was like, "You can Coach. You know how to Coach."

And so then I flipped into Coaching, because I wanted to only work for people or work with people who really wanted to succeed and grow. Not just people who said so, but weren't really interested in managing their mind for long term growth.





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And for me it was an efficiency issue. I was like, “I want to have an effect on the world, so I want to work with people who also want to have an effect on the world, not people who want noodle with their money and stare at their navel and otherwise melt down and have the same dramas over and over for decades.”

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, let's not do that. Let's make actual progress. Yes.

Serena Hicks:

No. It's so funny, because I had a client who had all the money in the world, so it was really helpful. I was like, “No, it's not about money, it's about impact.” And that's when I got into Coaching. And then, this feels the segue. Can we talk about how big happy money, which I talk about all the time?

Maggie Reyes:

Yes.

Serena Hicks:

Okay, you guys, big happy money, which is a concept that I love to share in the world, it's not just money. It's big, happy money, is the direct result of my first consult conversation with Maggie Reyes, considering coming into The Marriage MBA.

And why I love this story forever, and want every Coach or service provider... When I went into the consult it was to discuss joining The Marriage MBA with Maggie. The end. That was it. I didn't





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THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

notice it. And Maggie, being who you are, at the end it was like, “Okay, I have just enough money to do this, but I want to make this huge investment in my business to do this mastermind.”

And Maggie was like, “Listen, listen lady, I only take happy money.” And I said, “What is happy money?” And Maggie, you were like, “Money that you’re happy to spend. You should be happy to make this investment. And so otherwise, let’s just wait until it’s a time that you’re not like, “Ahhhh,” white knuckling it.

And so then, per the conversation we had, I looked up ‘happy money,’ and I liked the concept. But then I had to add ‘big’ to it, because I do everything big. And B, because the person, I think it’s Ken Honda, it’s a brilliant concept, but of course he’s also very clear on saving, and killing debt.

And I’m like, “My philosophy of big, happy money is just make large piles of big happy money,” which will solve for any debt. It will solve for retirement plan. We want to kill debt, and for sure everyone to have an easy retirement, but I’m like, “Let’s get our priorities in order, starting with large piles of big happy money, because it solves for everything else.”

So that was a completely unexpected, altered the trajectory of my life, from a less than 30-minute conversation with you, Maggie. I also knew I was going to make big happy money, and then hire you, which I did.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. I want to break that down a little bit for everyone listening, because if you’re in my world





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you probably have heard me say this, because I say it a lot: I only work with people that I know I can help. I make it a point to give you opportunities in the podcast to see my approach, to see what would we be doing together, to talk about the concepts.

There are no secrets here. And I'm really committed to only working with people that I know I can help. And I think you can hear that and say, "Well, what does that mean? And how do you do that in practice?" And this is such a great example of it didn't feel right to me. It just didn't feel right to me.

I was like, "She can be better helped doing this other thing she wants to do. And I honor that, right." And I was like, "I only take happy money." And what's fascinating to me is also, it was a very simple philosophy that I hold, that is just how I think about things. But for her, listening to it for the first time, it really changed the trajectory of how she thought about money forever.

Serena Hicks:

Yes. Literally.

Maggie Reyes:

And now she has a mastermind. Serena has that amazing mastermind, it's called The Big Happy Money Mastermind. And is it for Coaches?

Serena Hicks:

It is for Coaches. I'm open to CEOs and creators who think they can hang with all the Coaches. Good luck.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Maggie Reyes:

It's primarily for Coaches. And I am the godmother, I always think of myself as the godmother of that mastermind.

Serena Hicks:

As you should.

Maggie Reyes:

And it's so fun and so beautiful and so amazing. And what's beautiful about is just for everyone thinking about the yeses and nos in your life, whether it's a yes or no from your partner, whether it's a yes or no at work, from a boss, it's like that was a no at that moment, and we both liked each other and wanted to work together, but it was just a no in that moment. And then it later became a yes, in the most loving, most deeply profound way that it could become a yes.

Serena Hicks:

And perfectly timed. This is what you model so well, Maggie, the authenticity in you honoring your no. Because, you guys, I had been a Coach, and I'd made probably grand total around, I'm sorry, I'm working from memory, around 150.

But after that conversation with Maggie, I did join that mastermind. I ended up having a \$110,000 month. My largest income prior had been 25,000 in a month. So when I jumped to 110K in the next six months from that chance, or moment that Maggie had said no, I made 470K or something. It was the beginning of the rocket forward.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

So to be clear, it was perfect for me, because also then when I did get to join Marriage MBA money, and I know we're going to talk about internalized patriarchy and stuff, none of that was a factor in my relationship the way it had previously been a pain point.

So we got to work on the relationship with true clarity of what we were working on, and no distracting, shiny object of "Oh, money's an issue," which money's always an issue, everybody. But-

Maggie Reyes:

It's an issue we have to figure out how to manage.

Serena Hicks:

Exactly.

Maggie Reyes:

And one thing I want to say, because you just mentioned you made over \$110,000, and these big -- now Serena makes very large amounts of money. And for everyone listening, I want you to remember the story we just told you where she was the production assistant in Texas baking the cookies to get her first shot.

That persistence, that I'm going to open a door and I'm going to keep knocking until it opens, is why she now makes really, what seems to people who've never made that amount of money, a fantastical amount of money.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

I want you to all remember, because I just know my people, somebody out there's like, "Oh, how is that even possible, these amounts?" Guess what you make the cookie today, and whatever it looks tomorrow, you keep doing that, and questioning and making career pivots or making business pivots.

You keep iterating as you go. And I just wanted to just share that, because I think are easy to gloss over that and say, "Oh, Serena can do things that I can't do." Because Serena was writing a letter and...

Serena Hicks:

Yeah, "Hi, I'm the daughter of a truck driver." And I still am. Yeah, I made 50,000 in 2019. I want to make that clear. 2019 was a 50,000 year, and 2020 was just under 200,000. And now I'm using those numbers that crack me up because that's ridiculous. It's ridiculous.

Maggie Reyes:

So we just want to say that. We want everybody to know. So, you joined The Marriage MBA and you have a very I think unique and powerful story to share. Because you joined it, as everyone who joins it, joins it to strengthen your relationship. And during the course of our time together, it ended up where you decided to end your relationship.

Serena Hicks:

Ohhh, yeah.

Maggie Reyes:





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Yeah. And I think that we were talking as we were getting ready for the podcast, that I, as a marriage advocate of someone who helps people strengthen their relationships for a living, think it's very important to say sometimes the highest and best outcome for a relationship is for it to end.

And so all the strengthening work that we do for the relationship doesn't necessarily mean that then the marriage stays intact. It's the relationship is at a different level, no matter what, and then you decide what you actually want.

Serena Hicks:

Can I also just point out, though, technically he decided to end it. And I know we'll talk about the perfection of that. It's because I was showing up more authentically. It's because, as literally nothing has gone wrong, but I also want to clarify, technically it was his call, but that is the perfect result of the work we had been doing.

And then, being held in the container of the mastermind, if you're listening to this, Maggie's heard me say this 10,000 times, but I cannot fathom this transition without the community I found in Marriage MBA, and without the tools, and the love. It's been six months, actually.

Even when I was actively grieving, as in multiple crying fits every day, there was also so much gratitude, which I just found, I still find, profound. It gives me chills that so much grief, and then gratitude for what was, and gratitude for the clarity and the tools.

And even while it was sad and scary, I was 100% sure "This is right as rain and we are both going





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

to be better because of this. We're both free and we're both going to find an even better partner next." I'm like, "Maggie, how do you only charge what you charge for The Marriage MBA?" That's worth a billion dollars.

You can't put a price on, in the middle of grief, having love and gratitude for the person you're grieving, and gratitude for the container that you are energetically held and seen in. Can I tell the story immediately now about, okay, so I post in group, because I was active in Marriage MBA. And let's be clear, I'm gutted.

And even in that moment of knowing it was right, it was certainly not what I had in mind. And so I said, "He's decided he doesn't want to be in a relationship with me, so if I need to leave Marriage MBA, that would be very sad." And Maggie of course is like, "Nope, I want you to stay." And all of my, I consider them sisters, started commenting, "Here for you, call me if you need." And Angela... I don't know if we're allowed to say names.

Maggie Reyes:
Yeah, that's fine.

Serena Hicks:
I'm like, she's on your podcast. What if-

Maggie Reyes:
Yeah, we'll link to her episode.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Serena Hicks:

She's phenomenal, one of my sisters, one of them all. They're phenomenal. She literally writes, "I'm three and a half hours away by car," or what was it? "I can be there in three and a half hours." We're from the same east Texas area.

And it just lit me up. By the way, that's east Texas code for "you're sisters." But she was, not kidding you guys, she was like, "I can be there in three and a half hours, just say so." And I just sobbed and sobbed, at not just the gesture, but the sincerity and the "this is who is holding me as I'm going to grieve and fall apart and rebuild."

I'm surrounded by these powerhouse women who send so much love and so much sincere "we're going to hold you in this transition." And it's one of the things you talk about in Marriage MBA, Maggie, that I think is so profound, is how in modern culture too often we put responsibility for everything on our partner, and how powerful it is to have friendships and other relationships to support us and nourish us and feed us. And it was just such a life-altering moment. And, yeah.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, it's so beautiful. And shout out to Angela, we love you always. And we will link to her episode in the show notes, so you can listen to her just be amazing on the podcast as well.

Serena Hicks:

She is amazing. Yeah.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Maggie Reyes:

And I think we were all shook by that level of commitment to each other and to each other's growth, and just like, "We're here for you." It was just such a beautiful moment. And one of the things Serena and I talked about back then is you came here to learn the skills to have a healthy relationship. That goal hasn't actually changed.

There is no reason for you to leave, was my philosophy about it. Serena's being very thoughtful about everything, everyone else, and making sure to prioritize her sisters, like she's talking about. And I was like, that hasn't changed.

Literally, everything we're going to talk about in the next weeks coming up is all about how to do that moving forward. And I just so deeply honor you for staying, and saying, "Yeah, that hasn't changed, actually, even with all this grief and all the other things."

Serena Hicks:

Oh, it was so valuable, and so much of the reason why... I don't have my 'proof, yet, I don't have my evidence, I'm not married to my dream man yet. But the reason I know that is happening is that I got to stay in your container, and I got so much value and skills, not just from what you taught, but from witnessing my sisters, implementing and learning and making so-called mistakes, but all also implementing.

And it's my why. I know it is possible for me, because of you and them, and so many of the concepts that I'm like, "Oh my God, now I get it. Now I get to bring it into another relationship and apply it."





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. So powerful. So, before we move on to some of your favorite concepts, can you talk a little bit about this part where you said you had gratitude and love even as you were navigating the redesigning, the end of that relationship in the form that it had before.

And I'm curious, what were some of the mindsets or some of the perspectives that you had that allowed you to have gratitude and love? In our culture, when we talk about breakups, there's a villain, it's a problem.

It's this very heightened thing where there's a lot of blame, cake thrown around everywhere. And you just handled that with so much grace, even in the grief, feeling all the feelings, all the feels were there.

Serena Hicks:

So many feelings. So many feelings.

Maggie Reyes:

And yet you were able to find those places where that love that was a very profound and deep experience in your life, that was still present even in this chapter of it. And I think that's, first of all, amazing, and would love to hear any thoughts you want to share about that.

Serena Hicks:

Okay. So, now I'm crying again.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Maggie Reyes:

Okay. So breathe.

Serena Hicks:

I have such love and gratitude for my ex, because when I think of who the two of us were when we met... After we decided to split, I said I wanted to keep the apartment. And real estate in downtown Austin is at a premium, so I was very happy that he was like, "Yes." And I was like, "Great, thank you."

So we shared just over two weeks before he was able to move into his new place. And I remember there was a moment where he said, "You leave me so much better than you found me." And I realized, "Oh my God, that's true for me too."

And again, because of your container, Maggie, I really want to pretend any version of... I don't even actually want to pretend. If I weren't in your container, there would've been a villain. I would've been the victim. And my brain occasionally wanted to get in that game. As you said, that is what our culture teaches.

And because swimming in your mastermind container is like taking a deep dive in an ocean, and because I was surrounded by this love... And spoiler alert, you guys, one of the reasons I hired Maggie is because, Maggie, you are the high priest of love, actual love, not just the word. And so the gratitude was always there.

When I cry and grieve, then there's just the gratitude, like "I'm happy I knew him. I'm happy we





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

spent those years together. I'm happy we healed each other." I'm happy I'm in your container. I'm happy I'm surrounded by these sisters. I'm happy I have big happy money to pay for Coaching and pay for this, support myself.

It was like I couldn't actually get lost, in what felt like it was lost. It's like I could walk in that forest for minutes, and sometimes even an hour at a time, but I could never actually stay in the illusion that something was wrong or something was lost, because I was swimming and surrounded by what was possible.

And even some of the tools. You're so good about somatic and embodiment. And I remember the first time I was ugly crying in my kitchen after he'd moved out. And all of a sudden, at the bottom, it's like I hit the gratitude, and I was shocked. And it was like, "No, it's nothing but love." And like, yes, sadness, like there is a part of me that wants to know when he finds his perfect person, and another part of me is like, "No, I don't. I still have an ego." I'm still human.

Maggie Reyes:
We're still human. Yes.

Serena Hicks:
I'll be like, "Why couldn't it have been me?" on some level. But it's also like, I know why. Because one of the great values that I got out of Marriage MBA is I started showing up even more authentically as the human I am now. That's literally part of why we split, is we healed each other, and we no longer complement each other in the ways that are good for each other. So it's like, why would we drag this on?





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Maggie Reyes:

That's the thing. Yeah, that doesn't honor anybody if we drag it on, especially if the way we drag it on is with pretending, right?

Serena Hicks:

Yeah. I think there was some pretending that I was unaware of until I started showing up more authentically, which is again, I'm grateful that he was like, "Okay, here's the deal. We have hit an impasse." Because I was fully committed to like, "I'm going to work this out."

Also, you asked, and I'm like, mindset tools were helpful. I definitely, when I found the thoughts, like you teach the thought work, and again, tools.

Maggie Reyes:

Yes. So one of the things we talk about in The Marriage MBA is these emotional weight loss tools. And one of them is like, "No pretending, no convincing."

Serena Hicks:

Very... I'm like, it's the same as no flour, no sugar. I don't like it. I think it's brilliant, it's effective, it's nourishing, but I'm not going to pretend to be filled with joy. It's a process.

Maggie Reyes:

It's annoying as heck, for sure.

Serena Hicks:





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Dammit. Stupid head effective, stupid head authenticity. Grrr.

Maggie Reyes:

What is that? So, we talked about that. I have a podcast episode on it. We'll link to that in the show notes too. And then we talk about, where are we pretending, and can we find the place in our heart where it's true that we do want the thing, or that we do want to show up in a certain way, on behalf of love or in the relationship or the partner.

And if we can't, then how do we speak from our highest truth instead of from our wound? And it sounds very simple for me to say that on the podcast right now, but to actually do that in practice is the reason that you are in a coaching container for six months, and have a Coach and have sisters and all the things, right. Because you're like, "I'm not going to speak from my wound? But I still need to deal with my wound." Bring that to Coaching, right?

Serena Hicks:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. So the idea of when we stop pretending, if the relationship cannot hold that, then I always say that's data you want to know. That's my philosophy about it, in a nutshell. That's data you want to have. You just want to --

Serena Hicks:

I come from people who really love to deny. Denial, it's our family crest, "Can you be in denial?"





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

So it was, oh my God, I don't remember. Remember in the Matrix movie, is it the red pill or the blue pill, which pill makes you wake up?

Maggie Reyes:
I don't know.

Serena Hicks:

Okay, let's pretend it's red because you look magnificent in red today. So let's pretend, y'all, I don't know, don't write in, that the red pill is what wakes you up. But it's what Maggie just said, stop pretending is the red pill. The good news is the bad news, but it's really good news, and now we're congruent.

Maggie Reyes:

And I'll tell you, and I want to share this with everybody who's listening right now. And I think Serena, you'll not be surprised when I tell you the story. But sometimes I pray for my clients, or I pray about the work that we're doing, and I really want it to be for the highest good of everyone.

And it could be really painful, but it could be for your highest good to go through a painful moment. And I uncovered a thought that I had doing thought work, as we talk about on the podcast, and as we talk about in The Marriage MBA, I uncovered a thought, which was, "I could accelerate someone's divorce." Working with me could accelerate that.

And I had all kinds of judgments about it. I thought, "Well, that's terrible. I don't want that." I just had a complete rejection fit about it. And then I kept thinking about it, and I was like, "Wait. If





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

somebody is in a situation where that partner that they're with really isn't the relationship they should stay in, it really isn't for their highest good, if my intention is your highest good and your situation is your divorce gets accelerated, and we assume your intention is also your highest good, then what if not wasting five or ten more years in a relationship is for the good?

Serena Hicks:

It is. If that's yes.

Maggie Reyes:

If that's the thing. Yeah. And so then I thought, "This is a marriage strengthening program. When you come into it, you want to make your relationship stronger. And in the process of doing that, you're going to find whatever the holes are.

And sometimes we plug the holes and keep going, and you have an amazing experience." And I have so many podcast interviews, you can go back and listen to of all those different things that have happened with so many people.

And sometimes you'll find: I don't want to plug that hole. Nope. I don't. We found the deal breaker. It's this. We're done. And I think that just in the context of The Marriage Life Coach podcast, having a conversation about that I think is really important. So I wanted to share that with you and with everyone listening.

Serena Hicks:

Well, there's no doubt in my mind that my marriage will be strengthened because of my time





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

in Marriage MBA. Also, I'll be coming back when I'm married. No matter what. As I'm sure your listeners knows, some of my sisters in there are in thriving marriages, which is why they're in there. We're all in there for different reasons.

And yes, when I think of my future marriage, it will be exponentially stronger because it's the serum, and what you teach is, let's just be authentic and truthful. And it's like, oh, so that just means everything's actually even more congruent and in integrity in the world. Hard yes. Hard yes, please.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, I love it. So, I know that one of your favorite tools and one of the things we talked about a lot is, in the program we have something called the internalized patriarchy relationship inventory.

Serena Hicks:

It was amazing. It was amazing.

Maggie Reyes:

And I feel very strongly that I must talk about internalized patriarchy in marriage, because it's something that I didn't even realize was happening until I started learning more about what the heck is the patriarchy. Honestly, it's not something I ever really "paid a lot of attention to."

And the moment that I knew that it existed, I'm like, "Oh my God, this is every problem I see when I'm Coaching every day, has some grain, some piece of how we're socialized as women, the





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

opportunities we have and don't have, the mindsets we have and don't have."

And we think about patriarchy, it's not only how structures created by men treat or see us, it's we internalize it, and then we make decisions and have mindsets and do things based on that internalization. And I'd love for you to share anything that you want to share around that. Yeah.

Serena Hicks:

That alone, that one little, it's not little, you guys, nugget would be a reason to run, not walk, to Maggie and beg to get in the mastermind. That is just my opinion. That alone is reason enough. For me, it was holy wow, eye opening.

My big aha that I'm not proud of, but I want to share because I doubt I'm the only person on the planet, judge me if you must, but when my ex and I got together, I had just started my Coaching business. I was not fiscally fit. And he was always very generous.

And by that I mean when we moved in together, just generous. Not that he had so much money, but that he was so like, "Your rent can be late. Don't worry, you grow your business. I'm so proud of you." And so then as he witnessed me rocket my business, all he ever did was cheer. And if we had dinner with his family, he'd celebrate my newest success.

So, here I expect my partner to cheer for my wild money making and to very quickly switch into the "breadwinner." And yet, I had horrible, I'm not proud, judgements, because he was not good at directions. And in my patriarchal programming, again, I am not proud of myself, but in my patriarchal programming, "the man always knows the directions. He knows how to get there."





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

And when we were doing the inventory and I realized how hypocritical that was, that I expected him to be so feminist and support his woman making money; meanwhile, I'm over here with step one from the patriarchal playbook and holding it against him? Gross. So for me, that was a huge freaking moment to be like, "Gross."

How in the world did I not recognize that until we did the exercise to really see, "That is incongruent with who I want to be. That is incongruent with our ways of supporting each other." And of course there were other smaller things, but for me, teasing that out and making eye contact with that one fact, was like, "Whoa. I did not realize I was being inadvertently patriarchal poopy."

Maggie Reyes:

And it's so incredible to notice that, and then have compassion for ourselves, for our unconscious programming. We are all swimming in the same ocean, where there's all kinds of mindsets that we share, that we are unaware of, yet take action from those pieces of programming that we have.

So first, that experience of "Can I see something and have compassion for it and still keep moving, and not agree that it's a good idea, I want to change it." Right?

Serena Hicks:

Yeah. No, after that, when he was busy being lost and stuff, I was like, "Whatever. He celebrates that I'm a baller financially. We're good." That just gets dropped. I just forgive it, the end. The





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

end.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. And then the idea, I always think, “Okay, everyone just laugh with me.”

Serena Hicks:

I will.

Maggie Reyes:

Okay, I’m watching The Three Musketeers. It’s a BBC show. I’m obsessed with it. Highly recommend. It’s on Hulu. And of course it’s in the 1600, so all the patriarchal things, all the things that women go through, we watch it all the time. And women were a property, and you’d buy a woman and you’d get a cow, buy a woman. You’d marry a woman and you’d get a cow and some land and some things.

Serena Hicks:

Cool. And we were talking about this the other day, and my husband was like, “As if being a woman wasn’t enough.” He’s more feminist than I am, I think. He’s like, “As if being a woman wasn’t enough, you also need a cow?” Like, what’s going on?

Maggie Reyes:

And I think of marriage as this lab of collaboration and growth and maximum self expression in our century now. But we have hundreds of years of marriage being a place where we were owned, and we needed permission from either the father or the husband signed to travel, to





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

do things, to have things. So the idea of dismantling internalized patriarchy is like, what do you want your relationship to be?

Serena Hicks:

Yeah. That was also a big deal. You just reminded me of another 'holy crap' moment, that my head exploded, and I had to lean back in my chair, and I spent days letting it settle in, was effectively where it's like, "Oh." I've always been really independent, to the point, to be clear, my ex is the first person I really actually allowed deep intimacy with. So I've been independent to a fault.

And there was like, I'm sorry, I don't know if I can articulate it well, but there was this real moment where I realized even in that, I had started hiding in self sufficiency, even in the relationship. Where it was like, "Oh, I have done this. I have created a sense of distance." I allowed intimacy, but now I'm scared, so I'm hiding in plain sight, which is just not being authentic.

And when you said, "What do you really want?", being in the container allowed me to never mind all the things society says, blah, blah, blah; what do I really want? And does my partner really want that too? Do we co-sign?" No pretending, as you say. And the audacity, and the personal power in getting clear on "Okay, what are my desires? And what does that look like?" And then trusting my partner enough to my effectively start piece by piece sharing with that.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah. And in a patriarchal society, we're conditioned to put our desires last, pretty much always, or as often as possible. And so even to decide what we like sometimes is our whole





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

reconditioning on just “What do I actually want? If I could use my time how I wanted it, what would I be doing? How do I want this to go? Where do I want to live?”

All of those types of questions, that unless you're in a container where you're asking yourself those questions on purpose and then holding the answers in loving compassion... Because it can also be very jarring to say, “Oh, I've been prioritizing these other people from the goodness of my heart, thinking I was doing the right thing. And now I realize I don't want any of these things.”

Serena Hicks:

Okay, can we just say that's literally revolutionary? And the key part that you said, because you can definitely tease out some of these by yourself, but to be in a container where you get held with love and compassion and you have the space to process it, I think that is literally revolutionary.

Maggie Reyes:

I think this is how we change the world. I really do.

Serena Hicks:

Oh, I agree.

Maggie Reyes:

Like one --





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Serena Hicks:

This is why we geek out on each other.

Maggie Reyes:

Yeah, just one open heart at a time, yeah. Absolutely.

Maggie Reyes:

Okay, that was deep, folks.

Serena Hicks:

Hi.

Maggie Reyes:

I'm just going to let that sit for a second. Okay, so I have a question for you from The Questions for Couple's Journal, and it had to be a money question because you're the queen of money. And the question, the way it's written in the journal... And I'm going to tell you something and tell everybody: I do this at home too.

I'll ask my husband a question. This is the question: How often should you and your partner discuss money and finances? So, I'll ask my husband a question. I'll be like, "You know, I don't like how that's worded. What I really want to know is this other thing."

Serena Hicks:

Love it.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Maggie Reyes:

And then I change the question on the fly. And then I joke around. So I hold the book in my hand and I'm like, "But I'm the author, so if I want to change the question, I can just change the question."

Serena Hicks:

Right?

Maggie Reyes:

Yes.

Serena Hicks:

I also just want to point out, we're changing the question of this best-selling - is it top five now, this best-selling masterpiece book? Where are we at?

Maggie Reyes:

So The Questions for Couple's Journal, if you go to Amazon, last week as we were recording this, it was in the top 10 in the marriage category.

Serena Hicks:

Whaaat?

Maggie Reyes:

And it was a very special. Thank you for celebrating that with me.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Serena Hicks:
God, yes.

Maggie Reyes:

It was a very special moment, to not only be in the top 10, know that the book is helping people connect with each other and get closer and know each other's interior world more, so that was very special, but then some of my heroes when I first became a Coach, when I first started thinking about and writing about relationships and coming up with the concepts that I teach now, John Gottman, who's the founder of the Gottman Institute, and I think it was The Five Love Languages.

So, my book was there amongst these amazing books. The Mastery of Love by Don Miguel Ruiz. I love that book. And I can't even tell you the emotion of that moment.

Serena Hicks:

Well, your book was where it should be, surrounded by your peers. Exactly, exactly. That's what's so fun. We're back to congruence and authenticity. It was congruent. It is where it should be, in the top 10.

Maggie Reyes:

So listen, y'all. Everyone listening, if you haven't gotten The Questions for Couples Journal, you should get it.

Serena Hicks:





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Go get it.

Maggie Reyes:
It's really good.

Serena Hicks:

Yeah. It's on Amazon. Easy, easy, go get it. I'm going to answer your question. How often should couples talk about money? 100%, firmly believe all day every day. Because money is a tool, just like air and water. We talk about the weather without universes of drama.

Y'all talk about, I don't have kids, "Who's getting the kids from school?", sometimes a drama. But my point is, I am not team money should be on a pedestal where once a month you sit down and talk about it and I will celebrate with you as we do.

One of the things that my ex and I did right was money, back when I didn't have any, back when I had tons, who's paying for what? It was almost always in flow and conversation. There was no hiding. There was none of that. And that is definitely a standard that will always move with me in a relationship. If I'm dating some dude and money's some weird, weird, weird topic, we're not going to be a good match. Because I want to be able to share all of me with him, which includes how much I do or don't make, and how much-

Maggie Reyes:
That is so amazing.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Serena Hicks:
Thanks.

Maggie Reyes:
I love that so, so much. There's so much cultural narrative. And I have a podcast, and I had to have conversation about money, because it's such a triggering conversation for so many people.

Serena Hicks:
Of course.

Maggie Reyes:
But imagine, and this is something that it really dovetails with why I feel so passionately about people getting the book. Because if you have conversations about money all the time, then whether there's an up or a down or a blip or hiccup, it's not a big deal. Like you said, there aren't universes of drama here.

Serena Hicks:
No. It's something to be discussed. Sure, handle it.

Maggie Reyes:
And it's the same as, "Oh, we're doing the groceries, oh, we need to check this and the money." It doesn't have an emotional charge attached.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Serena Hicks:

It can be like managing the front yard, which again, I'm in Texas so it needs to be managed. I live in apartment, but if someone owns a house, whether you do it or you hire yard people, and is it drought, are we allowed to water, but it should have that level of we manage this, we take care of this, but this is not allowed to break us or be a false idol/crisis.

Maggie Reyes:

So, good, okay, tell everybody how they can find you and follow you, Serena.

Serena Hicks:

You can find me on Instagram and Facebook. I am on Instagram as xoxoserenhicks. On Facebook I am Serena Hicks AF. And you can just go to serenahicks.com, or type in bighappymoney.com. And I'm talking really fast, but I want to make sure I squeeze it in.

If you have not already joined Marriage MBA, you should do it. I will not mince my words. It's one of the greatest things. I just treasure our time together. And I am not confused. When I am newly engaged and/or married, I will be back in Marriage MBA.

At some point, Maggie's going to be like, "I'm going to charge you extra," and I'm going to be like, "Okay, I don't care. It's where I want to be. Let me in again. Let me in." I have no qualms.

Maggie Reyes:

You don't get charged extra when you return.





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Serena Hicks:

Well, you might be when it's me and it's my 17th round, and you're like, "Stop it." And I'm going to say, "No, that's Big Happy Money." But no, she doesn't charge extra. And just get in. That's all I have to say.

Maggie Reyes:

Just come in. And for everyone listening, I think when this podcast airs live in 2022, we will have enrollment open. So you can go to maggiereyes.com/group, and you can get all the details there for The Marriage MBA. Definitely check that out, submit your application, get it in. Very important.

Maggie Reyes:

Thank you for sharing from your heart. Thank you for being here. Thank you for all the ways you bless this earth with your work and with your energy, and for blessing this podcast with it. Thank you.

Serena Hicks:

Maggie, thank you for literally changing my life. Before we were even connected and I saw you coaching in different rooms, you changed my life. Being on that consult with you changed the trajectory of my entire business in life, and you exponentially multiplied the love and my capacity to receive love for myself and from other people, based on that six-month mastermind. So I thank you endlessly for having me as a guest and in your container.

Maggie Reyes:





EPISODE 104: RELATIONSHIP ENDINGS, BIG HAPPY MONEY, & MTV WITH SERENA HICKS

THE MARRIAGE LIFE COACH PODCAST | SEE SHOWNOTES AT: [MAGGIEREYES.COM/PODCAST/104](https://maggiereyes.com/podcast/104)

Bye, everyone. We love y'all.

Serena Hicks:
Bye, y'all.

