

S1. Ep26: Marriage: Making it better than it's ever been



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With Your Host

Lindsey Mango

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Lindsey: Hi, welcome to *The Life Coach Hotline*. This is Lindsey Mango, your life coach. How can I help you?

Amy Hi, Lindsey, this is Amy. I am so glad that you posted on Instagram and asked about people who wanted to change relationships for 2024 because I've been divorced for four years now. And my ex-husband and I have decided to get back together. And there's a whole bunch of, I guess, just stuff that goes into that, there's been a lot of growth on both sides.

And I'm just now at a place where I've never felt more sure about something. But also, I'm starting to get in my head just about what are other people going to think? Is she wishy-washy? Is she a fraud? How can we believe anything she says? Because I feel like I've kind of been this single mom persona for the past four years. And so I'm just, it's like a complete identity switch at the same time. Just among everything, it just feels really like a lot.

And then I think the other thing that I'm just uncovering now is that I am just questioning my ability to be the person, the wife, all of that at the same time.

Lindsey: This is so good. I first just want to celebrate you for being here and for walking up to this. I think that I'm sure that it has taken a lot of courage. And when I heard you say you're getting back together with your husband that you divorced, I'm like, this is amazing. So cool. The thought I just had is, do you know how much freaking – And you know, but I'm just saying this in general to remind you, do you know how much freaking healing and growth would have to take place for that? That is so cool.

Amy: Thank you. Thank you.

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Lindsey: And I just want to offer that to you, that lends to you because you may not think that everybody is going to think that. And they might not, right?

Amy: Right.

Lindsey: That's the reality. And let's talk about your side of the street, right? So you're like, I am afraid that it will mean that I'm wishy-washy, that people can't believe what you say. You're afraid of your ability to be a wife. You feel like you're stepping out of this identity as a single mom.

And my first thought/question is, really, it's a thought. It's like, of course. Of course you're having all these thoughts. Do you feel like you've really given yourself the space and compassion for that?

Amy: I think I'm starting to. No, the answer would be no, I haven't fully given myself that space. Yeah.

Lindsey: Because I think part of it is right now it feels all very true. The feeling that I had as you went through it, it felt like, okay, I've got all these problems that I need to solve.

Amy: Right. Right.

Lindsey: Instead of I want you to think about this, you said you're a mom, right?

Amy: Yes.

Lindsey: Imagine one of your kids goes out and does something really brave. They try to get a part in a play or try out for a team and they don't make it or it's their first game and they're really nervous. Or they didn't

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make the team last year and they decide to go out again this year. And they have all these thoughts. How would you think about that?

Amy: I would just think they were so brave for trying again. Yeah.

Lindsey: Would you be like, all these things, we have to solve these problems? Or would you be like, of course you feel that way?

Amy: I would be like, of course. Of course, this is massive.

Lindsey: Yeah. How does it feel to kind of see yourself from that lens instead?

Amy: There's a lot more grace there. A lot more grace for myself. And too, I guess, stepping back the bravery that it does take to even consider going back to an ex-husband after all of this, after everything.

Lindsey: Does it feel like it separates you a little bit from it? Like all of these, like the wishy-washy, how can people believe what you say, all of that?

Amy: Does it separate me from, what do you mean?

Lindsey: Do you feel like it gives you a little bit of distance from them or do they all still feel very true or do they feel a little bit like, okay, I'm just a little uncomfortable and scared?

Amy: Okay, yes. Yes, there is distance there. And I feel like I've been grappling with this all week and just trying to get to the bottom of it. I know that's just me trying to just solve everything now.

Lindsey: I totally get you.

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Amy: You know?

Lindsey: Yes.

Amy: We need to go journal about this. Let's go.

Lindsey: Well, and I think that's, like that's what's so fascinating about this work, right? A lot of it is like changing the thoughts and doing this work, but then it's like this push-pull. There's also a very important part of the puzzle that is just being like, yeah, you're scared and understanding when to kind of pull which part in. Because then it's almost like you're trying, like really what ends up happening is it's like you're using coaching to escape the discomfort, which isn't really the point of coaching.

Amy: Right. Yeah, I feel like I've been doing that ever since the divorce. So now me doing something different is just kind of like, okay, am I doing this now? Am I processing instead of just trying to affirm my way out of it? I don't know.

Lindsey: Yeah. What do you mean by that?

Amy: No, I'm just saying I feel like that's how it's been. Like for the last four years I've been in therapy and I've done coaching and I feel like I know that led me to this point, but I question my authenticity in it because when I look back, I completely looked at my ex-husband in a different way. And so I feel like it was all based on that, if that makes sense.

Lindsey: Tell me more.

Amy: Ways that I would see him as signs of weakness. I looked at them as signs of weakness. And when he does the similar things now, I see it as

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like this vulnerability and being extremely strong in his ability to be vulnerable with me, despite everything.

Lindsey: So cool. And what about that feels bad, weird, or like?

Amy: That feels amazing. It feels great. But then I just question myself. Well, I don't know necessarily. Well, yeah, let's just go with that, I question myself.

Lindsey: I think I get what you're saying. You're like, how do I know it's the truth?

Amy: Yeah.

Lindsey: Because before I thought this whole thing, and now I think this whole thing. So how do I know what is actually –

Amy: Yes.

Lindsey: Yeah. Okay, so I think the answer is two things. My first thought is what is the most loving response, right? Like what feels true to you in the moment? What is love saying? Not what fear is saying. That's a good kind of compass. Go ahead.

Amy: Okay, I was just going to say love just says yes. You had it wrong, and that's okay. You did that, you did that thing for a while. You had that wrong, that was your perspective. But I feel nothing but love now.

Lindsey: And then the second thing is, it's like that's kind of the beauty of this, you have a choice. Both could be true.

Amy: Right.

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Lindsey: But you have a choice. So the question is always, what do you want to choose and what serves you for what you really want?

Amy: Yeah. I mean, the love side wins. Yeah. Yeah. Back then too, there was so much self-loathing. There was so much not taking care of myself, like mentally, physically, spiritually. That was completely neglected. I was a new mom. When we divorced, our kids were two and a half and four months. So I was in the thick of it.

Lindsey: Oh wow.

Amy: Yeah.

Lindsey: That is like you're in a different reality because your hormones are in like a different reality.

Amy: Yeah. Yes. Yeah.

Lindsey: Okay, but I just picked up on something though.

Amy: Okay.

Lindsey: Because I think what's also happening is you're thinking you had it so wrong, which you said. And maybe you did, but there's some hint of it that's like, well, if I had had this perspective, then that would have never happened or this whole thing would have never happened. Does that feel true?

Amy: Yeah. Like I know that it's not true, but feeling it, I still teeter.

Lindsey: Yeah. How did it happen perfectly? Like even that part.

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Amy: It did because, and I say that, I look back and I'm like, I have no regrets because I don't know that I would be where I am right now if we hadn't gone through that. I wouldn't know how to love fully if I hadn't felt the opposite.

Lindsey: How does that feel?

Amy: Just so peaceful. I just feel really peaceful and calm and just feel good.

Lindsey: So good. I love it. There's one other thing I want to address if you're cool with it.

Amy: Yeah.

Lindsey: I think the whole single mom identity, I'm just curious what about that identity do you want to keep or are you afraid of letting go of?

Amy: It's funny because I don't feel like I ever really connected with it. Like I tried to. And people would say, oh, you're such a great single mom. Look at all the stuff that you do. Like, wow, look at everything that you've accomplished by yourself. And I used to be like, I don't want to, I would rather be with my family though. I don't want to be like this. I feel like I didn't always want to connect with it.

Lindsey: But at some point, did you decide to or you just feel like you were trying to squash yourself into a box the whole time?

Amy: I feel like towards the end of this, like in the last couple of months, I feel like I finally did accept it. Just accepting my reality. And the reality is I am a single mom.

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Lindsey: I think what's so interesting about this is – I think you're right, right? The world is often like, here's what single mom means. Here's what mom means. Here's what woman means. Here's what this means. And I think for you, it's like it was just a label. You just wanted to decide what it meant for you. It didn't actually mean anything.

Amy: Yes.

Lindsey: And so what if it's just literally all the things that you love that are true about you that you want to keep that were true being a single mom are also true about you being a married woman?

Amy: Absolutely.

Lindsey: Like zero is changing other than the title.

Amy: Yeah, I do feel that lately. It's been interesting because the last couple of months I feel like it's been like a wave of calming in a way, of like, no, we're not going to press this single mom stuff. It's just about you and loving your family and finally just loving yourself and being able to fill my cup and let it flow.

Lindsey: Yeah. I think this is so powerful because I think it's just you being like, oh yeah, I forgot for like a split second, the identity is what I decide it's going to be.

But it's kind of like for me when I became a mom, while there is a huge shift, of course, in so many things, I remember having this moment where I was like, but I don't feel different. Like yes, I do in so many ways. But I think for so long I was kind of sold on what mom means. And I had created such a different identity already as a woman where I thought mom meant you're burnt out and sacrificing and all these things.

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So I remember thinking, I'm like, wait, I'm still the same me who wants to dance around my office. It's like I think my brain was like, oh, when you become a mom, you grow up and you're mature or whatever.

Amy: Yes. Yes.

Lindsey: And I remember thinking, this is so strange. I am a mom, that is true. I was like, but I am me. I am totally me. I am different in that I love something more than I've ever loved it before and all of these things. And I am still me.

And I just remember it was such an interesting moment because it felt like the moment where I was like, oh, this is the identity, like I still have the same identity, I've just added mom to the list rather than taking on this identity of what I thought mom would like – I'd become when I became a mom.

Amy: Right. Well, and you just sparked a thought in me, too, because I feel like marriage is kind of portrayed that same way.

Lindsey: Yes.

Amy: Like the language I hear so much is like marriage is hard. It's going to be work. Get ready. That honeymoon phase is going to be over and game on. So I have that playing in my head, too, at the same time.

Lindsey: Oh, 100%. I don't know if you saw my post the other day about that. I was like, oh, I was totally told marriage is hard. And I'm like, that's the other thing, though. It's just like being a mom, it's not like it doesn't change you, it's not like there aren't moments that marriage is hard. But my husband and I always check in and I'm like, do you feel like this is hard?

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Amy: Yes.

Lindsey: And so I totally agree. And what a beautiful opportunity. It's like you get to choose your identity and what that means. And the labels really don't mean anything unless there's something about it that you want to take on that feels exciting and expansive.

Amy: Yeah. Oh, my gosh, that makes perfect sense. You just gave me a bunch of light bulbs – All the light bulbs just went on.

Lindsey: Good.

Amy: Yeah. Absolutely, because it feels like we're both at a different place too, where that would be it, rather than I'm the wife and I'm the stay-at-home mom and I'm all of that because I'm not anymore.

Lindsey: Yes.

Amy: There are pieces, like you said, there are pieces that I want to get back to, but also that I want to take with me on this journey.

Lindsey: Yes. And I really think, I mean, I'm just kind of like, this is so good. We're like ping-ponging. But I'm also just thinking about how I think a lot of times in relationships in general we've kind of been sold the identity that you kind of mold into your partner and become this like, instead of like, nope, we're just two humans who have our own unique interests and passions. And then we also have this relationship that comes together.

And I see that so often just in general, and that's a pattern I used to be in where I'd lose myself because I thought that's what it was supposed to be.

Amy: Yes.

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Lindsey: And now I'm like, nope, me and my husband, we have a joint life and we also have our own unique lives. And that's what makes our relationship so amazing and magical and not turn into this thing that we all wake up in like 10 years and we're like, who am I and what happened to the girl that used to dance around her office and listen to XYZ music?

Amy: Right. Oh my gosh, yes. Because that's what I've done before. And that's what I did in our marriage last time. It was like I was erased. But now, he completely respects everything. There's just so much mutual respect and just, I don't know, it's just so different than we experienced in the past.

Lindsey: That is so cool.

Amy: Thank you.

Lindsey: You are welcome. I'm sure that someone's going to hear this in a similar position and be inspired at the idea that they could end up with the same person they were with before that they really had love for. And it was their person.

Amy: Yeah.

Lindsey: That's so cool. I love it.

Amy: That would be cool. Thank you.

Lindsey: Yeah, you're welcome, Amy. I'm so excited for you and just keep me updated on how it goes.

Amy: Yeah, I will. I will.

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Lindsey: Sending you lots of love and thank you so much for calling in. I think a lot of people are going to get tons of value out of this.

Amy: Thank you. Thank you, Lindsey.

Lindsey: You're welcome. Awesome, I'll talk to you soon.

Amy: Okay. Bye bye.

Lindsey: Bye.

If you want to call in to *The Life Coach Hotline*, go to <https://lindseymango.com/lifecoachhotline>. Talk to you soon. Bye.