



STACEY MARTINO INTERVIEW Relationship Development Expert

By Chris Wark

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STACEY MARTINO INTERVIEW

Relationship Development Expert

Today I'm talking to my friend Stacey Martino. Now this is a little bit of a different interview than I've done in the past because, as you know, many of you that watch me all the time, a lot of my interviews I'm talking to people who've healed cancer or to doctors. And this is a different topic, different angle today.

Stacey Martino is a relationship development expert. And one of the things that I see in almost every cancer situation is toxic stress and dysfunctional relationships. Sometimes it's marriage, sometimes it's sibling relationships, sometimes it's between parents and children. But toxic relationships can just wreck your life and your health. And Stacey has such an incredible message and strategy and tools. And I've just had the opportunity to get to know her better and been listening to her podcast. It's amazing. And so, anyway, I wanted to have her come on and talk about relationships, and how you can transform your relationship if you're in a bad one, even if the other person isn't participating, which is so powerful.

Chris: So, anyway, I'm going to stop talking. Hi Stacey.

Stacey: Hey Chris! I'm so excited to be here. Thanks for having me.

Chris: Man, I'm so glad we're doing this. We've been talking a lot lately. I'm just super excited for you to share what you know with my audience because I know they're going to get so much value out of it.

Stacey: Yeah. Awesome. I'm thrilled to do it. I love your message, exactly where you started this conversation. Of course, you and I have talked about this plenty of times. It doesn't matter how meticulous we are with our health, with our eating, with everything. If it's coming into a body that's stressed out and acidic and toxic because of all the emotions that we're carrying, of all the triggers that are going on, even some of our best efforts are not really having the results that we want to have for our bodies. For our health. And so, what my husband and I do, we founded Relationship Development, we have a methodology that empowers people to actually solve their relationship kerfuffles.

So, instead of just trying to cope with family stress or marriage stress or family of origin drama or kid stress or work stress... Because I'm just trying to learn to cope. We all need coping tools, right? I mean, there's not enough meditation and all of those breathing techniques. Everything that we do, we need it all. But we also need to solve with actually causing it, so that it's not coming up every day for us to have to cope with it. And that's what Paul and I really do. And I know that's what you've been discovering recently about what we do is, we really have solved it. And we

are very passionate that every single family deserves that. And so, I thought where we could even start this conversation today is on the big out there statement that this works, even if your partner doesn't want to get on board and do this with you, kind of a thing. Cause that's the thing that everybody finds so hard to believe. Would you agree, Chris?

Chris: Oh yeah, absolutely. I've thought for years that if you have a relationship problem, that you both have to go to counseling together to fix it. And my wife and I went through not counseling, but just marriage classes, very early in our marriage because we just wanted our marriage to start off strong. And those were helpful, for sure. But there were also people in the classes whose marriages were in trouble. And some of those marriages did not make it. And we were just fortunate to go into the class in a good position. And so, we just were able to build on a good foundation that we had. But yeah, you kind of blew my mind when you started talking about this. It was like you were saying things that I knew instinctively. I knew. And it's like, the truth is self evident, right? When you hear it, you're like, "I know this is right!"

Stacey: Amen.

Chris: Anyway, everybody's like, "What? Just say it already!" So, I'll let you explain.

Stacey: Well, here's how it works. It really only takes one person to transform any relationship. And just so you know, like lady, what does she know about it? My husband and I have actually been blessed to save thousands and thousands of marriages. Our program has a 1% divorce rate and a 99% success rate. And most people come to us after years of failed couples counseling or couples therapy. They are way beyond what anybody would think was salvageable. And we still have a 1% divorce rate because what we do actually work. So, here's the thing. You don't need your partner to watch this video. You don't need your partner to do our program. You don't need your partner to come with you to our events. You don't need your partner to get on board. It actually works. And here's why.

First of all, couples work doesn't work. Unfortunately, right now, couples counseling and couples therapy has about an 80% divorce rate, coming out of couples work. And there's actually a good reason because what happens is, when most people get into couples work, it very quickly becomes a blame and side show. Both people tell their side, and the third party decides who's right and who has to suck it up. "You're right. So, you're doing it wrong. So, just change. You're right? You have to compromise." And that's not really building a relationship. And very often, one person feels completely aligned with the therapist or the counselor. They're like, "I love this. They're telling me I'm right. I've been telling you I'm right this whole time." And the other person feels ganged

up on. And eventually, it ends where they're like, "Look, this isn't what I wanted. I don't want to do this."

And it ends up being, what we call, the "nail in the coffin" move, where they feel like, "Hey, this was my last ditch effort. Even the counselor said, 'I think the last thing for you guys to do is to get divorced. There seems to be no way to fix this.'" And so, unfortunately right now, there's like an 80% divorce rate on couples work. But the reason why couples work doesn't work really comes down to the difference between relationship development and demand relationship. And this is what we were talking about with you, just recently.

Demand relationship is where you're not happy in the relationship and you tell the other person what they need to change, in order to make you feel more comfortable or please you. Right? Demand relationship is when you say your partner, "Hey, I don't like that tone. Don't use that tone with me." Right? Demand relationship is when you say to your partner, "Don't talk to the kid like that. You can't talk to the kids like that. You've got to change." Demand relationship is when you say, "Look, the way this thing in the house is working, it can't keep going like this. You have to change. You have to do something."

Demand relationship is when we ask other people to change in order to make us happy. And unfortunately, demand relationship only works when one person in the relationship does not really feel free to go. So, in demand relationship dynamic, there's really a power player and a non-power player. The power player uses things like demands or threats or leverages their power to try to tell the other person what to do, in order to please them. And the non-power player learns to use things like pleasing or compromise or a little bit of guilt or shame or blame or criticism, maybe even a little manipulation to try to get their way.

Now, unfortunately, this is actually all that's been modeled to us, for as long as we've been alive. Demand relationship is just how relationship has been done. You actually see this a lot in demand parenting. Parents, even with the best of intentions, we want so much to protect our kids, help get them ready for the world. And we end up using things like guilt and shame and criticism to try to get our kids to make the decisions that we want them to make, to try to control their behaviors the way we need it to be in the house or whatever it is. Even with the best of intentions. And that works because they're in your control, they're living in your house. They are dependent on you. Demand relationship only works when one person doesn't feel like they have the freedom or the ability to go. But the thing is, today, everybody is free. And as soon as everybody becomes free, demand relationship crumbles like a house of cards. Because at some point that person who didn't feel like they have the power in the relationship will eventually hit threshold. They will eventually get fed up.

Chris: Yeah. They just realize like, "I'm sick of this. I've had it. I can't take anymore. There's got to be somebody out there that's treats me better than this."

Stacey: Exactly right.

Chris: And yeah, the level of unhappiness just gets to the top of the thermometer.

Stacey: You nailed it. The level of unhappiness actually surpasses their previous fear of what it would mean to leave. That's the equation. When their level of happiness overcomes whatever was their previous fear of, "Well, how am I going to run my own house? How am I going to take care of my kids without them. How am I going to make enough money to support us?" When the level of "I had it" overcomes those fears, they hit what we call threshold. And that's when you see people say like, "I've had it. I don't care. I'll get my own place. I'll take care of my own kids. I'm out of here."

The same thing happens with demand-base parenting. If all that's been going on as you've raised your kids is demand parenting tactics, the minute they become bigger than you, financially independent from you, no longer need to live in your house, you get the same thing. Like, "I'm out of here! I don't care anymore. Take your rules and shove them. I can't wait to get away from you." And they leave because nobody likes to be controlled. And the reason why this has the ring of truth is because you know in your heart, and we all do, that we don't like to be controlled. And we don't like being in relationships where someone is clearly trying to control us.

Chris: And we've all seen it. We've all seen this happen so many times, either personally or people close to us. I love fact that you brought up the parenting dynamic too because it's true. Like if your household is just you controlling, controlling, controlling your kids... And there's a difference between control and rules. Controlling them, yeah, as soon as they get away from you, there's no relationship. There isn't a relationship. The whole thing was just based on you being able to control them. And once they're away from you, it's like you just lost your relationship with them.

Stacey: Amen. That's true. And it's so sad because it literally has led to, right now, we have this epidemic of people giving up on relationships because they mistakenly thought that demand relationship is relationship. And a lot of people don't want either part of that. Just like you said, they leave and they're like, "I'm going to find somebody, there's gotta be somebody nicer out there who will treat me better." Or some people have been the non-power player, and when they hit threshold they're like, "You know what? That's it. Next time, I'm in charge. I'm going to find somebody who's going to listen to me." And they don't have power player language for it, but they know like, "I'm going to be calling the shots next time. I'm

done with this crap." And they kind of switch to try and be the power player or the dominant, which ends up backfiring because there's no real relationship there either. And people are giving on relationships.

Our relationships with our children are falling apart. People are giving up on love relationships. And honestly, when demand relationship doesn't work, most people don't know to do anything else but turn up the heat on the demand. Like try to exert more control, try to threaten, try to hover things over. And it crumbles sometimes very badly. And it's just because we were never taught. We were never taught how to have relationships in a way that builds up your relationships, instead of breaking them down.

And so, that's the difference between demand relationship and relationship development. So, I'll just pull my chart because I always have one. But I'll show you. The demand relationship side is the red side, and that's the win-lose dynamic. That's where you use things like blame and control and compromise and punishing and all of those things on the red side. But the relationship development side is the purple side. That's the win-win. That's where we use things like giving and compassion and heartfelt understanding and building rapport and collaboration.

Chris: And peace.

Stacey: Peace. Harmony. It's a skill set. So, here's the first thing I want to say about relationship and then I will tie this up as to how it only takes one person. Relationship is nothing more than a skillset. And that is just not how relationship has been handed down to us. Most of us have been made to think that love is like this huge thing where either you're meant to be or you're not meant to be. Maybe you're not pretty enough, you're not rich enough, you're not whatever enough. No! Relationship is a skillset. And it's just a skillset that we were never taught because honestly up until a few decades ago, women were not free to go. And so, nobody really needed to work on it because women did what they were told. And now that everyone is free, we actually need this skillset. And it's just that nobody has taught us. And that's why we're here.

So, the thing I want you to get about this chart... I'm just going to hold it up, but I'll give you a download link for it, so that you can have one yourself. If you look at the red side of the chart, those things...that's not love. That's not love. Manipulation, guilt, nagging, criticism, frustration, protection, conformity, fear, judgment, punishing. That's not love. And yet, how many times in a day are we showing up in the relationships in our life that are supposed to be about love, and we're showing up from this place of desperation. We don't know what else to do. We just don't know what else to do to get to happy. But here's what I want you to get. You are either building or breaking down your relationships, in little

moments of your day, depending on which side of the chart you're showing up on.

It's you. And it's not your fault. Nobody showed you before. But the beautiful thing is, it's your power now, because it actually is you. When you show up on the red side of the chart, when you show up in demand relationship, in that little moment of the day, you're making a choice to break down that relationship in that moment. When you're able to gain the tools and strategies to show up from relationship development in that little moment of the day, you are building up that relationship, in that moment. You get to choose whether to break down or build up your relationship by what side you're showing up on. That's why it only takes one person to transform any relationship because it's about where you're showing up from.

Now, don't get me wrong, it's not your fault. No one ever showed you a different way. And you don't yet have the tools. Like please don't do the self demand relationship thing with yourself where now you blame yourself and you start to feel guilty because of things that you can see are going on in your household. That's not what we're talking about here. The truth is, saying that would be kind of like saying to your three year old, "I don't get why you haven't read 'Romeo and Juliet' and given me an essay on that. That seems a little ridiculous. There are millions of people around the world who've done this. Why haven't you?" Like they're three. Nobody gave that to them. Nobody taught them how to read. They're not ready for it yet. So, please don't feel bad about where you are today. We have all gotten to where we are exactly the way we were supposed to be.

As many of you listening to this conversation and watching us know, sometimes our yellow brick road through life is not how we wanted it to be. But it's always serving us. Whether it was an awakening that we needed or a life lesson to learn, we become who we're meant to become on this journey. It's not about what we've done, it's about what we're going to do with it today. And that's why we're here, is to start sharing the tools with you and the strategies so that you can turn any relationship in your life around – whether it's saving your marriage, bringing passion back to a good marriage, divorce proofing a great marriage, or healing the relationship with your children or with your family of origin or with work or anybody else in your world.

Chris: That's really good. And you know, it's funny, some of the best advice I got either before I got married or shortly after I got married, I believe it was my pastor at the time. And he said, "If there's a problem in your relationship or a problem in your marriage, it's your fault." And I know your intention is not to blame people. But that really sunk in and it stuck with me because what he was really saying is that you have to take responsibility for your relationship. And you have to take responsibility for how your actions are either improving the relationship or breaking it down. And so, through my own active quest for knowledge, I've learned a

lot of things about how to be a good husband. And I'm blessed to say we've been married since 2001, so 18 years coming up. But I'm no expert by any means. You're the expert. But I just wanted to echo what you said, that this is that personal responsibility aspect. When you change how you behave, it can completely transform how your partner behaves.

Stacey: Amen. No question. So, here's one of the things that I want to... I'm so glad you brought this up; I'm on fire about it. There's a huge tension between fault and personal responsibility. Fault is demand relationship. It's lame. Personal responsibility is relationship development. That's empowerment. And right now, actually, we have a little bit of a misunderstanding where most people hear personal responsibility and think fault. And so, people kind of back away from it like, "Hey, that's not my responsibility." Meaning "that's not my fault." Unfortunately, fault and responsibility don't go together. And I know you wish that they would. A lot of people are like, "Hey, this isn't my fault. I shouldn't have to fix this. Here's the thing, it may not be your fault, whatever's going on in your relationships, but it is sure your responsibility to fix it because it's your life. It's your happiness. Will Smith did a great video on this and he said, "Your life, your happiness is your responsibility and your responsibility alone." And I know we wish that the person who we think is at fault would fix things for us, but they actually likely won't. And we need to take responsibility for our own lives because as I always say, "It's your relationship. You either have to live through it or live through leaving it. So either way, do everything that you can, and release yourself." And that actually brings us back to this line down the middle of the chart.

Chris: The judgment line.

Stacey: Yes, sir. The judgment line. Because the minute we go into judgment, unfortunately, it's the thing that throws us into demand relationship. Because as soon as we make a judgment, we blame. And as soon as we blame, we go into demand relationship, which is the win-lose dynamic. "I'm right. You're wrong. I need to convince you of my way or I'm going to have to suck it up and do it your way, and I will not have that." And unfortunately, so much of marriage and other tight relationships end up in this win-lose dynamic. It's so deep in our blueprint, we don't even realize we're doing it. Why do we react so strongly when something flies out of the mouth of our partner in front of one of our kids, and we're like, "We're going to scar them for life! Don't say that." Why are we freaked out?

Because part of us considers this win-lose. Like, "I either have to convince her to parent my way, or I'm going to have to suffer with my children not becoming who they need to become because of the way that she's parenting." It's a win-lose. But everything in relationship development is about giving you the tools finally to create collaboration and create alignment to get to the win-win. Because the truth is, the

minute you become married, the minute you have children, the minute you get into a family, you became a team. And a team is about more than just you. And honestly, both parents usually have really good ideas, really good values. They're good people.

And if we just, instead of coming from fear and scarcity that I'm gonna lose my way, open ourselves up to really hearing, "What are your dreams for our kids as a parent? What are you afraid of for them? And how can we take all of your perspective and all of mine, and have this awesome collaboration to create a better third perspective, that's better than either one of us would have ever had?" Because your partner is wildly different from you. And a lot of the differences they bring, were the exact gift that you needed that because they're so different. It feels so uncomfortable. We don't yet have the tools to navigate that collaboration.

And so, we end up in what Paul and I call this accidental alignment predicament where we think, "Well, we fell in love, so we're totally going to see money the same way, right?" Like, "I know we fell in love, so we're gonna parent exactly the same way, right?" Then you're like, "No! Uh-oh." And so, you're in this accident alignment predicament. Where you think you're just going to align in the moment on the fly, until something flies out of your partner's mouth and you're like, "Crap, I'm not on board with that at all. Now what do I do?" And it's about designing alignment for your whole family, so that you can have that and create harmony.

Chris: Yeah, and I think the distinction between fault and responsibility is so powerful. And I have the same conversation with cancer patients. It's the same thing. It's like, "Look, you have a problem right now. You have a problem and it's important to acknowledge the fact that you may have contributed to this problem." I like to say, "It's your fault," but not in a blame or shame way. Just like, "Hey, we need to wake up. We need to wake up and be honest with ourselves and say, 'Alright, okay, I may have had a part to play. And what if it is all my fault?'" That's what I asked myself. I was like, "Maybe it is my fault. Maybe this is my fault. And if so, then that means I need to change." And that also empowers me to believe that I can fix it. If I contributed to this problem, this dilemma, this disease, then maybe I can fix it. And that gave me so much hope and enthusiasm and excitement about taking massive action to change my life. And so, it's like the exact same principle, same strategy, same mindset, between fixing a broken body and fixing a broken relationship.

Stacey: Amen. Literally, that's the exact same epiphany I went through when I, my marriage with my husband. I unknowingly contributed to the complete breakdown of our relationship. I had no idea. Just like all of you watching us, you have no idea that some of the things you're doing are causing some of the breakdown. You didn't know that. And you still don't know that. But the minute I started learning about, just for example, the differences between the masculine and feminine. Masculine and feminine are polar opposites. We are equal, but we are wildly

different. We are not the same. And I was misunderstanding so much of how Paul was showing up, how he thought, how he processed, because I was coming from a feminine filter. And I never in a million years would have guessed how the masculine process is. And I was like, "Oh my gosh, I've been screwing this up because I've been treating him like a girlfriend, and expecting him to show up like a girlfriend. And then being like, 'Why are you so insensitive? And why aren't you picking up on all of these things? I don't understand why you're failing all these tests.'"

And not even understanding that men only do explicit communication. They don't receive implied communication the way women do. All of these different things that I got to understand. And I was like, "Oh my gosh, I've been causing so much trouble. I didn't even know it." But the beautiful thing is, first of all I had to stop doing those things. That's easy enough to do. I can at least stop. Then I can learn to put in motion the things that actually bring out the best in him. That's a lot of power. That's a lot of power to transform things. And that's literally how I saved my marriage when Paul wanted nothing to do with the process of saving our relationship. Nothing to do with it. That's how one person does it.

Chris: It makes me think about how much resentment builds up over time, just as an example, when a woman expects a man to think and act and behave and respond the way that she does, and he constantly doesn't because he is a man. He is masculine and over time she gets more and more irritated and annoyed and frustrated with him, not understanding that he is different. He's wired different. But then, that light bulb goes on and it's like, "Oh, now I understand. He IS wired different. He's never going to think and behave and act like me. He's going to act like him." And then, all of a sudden the frustration and the anxiety and things kind of dissipate. It's almost like the same thing as learning someone's personality type. And then you understand, instead of being frustrated by the way they behave all the time, you understand, "Oh, that's how they're wired. They're always going to behave that way. And I don't have to be frustrated by it."

Stacey: So true. And the same works in the opposite order. Like at times a client or student will come to us and say, like a guy will say, "Look, I really want to have more sex in my marriage. I want more physical connection. With the kids and work and stuff, I'm like last on the list. And this needs to change and she needs to change." And we're able to show him and he gets the training that women need a lot of support and connection before they feel ready to open to that. And men actually use sex to connect. So, you're at the end of the day feeling like, "Let's just have sex, then we'll connect. It will be great. Let's just get back in it." And she's like, "Where were the last two days of us connecting and me feeling supported and loved by you and getting me revved up and ready? Because I needed that." But he would judge that, "My needs aren't even important to her. I'm last on the list because she's not providing sex."

Whereas when he learns to appreciate her perspective, that there's something she needed. She's wired totally different than you. Then he can stop feeling like, "Oh she's not doing this to hurt me. She's wired a different way for me." Just like you said, now the resentment drops. The false meaning that we attach to it drops. Now we have compassion and now we can start doing something. Everything changes. That's why it only takes one person to see the dynamic and learn the tools and start turning things around, because everybody has the best of intentions. We don't ever want the person who we're married to to be miserable. We're tied to them. Like we're all going down with the ship. We would never intentionally want to hurt them. And it's all unintentional because it's been completely invisible to us, up until now. Which is why Paul and I are so passionate about spreading these tools and these solutions, because every family deserves this. And I really think people are tired of hurting. I think people are just tired of it. And they deserve the help.

Chris: So, I've come to believe that the number one destroyer of relationships is selfishness. What do you say about that?

Stacey: Well, I 100% agree that when you're focusing on yourself, everything goes down. So, I like to create this metaphor of thinking of your relationship like a tree that bears fruit. If you've both been coming to the tree to take... Like, "I need to feel important to you. I need to feel wanted. I want to feel like I'm number one. I want to feel special. I want more connection from you. I want to make sure that you make me feel safe." And after a while, everybody comes to that tree to take. And then, the resentments as we've just discussed, little things like feeling unsupported or feeling slighted or being interrupted or feeling like you've been undermined in your parenting. All these things start to build up and people stop giving to the tree.

People stop watering it. People stop giving it sunshine. People start giving it nastiness. And the tree dies. And if we're still going to a dead tree asking for fruit, we are the ones that need to make the shift. Because we're still trying to take. It's demand relationship. We're still trying to say, "I'm really unhappy in this relationship. I don't know how long I have to tell you, you have to change." We're going to a dead tree for fruit. They're not going to change or conform to your way. The only chance your relationship has is to be willing to give to it, to bring the tree back to life. And then everybody can get their needs met.

But you can't demand fruit from a dead tree. You have to at least be willing to be selfless enough to give unconditionally for a period of time while you're transforming your relationship. And please don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying become a non power player in relationship and you give forever and they never change and nothing ever gets better for you. But they get everything they want. I'm not saying that. That's actually still demand relationship. And I know a lot of people might think that and that's totally normal because demand relationship

is really deep in the blueprint. But what I'm saying is when you take the first step that you go first, you start giving. When you show up differently in your relationship with like relationship development tools, real tools and strategies, not theory of craft real stuff to show up differently for your partner. Your partner will change in response to you.

They're not going to change because you've demanded it. But they will change in response to you. You can stop triggering the crap that you don't like from them and you can start learning how to trigger the best in them to come out, which is exactly what you've wanted this whole time. Your partner will change. You can't be in a relationship with someone and you change and them not. Like Paul is always that teaching relationship is a closed loop. When you put something different in, something different comes back to you.

How many of us have been in this situation where we were really, really ugly to someone who didn't deserve it and they decided to be nice to us back, and we so did not deserve it? Like we showed up really, really nasty and ugly, and that person was kind and compassionate back. What happens in that moment? You're like, "You know what? I'm sorry. I just had a bad day. You didn't deserve that. I'm sorry. I lost my cool." Immediately we change, in response to them. They put something better in and our reaction changed.

So, here's the thing, triggers are the most powerful force in human relationships today. You can't get rid of triggers. You and your partner, or you and your child, or you and your parents, whatever. You may be stuck in a loop of triggering the worst in each other and you don't know why. And I know you don't realize you're doing it. But a lot of what you don't love in what your partner's doing today is actually not them acting badly to you. It's actually them reacting to you. If I back the tape up 10 seconds, you don't see it, but I'm gonna see you poke that bear. I'm going to see you trigger them and I'm going to see them react to you.

And so, if you just learn like, "Oh crap, that's a trigger for them?" If you just learn, "Okay, so I won't do that. And they won't react. Now let me put this in. Oh, they react wonderfully," they're always going to change in response to you. It's about your level of relationship education. It's about your skillset that creates that response. But if we stay stuck in selfishness, which is actually nothing more than fear of worrying about "What about me? Who's going to take care of me? Who's going to love me? When is it going to be my turn?" That's what selfishness really is. It's just fear in relationship. Fear of giving. Understand that this is your relationship. This is your family. If you go first, you will get fruit from the tree. Not to say that every marriage can be saved. Not every marriage is meant to be saved. But every relationship can be healed. And if it's about healing the stress and creating harmony so your body can be well, if it's about giving your children the family by design that they really deserve, whether or not you stay married, it doesn't matter. Every relationship

can be saved because every relationship runs on these exact same patterns, these exact same dynamics, the same exact toolbox.

Chris: That's really powerful. What would you say to someone who's watching or listening that feels like they're the selfless one. They feel like they're giving and giving and giving, and their partner is the selfish one. And they're maybe thinking like, "I don't know. How can I give more?" I know you hear this all the time, but what do you do to break that false belief?

Stacey: So, what I want to share with you is that I know a lot of you think, "No, trust me. I've given everything. I did everything they wanted. It still didn't work. I'm always giving. They're selfish." I just want to share with you that that's still demand relationship, what you're doing. Because you're not actually giving, you're pleasing. You're giving in because you don't know how to create a win-win.

So, you're not giving, you're giving in to their way. You're pleasing them. You're doing what they said. "Fine, I'll do it your way. Fine, I'll make you happy. Fine, I'll do what you ask." And you're still in demand relationship because you're pleasing and you're compromising yourself. Because if you were truly giving, you wouldn't say something like, "I'm giving all the time and I'm never getting anything back." The measuring and the score keeping means you weren't actually giving freely because you felt great about it. You are pleasing to try to get them to be nicer to you, or whatever it is that you wanted. And it doesn't work. Being the non-power player in demand relationship also doesn't work.

So, we teach the difference between giving and pleasing. And you can actually just feel it in the energy of just saying "giving versus pleasing." Like, "Yup. I got it." Pleasing is when you do something you don't want to do, just to make someone else happy. So, pleasing and compromise – which, by the way, I think have been the poster children for relationship for like the last, I don't know how many decades – both of which are crap and they make crap relationships. Anytime you please or compromise in a relationship, you're in demand relationship. And it doesn't actually work because the boomerang emotion from pleasing and compromise is actually resentment, which is exactly what you've just demonstrated.

And it's every single time. It doesn't matter if your mom calls and says, "Can you please take your father to his appointment at the physical therapist?" And you're like, "We were supposed to go to the park and do this basketball thing," and she's like, "Can't Bill take them to do the park and the basketball thing? This is your father and he needs to go to this appointment." "Okay, I'll do that." And then it boomerangs back into "It's never good enough. It's never exactly the way they want it." Your family's disappointed. They're disappointed because they had to guilt you into doing it. So, clearly you didn't even want to be there. And then, ultimately, the unhappiness boomerangs back to you. And you feel resentful because you only did it to make them happy. You didn't even

want to do this. And now, they're not happy and you feel resentful, which is exactly what you just explained, which is someone saying, "I'm always the pleaser. Trust me. I'm giving, I'm giving, I'm giving and nothing works. It's never enough." And now they feel resentful because they only did it to please that partner, and it didn't work because it's demand relationship.

Giving is where you're actually whole and happy, and you're happy to contribute as well. So, relationship development is learning how to be happy without needing anyone or anything else to change in order to get to happiness. And learning the tools to relate to others in a way that builds up your relationship, instead of oppressing or controlling them. That's all relationship development is. And when you're able to do that, you can give freely. Like we have a great relationship. And I give freely to you, Chris, when you need something. And you give freely to me when I need help with something, because I'm not looking to get anything from you. I'm happy and I'm whole, and I don't need you to be any different than you already are in order for me to get to happy, because I've done my own work. I'm not trying to make you fit into what I need in order to be happy. That's true giving. It's giving without needing anything back because the giving actually is what made you happy. And if you're really honest with yourself, just like you said before, to anyone who might've been thinking that... if you're really honest with yourself, were you giving to your partner because the moment of giving was what brought you the most pleasure? And the answer's probably no.

Chris: Yeah. It's like are you giving to give or are you giving to get?

Stacey: Yes. And that's really pleasing. When I give to my husband, it's because I just want to make his life as great as I possibly can, because I just love him so much. And I feel so lucky to even be next to him, let alone be the person he loves the most on the planet. I give to him because I just want him to have this unbelievable experience. So, no matter how it lands, the giving is what gave me pleasure. I don't give to him so that he'll do for me. That's pleasing. And that's also a barter. And that's demand relationship.

Chris: I'm so excited because I know this is probably blowing some minds, right now. And it's so good, Stacey. I mean, I need to hear it. I need to be reminded of this. And as proud as I am to say that my wife and I've been married almost 19 years, it could still be better.

Stacey: Of course!

Chris: We could still be better. Like you definitely challenge me and provoke me when you talk about these things. And I'm just thinking about ways that I can be better. Ways that I can serve my wife better and be a better husband and all those things. So, that's great.

Stacey: Awesome. Anybody else who's feeling that way too, by the way, please don't try to guess. Because there's so much that's off your radar. Like that's what we've all been doing. From the beginning of time, we've been guessing as to "How can I serve her better? How can I serve him better?" And unfortunately, from your blueprint and your lens, it's so wildly different. It's kind of like different species trying to guess as to what's gonna make them happy. How to do this. Please just do yourself a favor. Get the tool box. We have like 300 or 400 tools now that we've created for real life families and real regular days that you can use to actually authentically – not trying to be something you're not, actually getting back to who you really are – show up, from a relationship development way.

It's just a skillset and it can be learned. But it's not something that most people will figure out. If we would've figured it out by now, we would've been doing it already. There's been so much pain. We would have all figured it out, if we could. But there is a toolbox, and you can get the tools and strategies. I'm happy to have these conversations and share with you what I can. But everybody deserves that. That's what I would tell you is just don't beat yourself up about it. Don't try to guess.

Chris: That's good. Talk about forgiveness.

Stacey: Such a topic. I love that you and I share this topic, and we've talked about this before. I know how passionate you are about forgiveness and that being such a huge part of healing. Forgiveness is also a huge part of healing your relationship. Because very often it's the pain of the betrayal, the disappointment, whatever it is, the unforgiveness that we hold onto is very often the block that prevents somebody from even saying, "Okay, great. Give me the toolbox. Let me do it." Because part of what we call the drunk monkey chatter in our brain says, "Screw them, they don't deserve that. Let them do the tools. They they hurt you!" And it's that unforgiveness about still being stuck in that, that prevents us from even opening to the possibility of a clean slate and of doing more of turning things around.

Paul and I have been doing this work for almost two decades, and a long time ago we created our five-step forgiveness process to take our students through. Because we realized that just saying to them like, "Look, you must be willing to wipe the slate clean there. There needs to be a way for you to reach for forgiveness and get out of unforgiveness. Because the unforgiveness is only hurting you.

One of the things I'll share with you right here is unforgiveness that we hold on to, it's kind of like fault and responsibility. As much as we wish it would, it doesn't actually transact between you and the other person. I know you think it does, but it doesn't. It only stays within you. And so, we realize that our students were struggling on actually experiencing forgiveness. They wanted to, but they couldn't get out of their beliefs

that, "But that person deserves it. But that's unthinkable. How could you forgive something like that?" And so, over time we created this five-step forgiveness process that we now have been blessed to take thousands and thousands and thousands of people through. And it's actually one of Paul's absolute favorite things to do with our students because he's all about freedom. He's so wired for freeing people.

And this thing, when we take people through this process in threes, so many people have things that they've been holding onto for like 20, 30, 40 years – like big stuff, things that you think are forgivable. When you really actually learn what forgiveness is, which is not saying, "Hey, that's okay." That's not forgiveness. When you learn what forgiveness actually is, you actually can free yourself from anything that you're holding on to unforgiveness of – whether it's with another person or something that you're not forgiving yourself over. Those things are relationship blocks. They literally block transformation from happening in a relationship. So, that's the process that we help people go through. And it literally is an experience of being free from the forgiveness, as opposed to just telling you to think your way to forgiveness. Which is really hard because forgiveness is actually energetic and emotional, not cognitive. And unforgiveness is also energetic and emotional, and not cognitive. So, trying to learn your way to forgiveness is really tough to actually break through. Some of the littler ones you probably can, but the big ones that have the legs that have been with you for a long time, they need an energetic and an emotional free. And so, that's why we created this five step process.

Chris: How can people get access to that?

Stacey: Awesome. So, we have never done this before. We have our "How to Forgive Anything" program, which is Paul and I taking you through this five-step process. It's a video program. And it regularly is \$497, and like thousands and thousands of people have been through it. But just for Chris and your community, we want to give it to you totally for free. I don't know how long this will last, but anyone who wants access to this program, we literally want to give it to you totally for free. So, either click the link above or opt in on this page to get it. And we will literally send you free access to this program, so that you can have this experience of freedom.

What I love about this and what I really want you to get is to like think of the one thing that you're holding onto for unforgiveness, and go through this video program. Literally do it with us in the privacy of your own personal experience. Nobody has to be in that experience with you, just you and us on video. But then do it again for something else that you're holding onto for unforgiveness. The beauty of why we created this program is we have students who have through this like 15, 17, 20 times because they're like, "Oh my gosh, I felt so free after that. Now I'm going to think about this other thing!" And maybe by the fourth or fifth time,

they're like, "Okay, I need to go back really, really far and go through this process for the one that scares me the most, the thing that I'm still holding onto that is unspeakable. But I need healing." And so, as many times as it takes for you, give yourself this gift to be free. So, that's our gift to you and I hope it serves people.

Chris: Thank you Stacy. I know it will. I'm excited. And the link may actually be below the video. I'll post the link below the video, if you're watching on YouTube or on the website or wherever. But yeah, that's amazing. And I definitely became a sort of forgiveness addict. Once I realized how powerful it was for me personally, I made a decision years ago to forgive every person who had ever hurt me in life. So, I just went back and worked my way backwards through my life and through all the people that had come and gone in my life that had hurt me in little ways or big ways. And one-by-one I forgave them. And so, I talk about this all the time. And I'm just so glad that you're willing to share that program with my audience because I know some of them are probably still struggling with forgiveness for some people in their life and their past.

And yeah, it's just one of the most powerful things you can do for yourself. For your emotions for your heart, for your mind, body, and spirit...is forgiveness! It's crazy. I've talked to so many cancer patients. And they can do everything right, but if they still hold on to anger and bitterness and resentment and unforgiveness – those words are pretty interchangeable, they're all wrapped up together – a lot of times you don't get well. That deep seated emotion is so toxic.

Stacey: Yes. Once again, I know it sounds crazy, but it's just a skillset. There's a five-step process to be free. And it's just something that if we don't figure it out for ourselves, that's fine. Like I didn't figure out calculus for myself either. Somebody has to teach me. So, just take this process, plug it in, and let it work for you.

Chris: Yeah. You just have to decide to do it, and then you have to do it. Make a decision and then do the thing. Work through the process. Absolutely. I mean, that applies to so much in life, right? We have been so conditioned to be victimized, to feel like victims of our circumstance, whether it's disease, whether it's an unhealthy relationship or whatever. And the truth is, one of my favorite expressions is a twist on a common cliché, which is: "Everything happens for a reason...but most of the time, the reason is you." So, that's my twist on it because, well yeah, what's the reason? It's you. Almost always, you're the reason for your problem.

Stacey: So, literally on our wall, eight feet across, is painted: "Everything happens for a reason and a purpose, and it serves you." And another quote that we have is something that I say all the time, which is what you're saying: "Everyone lives in the results of the decisions that they make. And there are no exceptions."

Chris: Right? Yes. I have a variation of that, which is: "Your life is the sum total of all the decisions you've made." They've all added up to now. What you got now is the result of all this stuff you've done in the past. And the good news is, if your circumstance stinks, you can look back at decisions you've made that probably weren't the best or were bad decisions or whatever, and you don't have to beat yourself up about it. But it's empowering, like I said earlier, to be like, "Okay, I made some bad decisions. And now I'm in this predicament. But I've got two ways to go. I can wallow in self-pity and victimhood, and nothing's going to change. Or I can take control of my life and start making good decisions and change the future." Another expression I like a lot, which I don't know if I made it up or if I heard it somewhere and stole it, but it's: "The future is your fault."

Stacey: Yeah. And that's a beautiful thing to remember. I love that we're going there right now, because all the power that you have is in the now. So, when we just end up feeling bad about where we've come from or what we've done, what we literally do is just take yesterday and repeat it today. And then, tomorrow is going to look a lot like yesterday was. But if we stop in the now and, like you were just saying like, "Okay, let me take responsibility for this. Hey, who's done this? Who figured it out? Who has the success? Who has the results that I want? This guy, Chris? Great. Let me get his book. Let me get his program. Let me do exactly what he did so that I can get results like that." The minute you make a new decision in the now, you change the trajectory for your tomorrow. And now your results in tomorrow are going to be based on the new results that you started in the previous now, not the previous previous now. So, all the power that you have is right here in the now, unless you keep doing what you've always been doing. And then you're really just creating a tomorrow that looks like yesterday.

Chris: Tomorrow doesn't have to be like today or yesterday. It doesn't have to. Yeah. But it does require some change. You've got to change, break the cycles, break bad habits, break the bad decision cycles, and hit bad behavior cycles and start changing the way you behave. And then, that all comes back to the relationship thing, right? Because when you change the way you approach your partner, you behave, you show up, then it not only makes you feel differently in that moment, but it also affects them and makes them feel differently. And then, they respond to you in a different way. And then, hopefully, if people are doing what you teach and what I'm trying to do as well in my own relationship, is that you create a snowball effect, right? And you get momentum.

Stacey: That's exactly right. And you can. You literally can get so much momentum that it becomes second nature to you. And the building up of your relationship moments stack to a point that they get a life of their own, and your relationship starts to take an upward spiral faster than you even predicted. Our students say all the time, "The results that I'm getting are bigger than I even dreamed of when I came here. I just came

here to stop things from getting worse and maybe get better. And now, it's like better than I ever thought I'd have." And the beauty of that is that when you do take that action and you do get into that momentum, it's not just for you. It's not just for your marriage. You're literally breaking the chains of demand relationship in your family's legacy, so that your children won't need me when they're 40 because they're watching you and what you're doing in your household – how you talk to your spouse, how you raise your children. And they will carry relationship development into their families. And that's what it means that we call our relationship transformers. That's what it means to be a relationship transformer, to be the hero that sets up for your family and also creates a legacy for future generations in your family. That's what this is about. It's total empowerment.

Chris: I love it so much. One other thing I want to talk about, and I want to be respectful of your time, are the live events you do. And I love the fact that, first of all, what you talked about in the beginning of our conversation, that it only takes one person to transform the relationship. And so, a lot of the people that come to your live events, it's just the one person.

Stacey: Oh yeah, like 90%.

Chris: So, it's either the husband or the wife that show up. But when a couple goes together, what do you make them do?

Stacey: Sit separately.

Chris: They cannot sit together, which is so great. Why?

Stacey: Because I mean what I've said. Look, if there's nothing else that you get from watching our conversation today, please just listen to me from my heart. Literally, I'm just trying to help your family. Couples work is so destructive. It doesn't work. Even when you try to take our proven tools and strategies and use it as couples work, it's destructive. It literally is what we call the nail in the coffin move. Like don't do it. Because what happens is when spouses insist on sitting together, what inevitably happens is one spouse is hearing something that Paul or I are saying, and they're elbowing the other spouse saying, "You know what? That's you, jerk. You do that to me all the time. What she just said, you do that? That's you. You should be listening right now because this is you."

Or the other person is writing something down and the other spouse says, "Oh, you're writing that down. Is that brilliant? Because I've only said that to you a thousand times this week. But now that he said it, you have to write that down?" It's so predictable that we do this because we're attached to them. And we're vested in their results. So, instead of getting our breakthrough, instead of really opening up and having our total breakthrough in our three-day experience, we actually really have

one eye on them. Like, "Are you going to change? Because I dragged you here so that you would change. Because I'm just sick of this. So, let me see what you're really getting from this. And maybe you missed that. So, let me tell you to write it down because that's why I brought you here." So what you're really doing is trying to use what we call fancy demand relationship, which is like, "I'm going to try to get you to do what I want through this relationship development stuff that sounds great. But listen up because you're the one who needs to change."

It's just so ingrained in us. Especially in the beginning, it's tough to break out of. So, we ask you to sit apart, because relationship development is all about doing your own work, running your own race, and staying in your own lane. And if you do have the blessing of having a partner who wants a relationship education for themselves, that's fantastic. Because you'll both have similar vocabulary. You'll be implementing tools at the same time. But it comes with its disadvantages too, which is that it's so easy to have what Paul calls educated blame in that moment in your house. When you're like, "Oh really? Is that a little demand relationship-y of you, that you just said that? Didn't you hear what Paul said?" Like we do this educated blame where we now use the tools as a weapon because we know they should know better. We're still trying to get them to change instead of doing it ourselves.

And so, whether you have the fortune of being the one to do it without your spouse, so that you take personal responsibility, you don't have the luxury of trying to ask them to change. And that gets you huge results fast. Or you actually do have a partner who wants to come to our event, we're still gonna ask you to sit separately in hopes that we can encourage you to run your own race and do your own work. Because our three day even is an immersion experience. It's literally not an education cognitive experience. You literally will have a breakthrough in those three days, where your relationship will up-level in those three days, literally before you walk out the door. So, you come in, your relationship is in one place. When you leave, it is up a level. We never miss. We've been doing this event for years. And so, you'll miss out on that if you're kind of focused on, "Are you getting all the things that are on my list that I brought you here to make sure that you hear from them?" Like that doesn't work.

Chris: It's brilliant. I love it. And I know people watching this are going to be like, "Aah!" So, now, it just makes me wonder, do you discourage couples from coming together?

Stacey: Oh, no. Never, never. Every human on the planet deserves a relationship education. We also encourage young people, like our relationship transformers teach our tools and strategies to their kids, so they can navigate school and friendships and eventually dating and all of that stuff. And for our relationship students, they often will bring their adult children. Now, our event is not child friendly. Marriages is an adult topic, and we go there through the whole thing – sex, all of it. So, it's not for

kids. But adult children, a lot of our relationship transformers have children that are adults and in relationships, and they want them to not repeat the same patterns.

And so, every human on the planet deserves this kind of relationship breakthrough. So, we encourage everybody to come. So, if your spouse wants to come, for sure, that's why we always give a free ticket to a spouse. Once you sign up, your spouse can get a free ticket because we believe in family. And we don't want to even have there be a financial barrier to a family member who wants to come. If you want to do something that's going to change your marriage and create a new legacy for your children, stop demand parenting.

Even just breaking the chains of demand parenting is enough of a reason to want to be able to have this shift and this breakthrough to be like, "Okay, I don't want to demand parent. But what do I do? How do I get them to be responsible? How do I get them to clean their room? How do I get them to get to the bus on time?" There actually are ways, when we teach relationship development parenting. And so, whatever it is for that person, whether it's to turn the marriage around, to be a relationship development parent, or if they have work challenges that they want to turn around. Please come. But we will ask you to sit apart.

Chris: Yeah, I love it. It's awesome. Stacey, you're amazing. Thank you so much for taking the time to share some of your wisdom. And you have no doubt transformed thousands of marriages and impacted a lot of people's lives. And I'm excited to dig in further into your course materials. And you might see me at one of your live events coming up, and my wife too. We won't sit together. We won't break the rules. We could come in disguise though.

Anyway, thank you so much again. Thanks for watching everybody. Please share this video. This is so important. People that you know and care about need to watch this because hey, everybody has relationship challenges. Not just husband and wife, boyfriend and girlfriend stuff. It's parents and kids, it's siblings, it's coworkers. And so, these tools and tactics and strategies translate to every relationship you have with every human in your life. So, it could even improve your relationship with your pets. Alright, well thanks again, Stacey. You're awesome.

Stacey: You're awesome, too. Thank you so much, Chris. It's been blessing to be able to have this conversation and share. And I'm just so grateful. And thank you all who've been watching. Please let us know how we can support you.

Chris: Cool. I'll post the link to Stacy's forgiveness course below, and the show notes and stuff too, for everybody. So, thanks for watching. Bye. See you on the next one.

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