

MERYL: Welcome back everybody to the rebel nutritionist podcast today. I am excited. I'm really excited about this conversation. Love this work. I have, I have Dr. Eva Brown with me, who is a marriage and family therapist. Uh, She is been in practice a very long time, over 15 years, I think you said, right?

And, um, and, and **specializes in, uh, what we'll call conscious couple counseling intimacy. We can call it that. I like that. Intimacy and communication.** And so welcome Dr. Eva.

EVA: Thanks, Merrill. I appreciate it. I'm excited to talk to you about this. I was taking a shower and thinking like, Oh my gosh, I have so much to say.

So this might be a longer podcast, but I think we have a lot of like good value to bring to the people today, especially for **those people that are coupled or are single and they want to be in a conscious and sacred partnership and they want to develop themselves first before they go into a relationship.**

Although it's not necessary, right? You don't necessarily. I mean, obviously doing some work on yourself before you get into a relationship is fantastic. Go for it. Right. But there's things that we can't really heal or we can't really address or don't become triggered until we get into a relationship. And that's where the playground of kind of healing really begins.

Mm hmm. Yeah. For a lot of couples.

MERYL: Right. So true. And I, I love this work, you know, I've experienced your work and, um, it really does add a whole layer. And look, I've been in therapy on and off many years. I, you know, this is no surprise to my listeners. I talk about this all the time and yet, right. There's **always another layer to learn and especially in communication.**

And I think, especially in — My, you know, the Gen X generation, let's say, I'm not saying this is not true for any other generation, but I'm sure it's preceding Gen Xers too, because **things, you know, in my house were not talked about. There was really no communication about anything.** Yeah. Right. Deep communication.

And so it has taken me, right. You learn — the self awareness stuff, right. But then **when you're in, in a partnership, how do you communicate and share and. And all of the nuances that, that come into that.** And I think it's so important and especially — in a, you know, in a different relationship post divorce and that's something else, right?

And I meet women all the time, men too, but you know, women who, um, who I think it, this kind of work, like, I think it should be a requirement. — **Anybody who gets divorced needs to be in therapy before they get into the next relationship.** Right. Um, — Because there's so much that goes on and into a marriage and then, you know, when that marriage dissolves, like, what, what is the emotional baggage?

What is all of that? And, um, Because that came from somewhere, right? So I just think it's, it's, it, your work is, it always fascinates me when I get to talk to you and, and your knowledge and your breadth, breadth of, uh, you know, scope of practice is just amazing. So,

EVA: you were talking about how it's so important to go to therapy after divorce, but the truth is, is that I think any type of coaching or therapy or anything, whatever you want to call it, mentorship with someone that has what you want.

Right. Has dialed in what you want, doing it, **even doing premarital therapy before the divorce happens is really ideal**, right? **Because the expectation that we're supposed to walk down the aisle — and, you know, get merrily married and live happily ever after.** Is not really the vibe because **there is so much there that still needs to be unpacked and will be unpacked as you go through your marriage together** and you have to decide do I want to do this in resistance with my partner or my partner or do I want to do it with my partner because **eventually what happens is our old trauma wounding starts coming up in the relationship dynamic** and it usually shows up when we get married by the way now Some people, um, go through the courting process, you know, six months, two a year, two, three years, however long it takes. —

Anything longer than that is. Like a real long term relationship, of course, but ——— the idea is to make sure that you address all those trauma bonds and those triggers and understand yourself really well. So that way, **when you're in a healthy partnership, you can communicate that to your partner kind of like, Hey, I have a trigger of not feeling heard. Or I have a trigger of not feeling supported from this time in my life. And it would be great if you could support me this way.** It's a simple communication, right? Like when you hear me say it out loud, it seems so simple. **But a lot of us are afraid of doing that. Or we don't know how to do it. Or, it doesn't even dawn on us that we can do it,** you know, and we can communicate who we are to this person.

And a lot of us live in fear and shame and doubt and insecurities and not good enoughness and all those other things that we can talk about today, Meryl, as well, because all of those things follow us into our marriages from our youth, from our childhood, from our experiences with school. Some of us have been bullied.

Right. Some of us experience not comfortable situations at home, which I do want to unpack a little bit today, like **enmeshed family dynamics and how those play a role in our ability to not know how to be intimate with someone. And I don't mean sex. I mean, emotionally intimate with someone for the first time in their lives. because they didn't have that when they were younger.** So, you know, getting prepared all around is very helpful.

MERYL: Yeah, absolutely. So yes, I should say pre marital, you know, pre marital. ——— I think there are all the stages, right? You need, and you're right, having a mentor, someone to talk to, someone who has what, I love that, someone who has what you, you know, what you value is important.

And so, right, I mean, look, I would have benefited from that work before I got married and understanding, like you said, right? Well, if you have a trigger, I think, you know, until I started doing this work, I don't even, you don't even realize what these triggers are, right? — And so then you start realizing, Oh, okay, well, that's a trigger.

How do I speak up and how do I communicate my voice? And Oh, I'm allowed to do that, right? Those were all big revelations for me, right? And then the fear of actually doing it, right? Stepping into that. So yeah, there's definitely a lot to unpack. So why don't we get started? Cause I, we can talk about all this other stuff, which is great too, but **I know we want to cover your five stages of like conscious coupling** or whatever, right? You call, I call it conscious coupling. You can, whatever you conscious relationship. Mapping or whatever, right? diminishing it. I'm trying to remember the name.

EVA: Oh, totally. I know, Merrill, no worries. I don't worry about it. You know, I'll talk about it, you know? — So in order to talk about the five stages, what I was thinking is that it might be helpful for me to talk about the beginning of my practice a bit. —

and how I developed the methodology of conscious relationship mapping. Because when I first started working with couples, it wasn't as a therapist. I was doing passion parties.

Have you heard of passion parties, Meryl? Is that like the sex toy thing? Yep. I was doing exactly. Yeah. I was doing parties.

I went to women's homes. — Oh, did you? Yeah. So fun. Well, you know, some of them can be raunchy. Some of them can be educational. It just depends on like, you know, who the person, who the consultant is that you're working with. Right. And what your vibe is and what kind of party you're throwing for your girlfriends.

Right. So anyway, I'm in college. I'm like, all right, I got to make some money here, you know, while I'm doing this. And I was one of those people that didn't want to work for someone else. I was like, not going to do it. I did do a lot of serving. I worked at Nikki Beach. I worked at Outback Steakhouse, you name it.

I was a server and I was a good server too. I loved it. It was fun. But after a while, I was — How am I going to go to school and get an education and be able to read and do all my homework and also make money, right? So I had to get creative, right? So I'm like, alright. So I met this lady. Her name is Anne Marie Fino.

I love her. Mentor of mine. She goes, yeah, so I'm doing passion parties now. And I'm like, well, it's passion parties, you know? So I walk, you remember Shoney's in Davie, Florida? Do you remember Shoney's? Do you remember that? Is that like a fast food chain? Roast restaurant? Yeah, I never went there, but I've heard of it.

Yes.

Yeah. So anyway, we meet there on Tuesday nights. Okay, that's where all **the Passion Party girls met. We hung out and we talked about sexual education and how we could help women in the bedroom, right? Couples in the bedroom.** — And so anyways, I got really into it because I knew I wanted to be like a sex therapist.

I wasn't who I am now, remember, you know, I was like, I want to be a sex therapist and I want to help people and all these things, right? So I was like, okay, this is the perfect avenue. I can talk to people about sex and I can sell them lubricants and vibrators and, you know, fun things that go buzz in the night and, you know, — you know, send them on their merry way.

I thought, well, that would be fun. I can help that way. Anyway. Thanks I was in the business for eight years and I loved it and I did three or four parties a weekend. I was busy, Meryl, and I would go in my little Miata, okay, that, that like such a small little car if you can imagine me

driving up and down the state of Florida at the age of 23 in my little Miata that was like super old.

It wasn't one of the cool ones now where you kind of get a new one. It was like barely had AC, okay, in Florida. — So, so I'm driving this Miata, right? And I'm going to party to party and after a while what I realized **when I would go into the ordering room with all the ladies, they would tell me that they were unhappy in their relationship ——— and that they wanted to buy these things.**

To spice up their love life, to invigorate it, to make their husband or their wife happy. It was mostly women, so it was husband. Unless it was a same sex relationship, because we did those two. ——— And it was just, wow. Like, I couldn't believe what was going on in the ordering room. So I, the majority of my time at the parties, We're in the ordering room.

I did an hour and a half party and then it was like a three hour ordering session because basically I was doing therapy and I didn't even know it. I was like talking to these women about their sex lives and what was going on and the communication and the power dynamics of their relationship and then also selling them lubricants and vibrators and the fun things, right? And you know, I remember this one thing, which is like pure satisfaction. And basically, you would put on the pure satisfaction on the vagina area, and it would kind of enliven all the nerve endings, and the ladies love that, you know? So we'd sell that, we'd sell that like hotcakes, right? But in the middle of it, it was like, wow, these people are unhappy. And I didn't realize, until I spent many, many years in the business, ——— how — many couples needed support. ———

So what did I do? I said, okay, well, I'm going to go to get marriage, my license in marriage and family therapy. And that's how I got started. In that, all right, this is the story So I go into the master's program and I figure out oh, okay Wow, this this **not only do I get a complete deconstruction of myself my own family system and learn about What went on in my family system and kind of open my eyes to all of that You know, my own training and putting myself through my own therapy.**

I was like, okay, I really love this. I'm going to move on to my PhD. However, as I was in my master's and I was just about to do my first year of my PhD, I had opened my private practice. And I was green. I had no idea what I was doing. I was so insecure about my practice. I was just like, oh my goodness, what am I going to do?

Meanwhile, I was probably more well adapted because I had talked to all these couples for so many years. And so as I got situated in my practice, **I started with sex, I started with intimacy, and I started with communication stuff. And for about two years, that's what I did with all of my clients and my clients benefited.**

But a lot of them came back to me eventually and said, this isn't working. The communication thing isn't working and the intimacy isn't working. I don't even want to have sex with him. I don't want to look at him. I can't stand him. You know, there would be content and there would be resentment and all these things, you know, and it'd be like, okay, I must have missed something,

And so that's when I started to become really informed about trauma. And I became essentially a trauma therapist. It's not what I set out to do originally, as you can see, right? I

was like, well, let's talk about the fun things. You know, let's talk about the sex and the intimacy and the communication and just move couples along.

That's not what it was, though. What I realized soon into my practice is that couples, all of us, — me, you, anyone that I've worked with, Which is thousands of clients at this point. **We all have some level of trauma. — Sometimes we have a capital T trauma, which is like rape, molestation, incest, all those things that you don't want anyone to ever go through.**

—
And then you have the chronic. Uh, lower T, trauma, which is like, I never felt heard, no one asked me about my feelings, I didn't feel supported, I never even knew what a feeling was, I don't even know what I am feeling, I'm not good at talking about my feelings, well there's a reason why, — right? Mm hmm. So, then I started doing trauma work with my clients.

And this whole methodology, Conscious Relationship Mapping, was born from that.

Okay? **Because I realized that that bottom layer, trauma awareness, and being able to clear the distortion — that trauma creates in people, individually and relationally, must be done — before you can feel the depth. of the communication work, the intimacy, and the sacred sexuality work.**

There's no depth in the work if you don't do trauma work with your partner, essentially. And, together, a lot of people are going to therapy by themselves and doing it by themselves. And I say to myself, — that's not going to really work the way that I have come to learn it works for my couples because there's something about sitting in a conversation together, me, my couples, right?

And really understanding yourself. And your partner, their triggers, what they went through. And I don't mean the content of what they went through, but here's what I mean. — Here's the trauma bond, right? Meaning most couples do have a trauma bond, Meryl, way deep down. And a lot of couples don't realize it because you have to have a conversation to figure it out and you have to have an eye for it because otherwise you can't see what you can't see. —

You just can't. Right.

So, as we do **the multi generational mapping of each other's family system, which by the way, this is the first stage,** we're in it now, Meryl, okay? Do you have anything that you want to like share before we go? Because I know you, you're, you're really passionate about this part of it too, so like I want to make sure before we go into the stages that, you know, you share what you want to share.

MERYL: Yeah, no, I, I'm loving it. And I just. Think, you know, I was just, as you were talking, you're saying okay, the foundational stuff, it's just so interesting. So it really, it goes, **it's root cause, you know, and the work that you do is root cause and I love that.** Yes. You know, I love that analogy of, um, the, or, or it's the similarities in the work that we do.

You really got to get to root cause if you want to heal the relationship and heal yourself. And the same thing goes physically, right? Physically. And in the work that we do, you've got to get to root cause and not just keep band aiding it. Um, because you don't, you don't heal and you don't get to the place where you want to be.

So I just, I just wanted to kind of make that. — Yeah. That's great. Statement. You know, I just think it was cool. So,

EVA: well, it's a connection. What you're making is a connection, right? To the work that you're doing, which is root cause and the work that I'm doing, which is root cause. We share that, you know, because at the end of the day, **we really care about creating a real healing and creating a real solution at the end of the day.**

Absolutely. And I think that's what you're speaking to. Yes. You know.

A hundred percent.

So trauma awareness, in order to talk about trauma awareness, what, what is the first stage and why are we doing it? Right? Well, we want to understand ourselves. It begs the question. **The first stage begs the question, — who are, who am I? —**

What have I experienced emotionally? Not just unhappy, but also positively to like, what are my strengths, but also what are my triggers? And where are my trauma distortions?

— Okay, a trauma distortion could be, I don't feel good enough, — or I don't feel safe to communicate my feelings, — or I don't blah blah blah.

All of that is informed. By a trauma — and we're talking about trauma as uppercase trauma or lowercase trauma But the truth is is that it doesn't really matter — the uppercase trauma or the lowercase trauma It's just the severity in which someone may shut down in which someone — May sabotage for example, so there's this scale Essentially of, you know, that we're on, you know, over time, right?

We'll might sabotage a little, then you might meet someone that sabotages a lot. —

Because they're scared and they're running their system off of fear, which is survival.

— **That's how the human race has survived as many, as many decades and centuries as we have. If we fear something, we find a way to avoid it.**

We find a way to survive through it. And for a lot of us, we do. And it's important to understand that the reason why we do that is because the brain actually doesn't fully develop until the age of 25. ————— Think about that.

That means that everything before the age of 25 is subconsciously stored.

Because our brain is not even fully developed or equipped to be able to handle a lot of the things that we experience as our, in youth. **And if we don't have families or aunts or uncles or grandmothers that have done their own multi generational trauma work because we all have it, — then that trauma gets passed down — from one generation to the next generation.**

It's called multi generational emotional transmission. It's crazy. Yeah. And so We, us, you and I, and, you know, everyone after us in terms of other generations, and some of the older generations, are finally clearing their multi generational trauma. Because we have the ability to do that now, we understand it better now, in the field of psychology.

So much better than we ever have.

Right? And so we've developed and we've advanced as a human species psychologically in terms of understanding what we do, why we do it, and how we're surviving. — And it's the most

beautiful thing. One of the things that I like to say when it comes to trauma is that it happened to you for a reason, — meaning that there's something that happened that wasn't cleared or was, it was in a distortion, right?

And we can figure out why, but that **there's no reason to feel shame or embarrassment or all those things that we feel as kids that we're not able to fully process.** And a lot of the times, especially for example, in what's called enmeshed family dynamics, — Okay, sometimes those distortions can become even harder for children — when they're younger to understand, but even harder for them to clear the distortions later on in life. ———

For example, **I came from a very enmeshed family system, okay, meaning that we weren't functioning as individuals in the family system. — It was, this is what you should do, and if you don't do that, then you're not doing the right thing. So there wasn't any consideration — for the individual person or the individual feelings or the individual wants or the individual desires.**

It was connected to what their mother or their father or their grandmother wanted for them. ——— So there was enmeshment. —

MERYL: I feel like it's so common, you know, in family systems, right? Like, what should I do? What am I doing to make my mother and father happy? Or they said I should do this, so I should do that, right?

I feel like, gosh. It's almost like, who doesn't have that? ———

EVA: It's true. Some of us have it on a more extreme level. Right. Right. And that's where, for example, guilt trips, right? When you get older and you have the responsibility, like I was working with one of my clients this week and she's in her, she's almost 30.

And she was saying that I feel so responsible and so guilty when my mom to make my mom happy. ——— I'm like, you can't make your mom happy. — She has to make herself happy. You can contribute to her happiness, but you're not the sole igniter of that happiness. But her mother, because of the enmeshed family system, makes her feel that it is her responsibility, puts the guilt trips and all these other things.

And that's just one example of what an enmeshed family system will do. So what am I doing with my client? While I help, I'm helping her recognize that it's her choice, just like it's her mother's choice to be happy and learning, she's learning how to differentiate herself from her mother and kind of pull apart.

But also at the same time, when you do this work, you start to understand your mother and you actually feel more empathy for her pain because the only reason why the mom is doing this in the first place is because she doesn't want to be alone. — It's just she fears being alone. She feels fear of not being loved.

And so what does she do? She puts all the pressure on the children to show up to be that.

————— Okay. And so that's just one example of enmeshed family systems.

But let's say we take that dynamic ——— and we throw that into a sexual partnership marriage romance. — **Well, what is she going to do to her husband? She's going to feel responsible for her husband's happiness.**

Yes. She's going to martyr herself. She's going to sacrifice herself. She's going to do whatever she can to make this person happy. And if this person didn't have a good relationship with his mom, — well then he's going to put more pressure on his wife to be what his mom wasn't. ——— AKA trauma bond.

You see how that all works out?

That's just one example. So crazy. Yeah, I know, right? So crazy. Like you're just kind of sitting over there like, oh my God, what's happening?

MERYL: You know, ——— . No, it's fascinating. I mean, I love it. I love it. Yeah. It's, you know, it really, you really, it really, really makes you stop and go, wow. — Yes,

EVA: And so, for example, another way of doing this, right?

Um, it's actually I think something you and I might have talked about is this, this feeling that if we're in an enmeshed family system, and let's say our mother or father is kind of like a helicopter mom or dad, right? Or they're like really invested in what their kids are doing. Right. And so you're just looking, **the child is just looking for the mother's approval or the dad's approval.**

Right. And kind of waiting there, they're like waiting for their parents to guess their next need. Right. Well, what happens is you get into a relationship and then you think, well, my husband or my wife should just know what my needs are. — They should just know that. ——— How come they don't know that? Did they not care about me enough? —

And so we have this higher expectation, and that's with family systems that are still enmeshed, but have like — a higher functioning relationship with their parents. And then they learn that, you know, oh, this is what it's supposed to be, meaning like there's a high expectation, meaning their parents created this high expectation.

And then we get into a relationship and they're like, Oh, Well, how come you're not doing what my mom or my dad did for me? ——— Where's, you know, why can't you love me like that? Yeah. Right? And then the other person's like, **I don't even know how to love you like that because I don't even know what my own needs are half the time or what my own feelings are half the time.**

And you want me to be attuned to you in that way. I don't know that I can. Right. Right. Right. So there's the distortion. Yeah. Right. So what the one person, uh, that has the higher expectation of, you know, the partner, for example, she would need or he would need to learn how to communicate needs directly and then the other person would learn, need to learn how to feel that need and that desire and not people please. ———

MERYL: We see a lot of that. Right? A lot of people pleasing.

EVA: Oh, yeah. And not people pleasing because they fear disappointing — that expectation, right? **And so they need to get clear on being able to say no when it's a no, but here's how**

I can support you, my sweetheart. Right. Use what I can do for you and then have the integrity to commit to that.

A lot of the times when they don't know how to say no and they're just pleasing their partner and then they don't have integrity with their word, they're not a man or a woman of their word because they're — displeasing you and they're not really committing with integrity to it, then the relationship gets washed.

You know, then I don't trust you, then I don't believe that you can hold a safe place for me, then I don't know if I can really open up to you because you're not really, like, gonna be there for me, obviously, you know, and then, but the truth is, is that it has nothing to do with that. It really has to do with understanding, which is the very first stage, — I'm just giving examples of what the stage looks like, for example, you know, it's like **the very first stage is understanding what dynamics are you playing with and what dynamics is your partner playing with and how do they meet in the middle?**

Yeah, — that's it. And then you can clear the distortion.

Then once my clients see it, they're like, Oh my gosh, I can't unsee that. That's it. Like, I can't unsee that, aka root cause analysis, we figured out what the root was, we pulled the weed, right? And now we don't have to have weeds in our garden of love anymore. —————

Seriously, you know, like, we don't have to have weeds. Yes, no, I love that. And there's a bunch of weeds, by the way, Meryl, there's a bunch of weeds. These are just little examples, but my job and my client's job. — Where are the weeds? Yeah. We also call them minefields. Like, because a lot of times we walk around in a relationship, there are some people that have been married, my clients, by the way, that have been married for 60, 70 years.

And they've had a bunch of minefields and weeds that they haven't known are there. And they just keep stepping on them, which is like the definition of insanity. You know what I mean? Oh my God. It's the same argument. How many years Do we have to have the same conversation? And that's when you know you're stuck.

Like that's when you know this subconscious has taken over your marriage and you're having the same couple of problems, the same gridlock issues over and over and over again to the definition of insanity until you develop so much resentment. Because it's not like the couples don't try, Meryl. They try.

They're like, oh, let's try this solution. Let's try this solution. Let's try this solution. It's kind of like, let's try this band aid. Let's try this band aid. Let's try this band aid. Well, none of those band aids are gonna work. Right. You gotta go all the way in. Yeah. **And a lot of people are a little afraid to go all the way in because it's vulnerable.**

It takes bravery and courage to really do what I'm talking about right now, by the way. You know, especially with your partner who you're not even sure you like right now. — You're not even sure you want to be in a relationship with them right now, right? By the time you get to this place, right?

But. — Here's the thing. **Before you get to that place of resentment or contempt, because Dr. John and Julie Gottman talk about their research and contempt is the reason why people divorce. It's not because of lack of love. That's it. You just get to a place of resenting and getting what's called like a negative sentiment versus a positive sentiment in your mind about this person.**

And I don't, I no longer want to be with you anymore. That's what brings divorce. It's not what people think. It's not necessarily sex and finances and all the things. It's because they have trauma blocks or I call them intimacy blocks. — That they haven't cleared and they're getting in each other's way.

And that's the definition of a trauma bond, by the way.

So there's one other thing I want to talk about before we go to stage two. Okay. And what is a trauma bond? All right. I think a lot of people could benefit and I want to be of service to those people that are listening and want to understand this.

So a trauma bond Is you experienced something when you were younger and you had a response to it and then maybe that response was fawning, freezing, fighting, you know, flight fleeing right before trauma responses and your partner experienced something. It could be chronically over time or it could be a one time situational acute thing, but normally that's not, — if it's a situational acute thing, it's easier to clear than someone that has chronic, a chronic thing over lifetime.

Okay, just to be clear about that. Do you understand what I'm saying, Meryl? Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, — so, **so let's say they both had an experience. — And both of them, no matter what the content of the experience is, because that does not matter, — both of them felt not good enough as a result of the trauma.**

Not good enough, unsupported, it could be anything, but it's the, **there's a similarity, meaning that she, let's say a heterosexual relationship, she felt not good enough as a result of this, and he felt not good enough as a result of this. Now, here's where we get into the attachment part.** Attachment. You guys have heard of attachment, right?

Yes. Like, anxious attachment, insecure attachment, avoidant attachment, alright? ——— She feels not good enough, he feels not good enough. They're little, you know, young little beans, okay? And she decides that she wants to please her parents. as a result of this trauma or please whoever created this environment for her.

I'm going to please, I'm going to be a good girl. I'm going to take care of everything I need to take care of. I'm going to be the overly responsible one. I'm going to overcompensate. I'm going to try to create peace even though, and I'm going to justify people's shitty behavior. I'm going to do all that.

Okay? Okay. That's what she did from her wound. ——— From his wound, — he's like, screw the world. I'm not going to do any of that. You know what I mean? I'm going to be independent and nobody's going to tell me what to do. Not even my wife. You know, and I, and I don't want to take influence and I don't want to be controlled and I don't want to eee. ———

Right? — And then they get into a relationship. — **Same trauma wound, if we look underneath, both not feeling good enough, but both are responding to each other.** Okay?

Now at some point, as the relationship goes, he might start to feel controlled. — Right? At some point, I'm sure. Right? And then at some point, she might start to feel like she has to sacrifice again, herself again, just like she did with her family system and like, oh gosh, no.

I guess I'm going to have to justify his behavior too. Right? And so now, I don't want to be controlled, justified behavior. I don't want to be controlled. I don't want to take accountability for my own behavior, right? And she's over here like, okay, fine, you know, I'll just sacrifice my needs, sacrifice my desires and stuff my feelings in the corner somewhere and never open them again for the next 20 years of this marriage.

Amazing. — Okay. **That's the trauma bond. And people don't realize that they're in it.**

———— **Okay? Because they haven't figured out what happened to them and why they are the way that they are** and all those things. And you don't need to go into the details of the trauma. What I ask when people talk to me about multigenerational — work, I'm just like, okay, what did you feel?

Give me five feelings in relationship to your mother. Give me five feelings in relationship to your father. Five feelings with your siblings. Cause there's also a lot of sibling stuff, by the way, that can go on. **And also grandparents** are a very, very key part in some people's lives. Because not everyone's.

Okay, and sometimes there's single family homes where the father's just completely cut off and the mother's the one that's taking care of everything or vice versa. Well, that's a whole nother trauma bond situation that we need to go into. And it's a little different because in one situation, in a divorce situation, she felt very supported or he felt very supported by his mom.

But I hate my dad. — Okay. Well, now we're going to have to work on that wound because that's not going to be supportive in a heterosexual relationship that you're now currently in. —

Because I hate men. I hate my father and I hate men now. And now every time he does something that I don't like, Oh, there's another thing that the man doesn't really want to do.

The man doesn't want to be supportive. The man then feeds into that trauma narrative. You see?

Oh, — this is the biggest stage. Yeah, like and then I'm honestly Merrill I'm not even going into all of it to be frank. Okay It would take us hours and hours and hours to understand trauma and how it works.

Okay, right, but This is what the first stage is, and this is the stage that I didn't do when I first started my practice because I didn't even know how to do it. I didn't understand it.

.
But then I developed my own methodology because the truth is there isn't any methodologies out right now that teach this.

MERYL: Yes. I mean, look, I've been, yeah. I mean, I, I, look, **I did, you know, couples counseling with my ex and no one ever talked about this stuff.** Right. It wasn't until you, and then it was, and talk about revealing and life changing. I mean, it really, it really is. So I think it's so important. I'm almost sitting here going, all right, well, now I got to sign my kids up for the,

Like they need to learn what their trauma bonds are. Cause I'm sure they have them. You know, what did I do to you guys? What did I do?

EVA: Oh, we all do. Right. Right.

The reason we all do, **it doesn't matter how good of a parent you are, just so you know, Meryl, it actually just has to do with the fact that our brains don't develop till 25.**

And kids and youth, they make, they make stories about things. We have a wild imagination, you know? So what happened on the soccer field at PE, where no one picked me. It's just, no one picked me, but we make a story about it, that nobody loves me when we're kids, because we don't want to feel that pain.

We're not able to cope with that. And then if we have parents that don't really ask, like, hey, how was school today? How was PE? Well, it was absolutely terrible and nobody picked me. Oh, don't worry about that, kiddo. You'll be fine next time. Because of course, parents don't want to feel like, The pain of their child because it's uncomfortable for them when their child goes through pain.

It's like, all right, let's just make it better. Let's put a quick little band aid on it. Everything is fine. Just tomorrow, you know, just go play with the other kids. Okay, don't play with these kids. Let's do a quick little solution. And of course, we're not thinking at the time, parents don't think because they have — To work, they have to make money, they have to get dinner ready, they have to get lunch ready, they have to get prepared for soccer practice at Saturday at five o'clock, or and if they have three kids, they have to do all of that.

So they're not thinking, Oh, wait, — I have to hold space for my child's feelings that just happened at PE because later on in life, this might ruin their life in some way, where this this wound carries through. And I didn't even know about it.

Like, for example, **I was 12. And I went on stage and there was a hundred and fifty people that were going to listen to me sing Meryl and I forgot my lines.**

And that moment was humiliation and shame and embarrassment for me that I never forgot. And the idea of even doing a podcast like this would freak me out at some point in my life. Okay, but I started doing passion parties and I got used to public speaking and all of that. So there was a lot of cool things that came of that.

But, like, really speaking my truth and singing for me is my passion. And that moment, — by the way, my family, my Enmesh family system, who I love, okay, also reminded me of that moment for the rest of my life. Hey Eva, do you remember that time when you were 12 and you forgot your lines? Oh, it was so funny, oh my gosh, like, I can't believe that, you know, and then my dad would break out in the lyrics. singing it in the middle of the thing. And I'm thinking, they don't even realize that I, that was my most embarrassing moment of my life.

And so, you know, this is just family dynamics. Yeah. This is how it happens. — And so, they, a lot of us come about it honestly. Okay. Now, like, if you were severely abused, — different. Like, you know, if you're abusing your child, that you're not supposed to do that. You know, or if you're sexually molesting or doing something terrible or heinous, like, you know, you're not supposed to do that. **But when it comes to intimacy and intimacy blocks, a lot of our parents just kind of came about it honestly.**

And also our siblings play a role in that, too. So, it's just, it doesn't matter how much or if you even associate yourself to experiencing trauma. Because a lot of people don't. A lot of people are like, oh, I had the perfect childhood. I had absolutely no trauma. I'm a perfect, I'm perfect. I'm amazing. I don't know.
She's the problem. Or he's the problem.

Right. And I'm like, well, I don't really know a family system that's completely perfect, but let's see what was going on with you emotionally. **And so here's the next layer. A lot of people go through things and they dissociate and they suppress it and they can't recall it. ———— And that's where it gets a little sticky in relational dynamics. — Because if they can't recall what happened or how they felt because they didn't even think to process it back then, there was no tools at all, then my kind of work would not help them. ————** It would have to do behavioral therapy or some type of other type of therapeutic model, which by the way, people that have severe dissociation or suppression or something like that usually end up with a mental health disorder.

Oh, wow. Like bipolar, a mood disorder, a personality disorder, which you see a lot of people talking about, narcissistic personality disorder. Narcissistic personality disorder. Technically, as research, 1 percent of our population is diagnosed with it, but I think that there are a lot of people that are not diagnosed, not just with that, but with a lot of other things.

Right. And also narcissism runs on a scale, but all of the DSM, in my opinion, — **everything that's in that DSM, which is the diagnostic tool for therapists, — is all trauma informed at the end of the day. Like our environment, Right. Plays a role in our mental health.** And so it's just getting in early guys, you know, that's the idea go in do the work Do the multi generational work and create your love legacy.

Like that's what I call it. **It's a love legacy You're creating a love legacy with yourself. How do I want to treat myself? How do I want to talk to myself? How do I want to communicate with myself? How do I want to give myself grace? —** Do I want to continue to be a perfectionist? Do I not want to be a perfectionist anymore?

La la la. All the things. Right? And then, what's my love legacy with myself? **And then, what is my love legacy relationally?** And then, if you have kids, well, that's even better, because now you get to figure out, **what is my love legacy with my children?** What is important that I pass down to them? — And that's the framework that I like to play in, because people get excited about that.

You know, it's like, oh, my love legacy? Like, okay. Like, it's not just my financial love legacy, my, excuse me, my financial legacy, because that's what people talk about all the time. And they're like. Financial legacy, financial legacy, la la la. And I'm just like, you know what, what about your love legacy?

Because isn't it at the end of the day when we're dead and we're no longer here, people remember how we treated them? Right. — They don't remember how much money they've had, you had in your bank account. Right. — Money is just a tool for a living, but what is your love legacy, you know? So anyway, that's the first, that's the first stage, babe.

Like, I know, we're like, what, 30 minutes, 50 minutes into the conversation? I know, I know, we are. Um, I know. Yeah, I can go through the other ones quickly because this stage is just, it's a monster of a stage and I just think it's so interesting for people to — To really feel this stage and understand it because conscious communication.

Okay, like people know intimacy, emotional intimacy. Okay, people know sex, people understand, of course, there's levels and all these amazing things. But you can kind of put two and two together there too, you know,

MERYL: I don't know. Can you though? I feel like it's all like they all have the nuances of like, you know, You know what, so I don't know, maybe we'll actually have to break this up into two, into two podcasts.

EVA: No, no, like for sure, there's a lot of nuances, but I'm saying **a lot of people don't understand how the first stage works. Right, right. Where you might have a little bit of an inkling of, How the other stages could work**, is what I mean. Like this stage is kind of like a, it's a mind blowing stage for my couples to the point where they're like, their mind gets blasted. And they're just like, oh my gosh, I didn't even think about this, where they thought about communication, and then they thought about sex, and then they thought about intimacy. And so that's what I mean, you know, that's the distinction that I'm making, you know,

MERYL: Gotcha. Gotcha. Yeah. Big, huge. Okay. So, **so then what's stage two? —**

EVA: Yeah. Okay. So if we know where we come from and we kind of work on our relationship with ourselves and we do this multi generational trauma work and we create our legacy, right? Then the next stage is accountability consciousness. We're **How can we be accountable then to our love legacy?** ————— Are we going to be in victim consciousness ————— or are we going to be accountable?

Right. Okay, so let's say one of my love legacies for me, because in my family system in order to get heard we yelled and we screamed. Okay. And we raised our voices. That's what we did. ————— My Jewish family system. You know, love it. Yeah. I agree with that. ————— Exactly. Exactly. So, um, **I had to learn that my legacy is that I don't have the right — to raise my voice, to scream, to yell, to curse, to do anything to my partner or anyone else in my life — just because I'm pissed off.** —————

Like, I don't have the right to be abusive, essentially, because that's what my family system was on some level. Of course, we didn't acknowledge that, but — I had to clear that distortion, because at some point in my life, I thought, well, if I'm mad and you pissed me off, well, then I can do whatever the hell I want to you, right?

I'm clear, you pissed me off.

Instead of me taking accountability for my own feelings and my own reactions, no matter how my husband shows up.

Which was a big transition for me, year four or five in my marriage. We've been together for 15 years. So in my mind, I thought to myself, I am not going to do that.

I am no longer going to do that. **So my love legacy is, I am going to speak at the same level that I'm speaking right now. And I'm going to communicate my feelings. I'm going to make a request for change. And if I can't do that, then I'm going to take a time out. And I'm going to put myself in another room.**

Or I'm going to take a walk. until my human body calms down.

MERYL: Right. That's so powerful. —

EVA: Yes, but that was part of my love legacy based on the family of origin work that I did. And I said, okay, just because I'm mad doesn't mean I have license to say or do whatever I want. I still have to be mindful. ——— And it was a big lesson for me.

And my husband, by the way. Okay? So, uh, that's one of my love legacies, but that's what I mean by being accountable to, even when I'm upset, even if I'm thinking, okay, this person upset me, right, I have to be accountable to the fact that it's still my own reaction.

It's still my own feelings, and I get to be accountable for how I share that with my husband. Without attacking him, without criticizing him, without blaming him, without making him feel like, you know, the smallest person on the planet.

So that's what accountability consciousness is, and there's all different layers. I'm just sharing one based off my own experience for the listeners to understand what that means or what that could look like.

It could mean a thousand different things, but it's gonna be In relationship to your family of origin situation. At the end of the day. Which is why it comes second, it doesn't come first.

Right. It's funny because I played with that model a little bit. I was like, well, you have to be accountable first before you do that.

But not really. **You can't be accountable unless you're aware.** You don't know. Right. ———

Okay. So that's why it's stage two. And then once we get to that place, then we can do conscious communication. — Okay. And no, **stage number two, just so you know, is about being a man or a woman of your word. If you're going to do it, then do it.**

You're not going to blame people. You're not going to criticize people. You're going to really take ownership for your feelings and your emotions and all of your triggers — and recognize it, that they're my own, that my partner's not to blame for them. And no one is to blame for them. Not even my parents.

So we have all these things. We're kind of moot. That's like a whole, that's a couple of sessions, by the way. It's like, I'm just saying it very normally here, but it actually takes a little bit of work to really like get that going.

MERYL: Oh yeah. It all takes work. I think, you know, like I, — like what we say, **it all takes work depending upon the layers and the journey is the journey.**

And you got to put the work into it and nothing is going to just pop like whoa, right? We these are these are deep subconscious things that you know, I know I was you know doing that kind of work too is like Wow. And when you finally realize it, and then, then that's a lot to wrap your head around and then you're like, Oh, right.

And so, yeah, it's definitely a process. Definitely. It's an

EVA: evolution over time, you know? Yeah. And, uh, one of my mentors, Melanie and layer talks about, you know, being in growth as an evolution over time. And I love the way that she says that. And so I want to give her credit to that. Okay. Um, then conscious communication, right?

Conscious communication. Is if I know my trauma story, my reaction, my reaction to the trauma, all of my feelings around that and I'm accountable for it, then now I can consciously speak it.

And then there's a whole thing about learning how to do that. Yeah. And the funny thing is, is that it's actually.

It's actually what I do with my couples are like what that's the only thing we're gonna do like ——— Like we're not gonna it's it's not more complicated than that because **conscious communication is very simple very direct very clear** You know, **it's not like this whole drama situation** It's not like oh and I'm talking about my feelings that I'm spending a half an hour talking about my feelings now — Here's some cool things about this, okay?

And also I'll talk about myself, just as an example.

So what I used to do, and what a lot of people do, is they disguise their thoughts as their feelings. — Example. I feel like you, which is the beginning of an attack, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. That's what I used to do all the time. I feel like you, Paul, are a blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

That's, that's a thought. That's not a feeling. A feeling is, I feel disappointed. — I feel discouraged, I feel unhappy, I feel unsupported, I feel triggered, I feel not good enough.

Those are feelings. And by the way, look, it took us three seconds to say that. — I feel unsupported. — I feel unsupported. That's three words. —

That's it. **We like to complicate our feelings — or the communication of our feelings. — Because we are, a lot of us are raised to have to explain why we feel the way that we do,** — right? And I was just talking to a client about this yesterday because he has this self righteousness trance, right? And he, he, when his, his girl could be literally crying.

Okay. I mean, she was crying and he would be like, no, I didn't say that. That's ridiculous. I would never say something like that. And she's thinking, no, you said that, right? **But instead of addressing her feelings, because he wants to be right about whether or not he said it, AKA defensive, — he doesn't know yet how to address her feelings, which would be, Hey, I don't recall saying that, —**

but

I'm so sorry that I made you feel that way because I didn't realize. —

I didn't even realize that you were feeling this way and I never want you to feel unsupported and I never want you to feel dismissed and I never want you to feel unheard

and that's the last thing that I want you to feel, honey, and I love you. That's, that's the proper repair, right? **You address the feelings first.** —

Before you go into, well, I don't know that I really said that, ——— do you see? And so afterwards I said, once you address her feeling first, then you can — talk about whatever later. You know what? I can't believe honey, I actually don't even remember saying that. So next time that happens in the minute, in the moment that it's happening, if you could, AKA he's making a request for change now, if you could, in the moment.

Let me know that I said that or I'm doing something in the moment. That would be great because my memory is failing me. — And I can't remember sometimes and this is not the first time we went through this, honey. So in the moment, just let me know. And then I'll make, I'll make a quick adjustment. And this, this couple was like, Oh my gosh, they felt so much relief.

They were like, Oh, perfect. She knows what she's going to do. He knows what he's going to do. And now he's realizing that he doesn't have to explain himself, defend himself, or do anything that he had to do in his original family of origin. — He just needs to address the feelings. And move on. — Amazing. It was my intention or it wasn't my intention.

MERYL: Right, right. And it sounds so simple when you say it, right? So much harder to actually, Oh yeah. Right, undo and put into the process. But it really, it makes so much sense. —

EVA: **Yeah, it takes usually six months to a year to be frank, Meryl. Wow. It takes six months to a year to really get these skills, like, under, underway in a relationship over time.**

Because. We're so used to explaining ourselves. We're so used to being defensive. We're so used to blah, blah, blah. So for example, another thing that, you know, in this particular scenario what's happening was he felt that he had to go into the details of everything. — Getting lost in the content of, well, you said this and you said this, and then you said it this way, and then you said it this way, and then this happened, and then this happened, and then this happened, and meanwhile, she's like, no, that's not how it happened.

That's not actually how it happened because he's gonna see it differently than she sees it. This is just how couples work. It's the definition of insanity trying to see a certain situation in the same way. People experience situations differently than you. Right. — And so you just have to increase the differentiation of self around that and recognize that and go back to what it is that you felt.

Not what happened, but what did you feel?

Well, I felt triggered. I felt triggered because there was a double standard.

Okay. Okay. Great. Now we can make a request for change for that. But in this process, as I was working with this couple, for example, and it happens with a lot of my couples, it just happens to be fresh in my mind, by the way, as I was working with it, he was having a hard time. He's like, that's all I have to do. — It just, it feels like, it feels like it should be more. Right. Yeah. You know, there should be more, I you know, there's like this tripping over yourself essentially, you know, when you first do this, because **it just feels so abnormal to how you were raised.** Exactly.

MERYL: fascinating. **That was stage three.** Right? So that was stage three.

EVA: Cool. Just to

give you an idea of like what it looks like and what couples are trying to integrate in that stage, you know, basically breaking old habits because they never really learned like how to communicate clearly.

Right. Well, that's the thing, right? Like the defending thing, right? You just go with what you've learned and like you said, right, you both have learned different things and you're coming into this relationship and then you get mad at each other because it's not your way or his way or whatever. ——— I mean, it's just so fascinating.

So fast, you know, and you sit here and you go and you're playing back, like I'm playing back all these experiences in my life. I'm like, wow, if I had these tools, I'd really be, — you know, right. And a little bit of a different situation perhaps, but no, I mean, I love where I am now, but you know, in terms of just the recognition and the communication, I It's so big. It's just so big. So it really is. Yeah.

EVA: And couples have to learn how to do it, Merrill. Yeah. Absolutely. In the interest of time, right? **Let's move on to stage four.** Cause we can unpack stage three for hours again to all of these things have so many nuances. Okay. A hundred percent. And maybe we'll do that at some point.

MERYL: I would love, um, listeners feedback on that, you know, so, um, yeah, no, if you guys want to hear more about this, let me know. Let us know. Um, I always say, uh, like. comment, share all of this with the people that you know and love. — Yeah.

EVA: Yeah. And if you want, maybe my husband and I can come on and do a show with you now.

Cause that would be fun.

Oh, we have so much fun together every time I cast, you know? Awesome. — Okay. So intimacy, right? — **At this point, we're so intimate with ourselves, we're in stage four now, right? Emotional intimacy maintenance,** right? That's what it is. It's emotional intimacy maintenance. — So, — **this is when we start talking about love languages,** right? We start talking about, like, hey, how do you like to be loved? What do you desire? And really **speaking from a place of desire, rather than from a place of, you know, Not good enoughness, or, you know, it's not enough,** okay? And the communication process goes into the emotional intimacy process, you know? It's like, **how do we create safety? How do we deepen our intimacy?** But also, just going as light as, like, how do you want to greet your partner at the front door? How do you want to say hello? How do you want to say goodbye? For example, Dr. John and Julie Gottman, They did research on unhappily married couples and happily married couples, and **they found that happily married couples do longer kisses, hello and goodbye.**

Okay. Longer meaning six second kisses. Oh, I just saw a tweet about that. Okay. I sent you, I sent you **six second kisses, um, actually elongates Your life.**

Oh, right. Yes. You did send that to me. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. —

And meaning it, by the way, **if you're in a happy marriage also, it elongates your life. If you're not in a happy situation or you're in a such a situation where there's chronic stress, your life is going to be shorter just because you're living in it every day.**

So if not for the marriage, do it for your health.

Right. Like fascinating.

Which is totally in line with your work, Meryl, you know, ——— seriously, you know, nutrition and, and being able to understand yourself at the core level, nutrition wise, physical wise, um, your, your emotional regulation plays a role in all of that.

MERYL: Oh yeah. I mean, even right, even when we talk about stress and the stress response and all, yeah, pretty cool.

EVA: Being dysregulated in a relational dynamic is the worst. It's the worst, right?

Okay. So that's the emotional intimacy. And there's like, like I said, — I have so many fun stories, like, about that, but in the interest of time, **we'll move to the last stage, you know? And the last stage is sacred sexuality.** It's like, **how do we want to be in love? How do we want to break through intimacy blocks and sexual blocks?** Because if there's an intimacy block, which I had, by the way, there's a sexual block, which I also had, which is hilarious to me. Because I was a passion parties consultant for almost nine years of my life, if you remember, — you know, I thought, Oh, I can talk about sex all day long.

And I can. **But the truth is, is that when I got married and you know, you're in living with someone every day and they're, the expectation is more consistent sex. You're just like, oh my gosh, I have to get out of my head and in my body. How do I do that?** You know, it's. Just it's, it's, there's a transition period.

MERYL: Oh, I think, I mean, I actually think that, and, and again, I don't think we can unpack that today. I think stage five has to be its own podcast because I think it is so big. I think it is so big because I will tell you so many of the women that I talked to and myself included. **I know maybe a few handful of people that I can say — have, you know, are comfortable with their sexuality** and that they're, you know, but I think most people, again, you know, it's not taught, it's not talked about.

You talk to your friends about this stuff, but then, you know, you're in a relationship. And then, you know, I remember a woman, uh, just a quick story, like a, a friend and, you know, when my kids were young and I remember her saying to her daughters, like, Or, or she said to me, she was having a conversation with her daughter is like, Oh yeah.

So, you know, when you're in an intimate relationship, you need to tell the man, you know, what you want and what you like and did it. — You said that to your daughters and I'm going, wow. I wish I could say that to my daughters, but there's no way in hell that I can ——— , you know? And because you want them to be.

But I'm like, wow. You know, so finding your voice in that. I think that is such a huge conversation, and I would love to really elaborate on that at some point, because I, I think it's huge.

EVA: Okay, cool. Let's do it, Meryl. And you know what, that would be a perfect conversation to bring my husband in on, because, you know, I had to break through so many intimacy blocks and sexual blocks and everything, and he's been with me throughout all of it.

And his insight as a male counterpart is even more extraordinary, and how he's held space for my intimacy block and my sexual blocks to open. Yeah. I love that. All right. So we're going to schedule that right after this. I'm excited to actually get him on this, but I think it'd be great for the men and the women, because I think most men also don't really, you know, I mean, it's not about raunchy dirty talk.

I mean, it can be, right, but that's not what we're talking about. And I feel like, gosh, we're talking about intimacy. Exactly. Intimacy. And I, and I think, and I do think there's a big disconnect between men and women, you know, women. Um, you know, women, I feel like, okay, I'll speak for myself. Right? Like I, for me, emotional, **that emotional connection is so much more important.**

Firstly, before the sexual, physical, right? And I know, I mean, I am gonna, you know, I talk about Howie all the time, and we've talked about this, and you know, he, he and I talk about that, like, **For him, it's more physical. And so I'm like, okay, well, we got to figure out how to meet, right?** So I think it's just a bigger, bigger conversation though.

EVA: Absolutely. Um, but also just so you know, Merrill, you know, like when it comes to the only reason why men associate to that, and by the way, women do too. It's not just that, like they're very physical. It's just that they just don't know what they don't know. Like they don't know how to expand their, their repertoire.

It's like, my husband will talk about his experience if we end up doing that podcast, because You know, you know, when they're young, they experience it as, as physical, as a physical relief when they're young, right? The masturbation and all that. But when you get into a marriage, that's when, you know, the women and the man get to deepen.

You know, and so it's just an evolution over time as well So anyways, that's the five stages the conscious relationship mapping those. That's what I take my couples through It's super fun. And thank you for having me today.

MERYL: I love it. I love this. Um, I love your work I love working with you. You're amazing and you're again your depth and and breadth of knowledge is phenomenal, so Um, great great work. I look forward to part two You And, uh, and thank you so much. —

EVA: Thank you.

MERYL: All right. Uh, this is your Rebel Nutritionist signing off. Everybody stay tuned for part two of this when we go into the whole intimacy. Uh, can't wait. And, uh, also wanted to let you guys know if you are listening, we have re uh, **released our membership.**

Uh, three tiers of membership, uh, please go check out. We're going to put the link in the show notes here because it's a great way to engage with us. If you have worked with us and have fallen off, and if you haven't, it's a great way to kind of, uh, enter into, into working with us. So check all that out.

And, um, — this, uh, this, this, yeah, this is a cool conversation. So thank you again, Eva. We'll talk soon. —

EVA: Thank you, Meryl.

MERYL: Bye bye.