

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

[Feminist Wellness](#) with Victoria Albina, NP, MPH

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

This is *Feminist Wellness*, and I'm your host, Nurse Practitioner, Functional Medicine expert, and life coach, Victoria Albina. I'll show you how to get unstuck, drop the anxiety, perfectionism, and codependency so you can live from your beautiful heart. Welcome, my love, let's get started.

Hello, hello, my love. I hope this finds you doing so well. I'm really, really enjoying having these conversations on the podcast. The last 220-something episodes where it was just you and me have been really, really sweet. I love coming to talk with you every week. It makes me really happy to picture you put it on your little headphones, putting on your little sneakers and going for a walk, or take me to the grocery, or do the dishes.

It's fun. It's sweet. It's joyful. Doing the show is really, really joyful. I hope you can hear it in my voice. It's been extra joyful to share this process with all these amazing women I love. Having them on the show has been an absolute delight.

And I want to hear from you. Drop me a little DM, send me an email, podcast@victoriaalbina.com. Let me know if you are enjoying this conversation series and we'll keep it up, because it really is just a delight. If you're loving the show, please head on over to where you get your podcasts and leave a five-star rating and a written review. It helps others to find the show so we can be of ever more service.

What are we here to do in this beautiful world, if not be of service to ourselves and our communities, right? And 'our communities' does mean strangers across the globe. So, thank you in advance.

This week, we're talking with the ever lovely, wonderful, and just plain adorable Maggie Reyes. Maggie, she'll introduce herself, she's a sex, love, marriage relationship coach. She has a program called The Marriage MBA,

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

which is such a cute and smart title. And, she's a champ. I mean, she's just so darn lovely.

It was so fun to talk with her. We always have the best conversations, both on and off the mic. We do really similar work. So, she talks about relationships through the lens of marriage, and I talk about relationships through the lens of emotional outsourcing. But at the end of the day, we're doing the same work. We are talking about relating, because it's one of the most core and vital parts of being a human mammal.

So, it's really fun to talk with someone who does the same work but with her own different lens, and brings her own particular lived experience, coaching experience, training, to this work. I could go on forever. You know, I can, c'mon y'all. But I'm going to not. Instead, I am going to bring you the ever lovely ,the ever magnificent, Maggie Reyes.

Victoria Albina: Hola, Maggie. I'm so thrilled you're here.

Maggie Reyes: I am so excited and delighted.

Victoria: I love both of those words. I would love it if you would introduce yourself to the good people. You're so vibrant, I didn't feel like reading your bio, "Here is who Maggie Reyes is."

Maggie: Okay. I'll introduce myself, and then I want to hear your introduction. Not my bio, just what you would tell somebody.

Victoria: Oh, okay, I love that. Should I put on earmuffs?

Maggie: No, no, no. That's high tech, we're not that high tech. When we take the show to the network's right, then we'll do it.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Victoria: Okay, okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. So, let's see.

Maggie: Okay. Hey, everyone. My name is Maggie Reyes. As you can tell, I have a playful spirit. I am a relationship nerd, but also a Master Life Coach. I think "relationship nerd" is more accurate, because I'm just fascinated by how relationships work, what makes them break down, and I would do it for free. It's my business and it's my mission.

Victoria: I feel that way 100,000%. And in fact, here's how I ended up a coach... we'll just do this very Latina thing, where we start at A and then we go to Z, and we come back to ba-bi-ba-ba-bap. I was practicing primary care medicine. I was frickin miserable. I was working 7,000-hour days; typical right?

And a friend of mine was like, "Here's how you figure out what you want to do. What will you not shut up about at dinner parties?" Like when you're with people, particularly new people, and you've got the floor, because you're just meeting people and you can direct the conversation. "What will you obnoxiously, endlessly drone on and on about?"

And I was like, "Nervous system." This was like 20 years ago. I was like, "The body, mind/body connection. Holistic Medicine, our mindset." I was just getting into the whole mindset thing, that was so much more nascent in the zeitgeist. I was obsessed.

Maggie: I love that you and I... The moment we met; we were kindred spirits. And the more we talked to each other, the more we uncovered our different similarities. So, here's how I picked marriage coaching as my specialty. The coach that I had at the time said, "What can you talk about and never get tired of talking about?" That was her exact question. At the time, I had no idea what I was going to do.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

I had just gotten married. And I was very alarmed, because the “wedding industrial complex,” as some people call it, is very large. There are 57 ways to fold a napkin, and what to do on your honeymoon, and all these things. I got married in my 30s, I did not want to mess it up. I was like, “I need to not mess this up.”

There was nothing for me. I felt like there was marriage counseling for people that were really struggling. And there were books and things for people that had some kind of dire issue. In my original blog, when I first started writing about marriage, I was just like, “How about people who just don't want to mess it up?”

Victoria: “We just don't want to mess it up.” There's just something so sweet in there, of ‘I just want to do this to the best of my sweet, little ability.’ It's like wanting a tutor or something. You know what I mean? Like, that energy. “I'm failing the class. I'm not in remedial studies. But how could I do this in a more loving way?”

Maggie: “I need a little something.” And it was the juxtaposition of getting married... Mind you, I had a big wedding. I did a thing, right? There were two conga lines and a Mariachi. So, just so everyone can orient themselves to the whole situation.

Victoria: That is very juana in Miami. I love it. I love it.

Maggie: So, I had that. But I was very concerned that the preparation for marriage, as I experienced it as a bride, was the preparation for the wedding but not for the marriage.

Victoria: 100,000% yes, absolutely. I have many a time wished that there was some sort of course that we all went through, like in high school or

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

early college, that was like, “Listen, y'all, you need to understand...” First of all, relationship training should be an active part of the curriculum in kindergarten.

Maggie: Literally, my program is called the marriage MBA, and these are the skills nobody teaches you in school.

Victoria: Nobody. Nobody teaches you this. Maggie Reyes, when is the last time that you talked about the defenestration of Prague, The War of 1812, sine/cosine?

Maggie: Trigonometry.

Victoria: Oh, trigonometry. I mean, mira, before anyone's like, “Why are you hating, you nerd? You two nerds?” I love learning for the sake of learning. I'm actually taking this class on Hinduism, and I'm loving it. But my point is, couldn't they have squeezed a little something? A little something about how to regulate your nervous system. Hello!

How to live interdependently. How to spot codependent thinking in yourself. And how to do relationships, starting with self. And from there, let's get a marriage MBA. No?

Maggie: I'm in my 40's.

Victoria: Well, you're in your 4'0s too, right?

Maggie: I am 49.

Victoria: Forty-nine; I know 50 is coming soon. Muy bien. As my friends move into each of the next decades, I start getting wicked excited. I'm like,

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

“Ah.” I remember when I was in my 20’s... My friends have always been a little older... I was like, “The 30’s, that’s where it’s at.” Then I was like, “Oh, man, the 40’s? Ah.” But now all y'all are turning 50, and I'm like, “Dang!”

Maggie: Fifty is good.

Victoria: Fifty is tranquila. Mama settled down in her 50’s. And it's like, “shhh...” in a good way.

Maggie: Here's the thing about us as nerds, that I think is fascinating, that I think both of us take a little bit for granted, but hearing you say this it popped it out for me, is we love aging, in a culture that doesn't, in a culture that tells you not to. I'm like, “I'm 50, I'm proud.”

Victoria: I mean, A-#1, we made it. Let's even just start there. What's up? Yeah, we're getting wiser, and I love it. One of the things I love to talk about is communication. I did a whole series on it... it feels like 15 years ago, because it was in 2019, maybe 2020, in the pandemic, right? It was like 75 years, but also five minutes, right? Because what is time? It's not linear. It's a disc. Anyway, we can get philosophical about what it's time later.

Communication, I know it's one of the big things you talk about because it's such a huge part of relationships, of dating, of marriage. I'm just wondering, let's talk about both; where you see communication breaking down. And how you support folks to improve communication. Again, I'm pretty sure you're going to go with self first, no?

Maggie: First of all, I have a whole framework that I teach my class. It's called Soul Centered Communication. The reason I created it was so that it's something that only you have to do. Because a lot of communication

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

frameworks rely on both partners having the training or understanding of what's happening, whatever.

My whole hypothesis of life is based on systems theory. It's, when we change, the people around us change, and then they respond to us. So, I definitely want to tell you a little bit about that. Where I see things breaking down the most.... People think they have a communication problem, and it's the number one thing people ask me for.

Like when they join my email list or something, I say, "Hey, what's the biggest thing you need help with?" They say, "Communication." Everybody thinks it's communication, but it's not. Most people think they have a communication problem; they really have a safety problem.

Victoria: Woof! You're always speaking my language. You and I...

Maggie: Me and you... So, everybody listening, as you can tell, Maria Victoria and I have a lot of psychological safety. We'll follow each other down any path. She'll talk about something; I'll bring something else up. We'll just go there. Why is that possible?

The reason that we can just follow each other to any topic is because I feel completely safe and held in her space. I know wherever she's going to take me is pretty damn fun. It's going to be a cool place to go.

Victoria: Right. And, I'm never going to attack you. You're never going to be unsafe. I'm always going to be emotionally generous, kind, loving, and hold you in high regard, because I do. Also, I think because tender ravioli sees tender ravioli, and you and I both have soft, cheesy middles; our constitution. Socialization conditioning as Latinas in this world, we are

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

tender, we are soft. I'll say we're firm, strong, powerful women. And part of that is we are kind.

I thank you for flagging that and naming that, because you're right. I can flashback to my marriage, and how I would not follow them anywhere, because I didn't trust them. I mean, they were abusive, right? So, they were not a safe person for me.

So my question becomes this... It's like the frog in the boiling water, no me requenta. I didn't realize how crap things were until they were real bad. The communication was just so lousy. Things felt so unsafe. I can think of some of the hints, in hindsight. I'm curious, you as the expert, what would you have folks be atento to? What would you have them looking out for, thinking about...?

Maggie: It's really simple. We can list a bunch of things. But, how often are you delighted in the presence of your partner? If we want to just cut through it all. Because "delight" is a big emotion, right? So delight, it's not available to you if there's no safety.

Victoria: I remember walking up the stairs every day, and being like, "I'm going to open that door and they're going to be sitting on the couch eating hummus, watching reality TV. There will be no dinner started." Every day I was like, "Ugh!" before I even saw it. That feeling, that dread.

Maggie: That dread? Think about the difference, for everybody listening, between "dread" and "delight." Now, if you feel dread on a consistent basis, you also want to check: Is it every day? Is it once a month? Is it all the time? I'm a big fan of measuring the scope of things.

Victoria: Let's give a shout out to our girl, Maisie Hill.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Maggie: Oh, we love Maisie!

Victoria: We love Maisie Hill! Maisie Hill, please go follow her immediately, or sooner. You could do it sooner than immediately. She is also a Master Certified Life Coach. She's a goddess. And her focus, historically, has been on the menstrual cycle, but not just for humans who menstruate. Because all of us are impacted by the moon, like the tides are. And how those cycles, how periodic period cycles impact our moods.

So, I love where you're going. Do you dread every day? Or is it, oh, I don't know, every 28 days or so, that you're like, "I want to murder your face." Because then, that doesn't mean it's invalid. Because in my way of thinking, what comes out when the veil is thin, right before our periods are in it... whether you bleed or not... Yeah, it's the real "real" because our defenses are down energetically.

Okay, I jumped in there. So, check it out. Do an inventory. Do audit it; how often is the hate? And from there...

Maggie: Yeah, so we want to check the distance between dread and delight, that's one very clear... When you get home, or when they come home. When I go to bed at night, I literally tell my husband, "I can't wait to see you again tomorrow." I'm just so excited.

So, if you're not having that feeling all the time, that doesn't mean your relationship is doomed. I know some people are listening to us and think, "Oh my goodness." No, literally, I hope people turn their relationships around for a living. There's lots of relationships. Where with simple tweaks, you can contribute to the psychological safety, you can turn the shit around.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

But there are some relationships that... I want to say this because I'm a marriage coach, I'm a marriage advocate, and I talk about marriage all the time... There are some relationships, hear me well everyone, where the highest and best outcome is for them to end.

Victoria: Oh, yeah. I appreciate you saying that. Will you put a pin in it? Can you remember where you were going? When things were really bad in my marriage, I was coaching with someone from our same school who was really dedicated to my seeing my thought errors as the only thing.

And in a way, really gaslighting, and a manipulative energy of, "Well, if you just changed your thinking. So, why does it matter that they never do any shopping, cooking, cleaning? That they never participate in the household? That you do literally everything? Why does that matter? Do you want to keep having those thoughts?"

And I was like, "Yes. Because I want mutuality and reciprocity and interdependence." Luckily, I spotted it in the moment, and was like, "Oh, no, I am calling b.s. on that pretty quickly." It took a little minute, because I was in such a vulnerable place and she was someone I trusted. But I think that that's all too common in the coaching world, no? Like, "It's just your thoughts. It's just your thoughts. Your thoughts are the problem."

Maggie: In cognitive coaching world... yeah... Whenever we're questioning our thoughts... I love that you're talking about this, because people have come to me having been told things that I have to help them unravel. So, I'm just going to say a few things about this.

Relationships are collaborations. Everyone, if you have something to write with... You probably should get something now. Relationships are collaborations. Which means you get to ask for things. You get to want

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

things. You get to have your wants and needs honored. And that doesn't mean your partner's going to do everything you want; you just get to want things.

And then, you get to figure out, together, how does it work for both of you? How can you collaborate towards what you both want? This is what you're telling me now, I've heard it more than once. This narrative, from a lot of different corners of the cognitive world of, 'all you need to do is change your thoughts,' without any nuance.

I also help people question their thoughts. But it's not for the purpose of accepting things we do not want.

Victoria: Can you say that again for the folks in the cheap seats?

Maggie: When you question your thoughts, it's not for the purpose of accepting things you do not want.

Victoria: Because it's so vital. Particularly when we come to coaching or other self-help work in a vulnerable, fragile place. Where we don't trust ourselves, we don't know what we don't want, we don't know what's right, we don't know which way to turn. It's so easy to convince ourselves.

Maggie: And here's the thing with a place where I have landed, after thousands of coaching hours. I did an advanced certification in Feminist Coaching with our mutual fabulous friend, Kara Loewentheil.

Victoria: This entire episode just can be a shout out to our dope friends.

Maggie: So, I did that training with her and it really helped me expand my view of the world, right? I am Cuban-American; I grew up in Miami. I was

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

the daughter of a single mom. And most of my life I was surviving. So, I was not questioning the theory of how a woman should exist in the world. I was just trying to get to the next day.

But now that I understand better, there are so many things that I thought were individual to me, which happen in our marriages as well. We think they're individual issues that we have to solve by changing our thoughts, for example, when they're actually structural infrastructure issues that aren't just solved by one of us changing our thoughts. Although, changing our thoughts can be useful in certain moments, for certain things.

So, after I did that training, I thought about... This is for everyone listening who has any understanding of questioning your thoughts, and then you can decide whether you want to keep them or not, or whether they're useful or not; that's the basic idea.

I thought about the type of coaching that I do, and I actually created my own coaching framework. Which I call "contextual collaborative coaching," which we weren't planning on talking about today but here we are, because this is how we go. This is how we do. And so, if you think about your thoughts, and you put them in a circle...

If you listen to us, and you're familiar with the self-coaching model, you get the whole model in a circle; your thoughts, your feelings, your actions, your results. Put them in a circle. Then, you make another circle outside of that, and there's your emotional landscape and nervous system. And then, you make another circle outside of that, and there's the world. So, there are the cultural narratives, there are the family stories, there are the mentors and guides, there's media, the rom-coms, right?

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

So, we have our thoughts. But our thoughts don't occur in a vacuum, they occur inside of a context. So, when somebody comes to me... If you came to me and said, "Oh, my husband does this and that and that." I'd be like, "Well, what's the context? What is the cultural narrative that said we should accept this behavior from someone because they're labeled as 'husband'?"

Victoria: It's so powerful. I'll bringing this sort of Internal Family Systems, nervous system part. One of the biggest things that our nervous system does is reenactment. So, our nervous system is constantly trying to reenact the past, towards the goal of creating a new outcome. That the medial frontal cortex can then write into our mind as the more guiding story of life.

So, when you felt not accepted by your parents, you will either project not being accepted onto everyone in the world. Or often, you'll project that while simultaneously looking for someone to prove to you that you're worthy of being accepted, no? So, we'll play that out with partners so that can be the new dominant script in the nervous system, in our mind. That can start to write the show.

But it usually doesn't work, because we're trying to squeeze blood from a stone, and we're trying to force a narrative on to someone else, and we're trying to make someone else's opinion of us create our lived experience of life. It's not the cutest look, right?

So in my marriage, I was constantly like, "Okay, here are the 6,000 things about this person that really don't work for me. And maybe if I work harder, I can help them to change. I can fix them." The whole, I would come home and they would be on couch having done nothing to add to our domestic life together because we didn't have a domestic life together. I had a bad roommate, whose mom I was, right?

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

So they had put me in the role of their mom, and I had put them in the role of my dad. Right? And we were both trying to reenact childhood experiences with the goal of a different outcome. And so, my worth was, in many ways, predicated... This is not conscious. This is all subconscious, nervous system business.... But my worth was hanging in the balance of 'will they change?'

If I say it enough times, "Dude, come on, turn the TV off, put the hummus down. I just worked a 10-hour day in primary care medicine, and I have three hours of charting. And you ducked out of work at 3:30 again. Can you maybe make dinner?"

My nagging was an attempt to try to get them to be someone who they are not, or someone they were not willing to be, so that my nervous system can then begin to believe that I'm worthy of having someone who will meet me, who will love me, who will show up, who will be kind, who will be interdependent. Which I also simultaneously didn't believe, right?

And so now, because I've done so much nervous system work, and I've worked so hard to overcome my codependency, to get anchored in myself, to live interdependently, I'm now with a partner who does 1,000% of the things.

I was in Puerto Rico this weekend, and we'd go on little walks; we'd walk the dog in the morning. It's very sweet. I like went to check the mailbox, and she was like, "Babe, I checked that yesterday." And my brain is still like, "Oh, right, you're an adult."

I healed myself. And so, I attracted an adult who is also healed, right? Instead of attracting takers, I attracted another giver when I stopped giving from a place of manipulation. Because that's what I was doing; I was

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

giving, giving, giving, giving, so you change. Giving, giving, giving, so you can be someone else.

Maggie: So, you changed.

Victoria: That was a lot, Maggie.

Maggie: So, you changed. Here's what I want to say. Sometimes, for everyone listening... Because I know a lot people who are listening to us are in long-term relationships with people, and they're like, "Oh, my God, am I totally screwed? Then what?"

I just want to say this, there are times that we over function, yes. Because of our socialization, if we identify as a woman, where when we stop over functioning, it gives our partners the opportunity to function at their highest level. And for some of us... In your case, it was just not going to happen.

But for some of us, when our partners have the opportunity to rise to the occasion, they do. And that's what I just want to tell everybody who's listening. As you listen to us, there's a personal path for each human on this earth. And even for me as a marriage coach, there are things that I always remember; that I do not know this soul's path. I do not know what is for their highest good.

Victoria: I love that.

Maggie: So, when I'm coaching, I don't coach with the agenda for you to stay together and for you to not stay together. I will ask hard questions in both directions. So, I'll ask you, "Why are you accepting this behavior?" Not because I want you to get divorced, but because I want you to figure out why are you accepting the behavior? What do you actually want instead?

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Victoria: That's so beautiful. I just kind of want to reiterate that we never know what's in someone's best and highest good, and what growth they actually need for their mind/body spirit/soul. For their own evolution, their own expansion. Pretty beautiful. I mean, you know, I mean, it's alright. It's okay. You know, it's a soul's purpose, whatever, to spread the word, but whenever.

Maggie: Every time I'm here with you I've got to bring my A-game.

Victoria: Girl, you're always A-game. Get out of here.

Maggie: This morning I was drinking a tea, and I was like, "This is kind of like going on Oprah." There are some podcasts that you do that you just know the person is going to ask you deep questions, that you're going to think. And there are some podcasts where you just chit-chat and stuff, right? Which is great and beautiful. I love the chit-chat. I'm all about it. But this morning, I was like, "Ooh, we're going to go deep today."

Victoria: That's how we do. Because, why not? Right?

Maggie: It's my favorite.

Victoria: I mean, it's my favorite too. Because we are relational animals, right? As humans, we're pack animals. And the way we relate with ourselves and each other, is literally the foundation of our whole lives, right? Our relationships are, legit, everything. You know I'm always going to talk about the nervous system and our health.

So, having the capacity to regulate your nervous system and being in relationships in a way where you're getting coregulation from the people

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

you're with, versus activation or shutdown. Being able to relate to others with gentle, loving kindness and to stay in your power.

Your thyroid, your digestive system, your heart and lungs, your reproductive function, everything, your hormone balance, your cortisol, your adrenal, everything is optimal when we are relating well. Because it supports our nervous systems, being in ventral vagal and being coregulated, right? I mean, it's science, right?

Maggie: Have you seen the study where, when you hold the hand of someone you love, it has a physiological effect on the body? That's taking medicine.

Victoria: Yeah, and here's what's really fascinating. When we put that side by side with the Tylenol studies, when they looked at acetaminophen... So, acute and chronic Tylenol use. I don't want to throw a brand name under the bus. The paracetamol, acetaminophen, analgesic drugs, lower our empathy.

Maggie: Why? Or how?

Victoria: We're going to spend another hour on that, so I'm just going to say, "Because, science."

Maggie: Wait, pause there. For the Trekkies that are watching, this is going to relate to what you just said. So there's a Star Trek documentary, it's on the History Channel. It's amazing. The guy who produces it also produces Outlander; sidenote, nerdlet. And he talked about how they write the scripts for Star Trek; when he was writing Star Trek. And this is what they would say... Because when you said, "Because, science"...

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

They're getting attacked by an enemy ship, and he'd say, "Okay, now we're going to tech the tech. And then, we're going to take tech the tech. Then we're going to tech the tech. And then after that, we're going to tech the tech." That was what the script would say.

And then, the science advisor would come in, and say, "Now we're going to fire the photon torpedoes. And then we're going to do this, and then we're going to do that." So, we're just going to tech the tech.

Victoria: We're going to tech the tech. We're going to say, "Because, science." That's amazing. Relationships are absolutely everything. They control when you shit. Whether you can poop today or not, it has to do with how loved you feel in the world, how safe you feel in the world, how secure you feel in the world.

You might also have a parasite, right? You know what I mean? Let's be holistic. But it is part and parcel of whether you can poop today, or whether you are too much pooping today. Healing your inner children. And when I talk about inner children, I mean, if you're 35, your 34-year-old you, that is a child version of you. If you are today's adult, right?

Maggie: I was doing a child's workshop, and somebody was like, "I don't know which one..." I'm like, "Yesterday you would be enough. Whoever appears is okay."

Victoria: That's okay. Yesterday you is more of a child than you, because you are the most adult you. It makes me think of one of my favorite frases españolas, which is, "You can't kiss the same girl twice."

Maggie: I've never heard that one.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Victoria: Oh, that's so good. The Spaniards say that one. "Yeth, and you have to lithp if you thpeak of the Thpaniards. lth mandatory. International law." Yeah, you can't kiss the same girl twice because we're constantly changing and growing.

Which also immediately segues my brain into compassion, obviously. Also, because it's us. Right? But you can't kiss the same girl twice; the girl you were before the kiss. The girl you were yesterday. Right? We're feminists, we mean grown-ass women. We're just being cute.

She deserves your love and your care. Because she doesn't know what you know today. She doesn't know. She didn't know. How could she know? How could she know any better? We don't have to disavow her; we can just support her to grow.

Maggie: You don't have to disavow her. I love that word.

Victoria: It's such a good word. And it's such a good energy of 'I don't abandon you, self.' Right? I don't abandon past me. The me who dated the jerk, stayed in that marriage, she was doing the best she could in her own reenactment of her own childhood wounding. She was doing the absolute level best she could. Was it optimal? No. Would I do it again in the exact same way? I mean, we can get really philosophical and say of course, I would. Because I needed to learn those lessons.

Maggie: But the version of you, that I am today, wouldn't. But that version, she needed to, and we can honor that with love.

Victoria: With love; with love and care. I just want to pause because I can hear that really tired trope, particularly in the #white wellness complex of, "Whatever trauma happened to you was necessary for your growth. It was

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

meant to be.” Everybody, Maggie and I both rolled our eyes at the, legit, same moment. It was like, ugh, if the wind had changed, I would have gotten stuck; because that's real.

Nobody here is saying that. I'm literally just speaking for my own self, and my growth, and what I needed, right? And from the science of reenactment in the nervous system.

Maggie: I'll say this, whenever we're coaching someone, whenever we're working through things that happened in our past, something that I say a lot, is when we discover something that isn't delightful, it is not a reason to make ourselves the villain of our own story. I think that's what we're talking about.

Again, we don't know each soul's journey. We don't know why the trauma happens, or what it represents, or if it has a greater purpose, or if it has no purpose. Honestly, we don't know. So, we do the best we can with what we have now, without justifying. Like, “It wasn't a good idea. It sucked. It was awful. It's terrible. Okay, where do we go from there?”

Victoria: Right. That's a trauma response, is to roll around in the past, right? When we stay there more often than serves us; journaling about it, thinking about it, whatever. It's the difference between thoughtfully, intentionally revisiting towards understanding. Versus ruminating, when we are out of the prefrontal cortex and we're in the limbic system, and no good can come there.

I want to loop us back around to communication.

Maggie: Oh, yeah. Hey.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Victoria: Oh, hey. Oh, hey. Oh, hey. Oh, Hey. How's it going? Coaching advice is so actionable and useful, which is so dope. What advice would you have for the good people?

Maggie: Can I just tell you why my coaching advice is so actionable? This is a story. I worked in human resources for many years before I was a coach. And my number one pet peeve, my number one; it still riles me up about when I think about it now.

We would have these fancy trainers come in and they did these workshops, and everybody would feel amazing for two hours. Then the workshop would be over and everybody would go back to the desks, and nothing would change.

And then, in later years when I had a say in how trainings worked, I was like, "The number one purpose of this training is not the hours that we're together, it's what do you do outside of the training room." I was just annoying.

Victoria: Listen, it's a beautiful thing to be annoying about. It's legit. I would see it in medicine, too.

Maggie: So, the reason that I'm like, "You listen to me today, and then you do it tomorrow," is because of that.

Victoria: I love it. I love it.

Maggie: Here's one thing from my Soul Centered Communication framework; just super easy. I'll just tell you. The four words are: Solution focused, open hearted, uncomplicated, and loving towards yourself and the other person. But I'm going to tell you the uncomplicated one. The

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

uncomplicated is, when you're talking to someone talk about one thing, one thing only, and then the next thing; the opposite of our conversation today.

But when you're problem solving... When you are even on vacation, so you're not necessarily problem solving, when you're doing something that's a project, something that requires action after, so many of us get lost in 'but what about this? What about that, and then this other thing, and then this other thing?' Sometimes it's us who brings up all the things, and sometimes it's our conversation partner.

And so, one thing, one thing only, and then the next thing. The wacky example I have for this is, one time I was planning a vacation. This is a true story. I'm starting a vacation. We were setting the budget; where we wanted to go and wanted to spend.

And then we're like, "Oh, but maybe we should also consider the other vacations? And then we should determine what we have in our savings. And then we should determine what are the other decisions we need to make related to money." Suddenly, we're planning our wills or something. We're just trying to go to Mexico for the weekend.

So, it can happen in ways that really derail you, whether it's a good thing or a delicate or tender thing you're discussing. And just remembering to come back over and over again to one thing. Which you did. You're like, "Let's go back to communication." We did model that here, too. Let's go back to the thing. That's how you do it. You just tell the person, "Let's come back to the thing."

Victoria: Right. One tool I love to use towards that, is to get a piece of printer, paper, scrap paper, whatever, and write the central theme of the conversation on it. So, literally, with a big Sharpie, write "Childcare next

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

week. Meal planning.” I would stick to the C-line, to the Circumstance, if we're using the model here.

So, what is the C-line conversation with your mother at Easter? Because where my brain went to was, “You didn't defend me from your mom. Well, you didn't...” and my brain when ba-ba-ba-ba-bap into the T-lines, and then we start getting wild. So, come to a neutral C together and write it down.

Maggie: I love writing things down. Yes.

Victoria: Yeah. And so, then you can keep pointing to it, and keep coming back. Because one of the things, that doesn't happen now in my life because I've done all this work, but used to happen all the time was something would come up, and then I would have gone into dorsal, into the shutdown freeze reaction so often. My ex had a temper issue.

And so, that would shoot me into sympathetic and right into shutdown and fawning. And I was like, “Okay, fine, fine, don't worry about it.” And I would back up and not really bring anything up. Lights were on but no one was home, for quite a while, as a self-protective mechanism. Until a straw would break this little camel's back. Right? And then months of stuff that I hadn't brought up would just come flooding out. Which was lousy communication on my part.

Maggie: By the way, have you seen the study?

Victoria: Oh, my God, I love you so much. Always, Maggie, but right now extra.

Maggie: I have to find the name of it, but there's a study that says that women who suppress their anger are more prone to heart attacks.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Victoria: Yeah, that makes... Cortisol. Because that's sympathetic activation. This is in the first 10 episodes of *Feminist Wellness*. Because it was a thing I was obsessed with then; completing the stress activation cycle.

Maggie: I mean, I'm obsessed with that now too.

Victoria: Obsessed. In my training in somatic experiencing, it's such a huge thing that we do. We recognize that the issues are in the tissues, and what you don't complete, what you don't bring to its natural conclusion stays in your physiology. Because, science. Yeah, and so having heart attacks, having strokes, hypertension in general. But also not pooping, not having good vagal tone; good tone to the vagus nerve. It all just makes absolute sense.

Do you know my term “emotional outsourcing”?

Maggie: I think I've heard you say it, but tell everyone who maybe this is the first time they're listening to the podcast.

Victoria: Thank you, Maggie. Well, emotional outsourcing, it's the term I created as a replacement for codependency. Because that term was really not working for me. I come by codependent habits quite honestly, I might say. I'm from a long line of folks with codependent behavior. And still, the word seems like not me, right? It was not hip, fun San Francisco/Brooklyn me. Oh, no, “I'm not the long-suffering wife of an alcoholic man.” I'm not enabling some dude to use alcohol.

Oh, P.S. I don't use the word “alcoholic;” a person who uses substances. We use people first language here. I was just quoting the trope. I did not see myself in it. But all of the behaviors, all of the thoughts, all of the ways

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

of moving through life; hola, me. Hello, it's me. Hello, ¿Qué tal? How you doing? How you doin', Maggie?

So, I wanted to come up with a term that could be an umbrella for all of the habits... we could put the signs and symptoms of believing that you're not worthy to codependent, perfectionist, and people-pleasing thinking, right? And emotional outsourcing is when we chronically and habitually source our sense of worth, safety, and validation, from everyone and everything outside of ourselves instead of from within.

So, good, right? I did trademark emotional outsourcing.

Maggie: I'm waiting for the book. I'm ready to walk to the airport and see it there. I'm ready.

Victoria: Yes, very excited. I'm very excited for it. And why did I bring that up? It's when that's our mindset. Our communication is predicated on the attempting to prove that we are worthy of love, at every pass, at every turn. Right? So, it's not just making your partner's lunch in the morning. It's saying, "Babe, did you see I made your lunch? Oh, I hope you like it. I kind of worked hard on it."

Maggie: And then, not receiving that.

Victoria: Right. And then, feeling like crap. And then make it, "Oh, they don't like me. Oh, I didn't do it right." Making it about your worth.

Maggie: Yeah. And that's the part where questioning some of those thoughts can propel you in a completely new direction in a relationship with someone. Because that person could love you the most they love another human, and when you stop emotionally outsourcing you can receive it.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Victoria: Yeah, I did a show not that long ago about receiving. There are so many layers to it. But one that I called out in particular, that I think isn't talked about that much, is our almost cultural obsession with this old story about what codependency is. The kind of story that labels folks as "codependent people." Which, barf, not 0% into it. Your character is not defective. You are not a codependent. You're a brilliant, amazing human with survival skills, right? Don't need to disavow.

Wait, Maggie, I just totally lost my train of thought. So, everyone listening, I was going to cut this because I was trying to be professional. And then I was like, no, let's be real. So, my partner and I are turning... There's a two-car garage under our house, because the house is from the 50's, when you drove your car into your house and filled your house with exhaust from leaded gas, and that was fine. But we're not going to do that.

And so, she's a Tibetan Buddhist and she teaches meditation, I teach breathwork, and ba-ba-ba-bap. So, we're turning it into a studio to teach yoga and meditation. It's so exciting. The contractor is working down there, and in the middle of what I was just pontificating on, somebody dropped a big ole box of tools. Because it sounded like actual Armageddon was happening right under me.

My body went into sympathetic. It was like shh, what? And then I just plummeted into dorsal so quick, I just lost my train of thought. It's just wild, right? So, I think it's important. We can do so much healing and we're still humans.

Maggie: "We can do so much healing and we're still humans." My thought about it is, the universe said no. The universe said, boom, you've got to read the book.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Victoria: Aww, Maggie.

Maggie: This is the thing. This is going to be in there.

Victoria: This is it. I love that. Thank you, Maggie. I love that. I love that we are both people who love to roll around in what sucks and what's terrible, and then we're like, "And here's the positive spin." But never in a #positive vibes kind of bullshit way. We're both like, "Oh, tell me what's terrible." But then we both just have this energía, like constitutionally. And for me, it's also been a choice to gratitude, gratitude, gratitude. Cultivate that we're both just like, "But what's beautiful here?"

Maggie: One hundred percent. I am anti-suppression energy. I coach on marriage, as you coach, and on all the things we coach on, it's deep stuff that sometimes feels very heavy. Anything we coach on is never for the purpose of suppressing, or pushing down, or pretending, or anything like that. We want to see it all, and we want to see where we go from here. But we do want to see it all.

Victoria: Yes. See it all. Feel it all. Process it through our bodies, and support our nervous system to tell a new story. Yeah. And if that story is neutral, if you're not ready to be the Maggie and Maria Victoria positivity town show, that's cool. That's cool, todo bien. But can you get towards neutral just a little bit?

Maggie: Can you go in that direction?

Victoria: Yeah. It's beautiful thing, because then you start coming towards your partner with positive regard. And more positive regard for yourself, when you're like... Because that's a moment when I really could have beat myself up. Now, I've been podcasting for years. I'm a professional at this.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

I'm on so many people's shows. I have a book contract, right? I'm a master coach. I ba-ba-ba-ba-bap; ego, ego, ego. How dare I have a nervous system? How dare you?

Maggie: We are human the whole way through. And never, ever do we judge ourselves for having normal human responses.

Victoria: No, because that's the gift.

Maggie: That's a big cultural narrative piece. A woman gets angry, what is that? It's the fight response. Cultural narrative says you shouldn't feel that way. And then we judge ourselves for?

Victoria: Right. Being a human, being a mammal.

Maggie: No, we are humans. And I think the more we talk about this... It's so important. I always think we might be the first time somebody hears somebody say, "Hey, guess what? Those reactions you're having?"... Even the appease response, which in so many ways there are moments that you want to overcome it, and you want to understand that... and all the work that we do to help people work through it.

I used to work at a cruise line. And some of my bosses were better than others. And I used to agree to stuff. I used to say yes to things that I wanted to say no all the time. And it was the right thing to do in that context.

Victoria: Oh, context is so key. I think that's one of the ways we just treat ourselves like crap, by decontextualizing. I'm sure that's something you see in marriage so often.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Maggie: Yeah. What is the context in which this is happening? And the more that you listen to this podcast, understand your nervous system, understand your reactions, guess what? Anybody you're in a relationship with they have reactions too; we forget, we get amnesia. "Oh, they're having a reaction too." Guess what?

Victoria: Woof. Oh, Maggie, I think we could probably keep talking for the next 674,000 hours.

Maggie: I'm just coming back.

Victoria: Okay, we're going to put that on the books, folks. This is not Maggie's last time. Maggie will be back.

Maggie: It'll be a sequel.

Victoria: It will be. I'm having Danielle Savory and Sonia Wright on the show to talk about s-e-x. Maybe you can come on with them.

Maggie: Oh, it would be so fun.

Victoria: We need to keep talking about communication. Maggie, you are fantastica. You are phenomenal. Te adoro.

Maggie: Maria Victoria Albina.

Victoria: Sí, mi amor.

Maggie: Are you ready to receive?

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Victoria: Wait, hold on. Okay, great. I have two feet on the floor. It helps. Oh, that's what I was talking about before, it was receiving. That's so funny!

Maggie: And it'll be in the book.

Victoria: There's a whole... I mean, there was a podcast about receiving... but a whole chapter on receiving. That we are culturally so scared of being codependent because it's a label and so bad, that we don't want to believe that we have dependency and that we need others. But we do. And that's a beautiful thing. That's the whole point I was getting to, Maggie Reyes.

Maggie: This is so beautiful, right? What happens when you trust and you let go? So, what we modelled for you, among the many other things you modelled in this particular episode, is being detached from the outcome, trusting that we could keep going forward, and then the thing we deeply wanted just revealed itself.

Okay, so Maria Victoria, on behalf of all of your listeners who don't have the opportunity to come to the podcast and tell you, I need you to know that your work is like a vitamin. Right? Like, vitamins for the body. It's like a vitamin for the soul. And every episode that you do is a healing balm. It's another healing balm, another healing balm.

And we live in a world that has all these very violent messages about how we should treat ourselves and think about ourselves. And you are a person who stands for fierce love. Fierce. We're going to fight the fights we need to fight, and we're going to just love, love, love.

Victoria: Love, love. Más amor.

Maggie: So, it's an honor to be in your presence.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Victoria: Maggie, I am truly honored to be your friend, and to love you back. And I am truly honored by the gift of your words. I'm super grateful. Thank you. Thank you. And thank you for being you in the world. You do magical work mi amorsita. I see you, Reyes. You so nice.

Alright, we will get you back on the calendar. Everybody get stoked. I know everyone's deeply excited; they've probably already looked you up on "The 'Gram." Let's be real. But for those who have not yet found you on the interwebs, where shall they have the delight of finding you?

Maggie: You can go to @themaggiereyes on Instagram, and then MaggieReyes.com is the website. So, @themaggiereyes or MaggieReyes.com, you can find me there.

Victoria: I love that you're declaring that you are *The* Maggie Reyes.

Maggie: I have a good time with it. Because as you know, in Latin culture Reyes is like Smith, so I'm like, "Apologies to all the other Maggie Reyes'."

Victoria: Wow... or not. Because, yeah. So Maggie's name is one R, r-e-y-e-s. Anyone who took basic Spanish is like, "But isn't it multiple r's that you roll like that?" Yes. And I don't care about grammar right now, because it's so much more fun to say Rrrrrrr-eyes.

Maggie: I think I might be one of the few people who actually calls you Maria Victoria.

Victoria: I'm trying to think when this will come out, so I'm shifting back... Remember when we were talking about that at mastermind? You, me, Judith Gatton, Sara Fisk, Brenda Lomeli. There's a Latina group at our coaching school. We were talking about it because I only started going by

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Victoria because Americans couldn't handle Maria Victoria and would just call me Maria. And that is *not* my name. My name is 0% Maria. Not available to be called Maria. Maria Victoria...

Maggie: Is a different thing.

Victoria: It feels different. It has a different energy. Yeah, so I went by Victoria, which is also a name I don't like, but it was better than Maria. It's a whole thing to change the Instagram, because you have to change all the URLs. I bought MariaVictoria.com, and we're in it. We're neck deep in it. It's been months, but we'll get it all set up and good; new logo, new letterhead as it were.

So, I love that you call the Maria Victoria, yeah. Is good. Gracias, Maggie Reyes.

Maggie: I'm a little teary-eyed, I'm not going to lie.

Victoria: I'm just watching your face. Just holding space for it. Buena suerte, hermana mia. We have built lives with a lot of love. And yeah, we give a lot of love. We get a lot of love. We're very blessed. Very lucky, very supportive, very guided. A lot of gratitude. Thank you for being here.

Thank you so much for listening, my love. I hope that that show was supportive for you. I hope you learned something; I know I did. I really enjoyed the conversation. Thank you for being here. Thank you for spending your time with me. Thank you, in advance, for sharing this podcast with your friends, with your family, with your partner, with your parent, with the people you love. Very much appreciated.

Ep #264: Coregulation and the Keys to Relating Well in Love and Life with Maggie Reyes

Let's do what we do. A gentle hand on your heart, should you feel so moved. And remember, you are safe. You are held. You are loved. And, when one of us heals, we help heal the world. Be well, my beauty. I'll talk to you soon.

Thank you for listening to this episode of *Feminist Wellness*. If you want to learn more all about somatics, what the heck that word means, and why it matters for your life, head on over to VictoriaAlbina.com/somaticswebinar for a free webinar all about it. Have a beautiful day my darling, and I'll see you next week. Ciao.