

Ep #110: Dating after Divorce with Sade Curry



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With Your Host

Maisie Hill

The Maisie Hill Experience with Maisie Hill

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If you want to do things differently but need some help making it happen then tune in for your weekly dose of coaching from me, Maisie Hill, Master Life Coach and author of *Period Power*. Welcome to *The Maisie Hill Experience*.

Alright, folks, welcome to this week's podcast. I'm just so excited because today I have an amazing guest with me. Sade Curry is here on the podcast. Welcome, Sade, it's so good to have you.

Sade: Thank you, Maisie, it is so good to be here with you. And it's just a joy, just a joy. Every time we hang out, I have such a good time. Thanks for having me.

Maisie: I know. Well, you're really reminding me, I was just so surprised when we met in person that you're tall because I'm quite tall as well. And we just get so used to seeing through these amazing virtual relationships I have with various people but you just get used to seeing these heads and chests and you have no sense of what someone's like. And I was just like, "You're tall, this is great."

Sade: Yes, I think we had that, the conference we were at it was just like the tall girls. Oh, my goodness, so tall, I got that. Yeah, I'm 5'10½ ish.

Maisie: Me too. We're exactly the same. That's it. Okay, well, Sade is here because she helps women to heal from divorce and create a relationship where you feel safe, loved and cherished which I love and I'm just so delighted to have you here on the podcast because you are 1,000% who I would be hiring if I was on the dating scene and if I was looking for a coach to help me which I know plenty of people personally and professionally. And I know there's many people listening who are in that boat.

So welcome everyone, you're absolutely in the right place today. I've been texting my friends, you're never going to guess who's coming on the podcast. We're going to be talking about dating and so everyone's very excited, not just me. So I have to tell you a fun story before we start.

Sade: Yes please.

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Maisie: A while back I was listening to your podcast which is Dating After Divorce, that's the name of it. So I was listening to that a while back and I was just absentmindedly cooking dinner and Paul my partner who I love very dearly, came in and he was like, "What are you listening to?"

Sade: I wonder where this is going.

Maisie: And he clicked on the screen and he's like, "Dating after divorce. We're not even married yet." He's like, "That would be such a you move as well." He was like, "You're just such a mercenary." He always talks about how I'm mercenary. He's like, "That is a mercenary move."

Sade: Oh my gosh, how fun, yeah. It's interesting, I have a couple of dating app profiles currently and it's mostly because as I help my clients, I realise the dating apps have changed so much.

Maisie: Yeah, you've got to be up to date.

Sade: So in order to catch where their thinking gets caught in using the technology, last year for about a month or so I went on the apps.

Maisie: Oh my gosh.

Sade: Of course I told my husband, "Hey, you know what? I need to catch up. So, this is going to happen." But yes, we have these weird moments, the weird things that we do so we can help our clients.

Maisie: That's so funny. It never occurred to me, but it makes so much sense that that's what you do. Okay, amazing. Right, tell us, how did you get into this? Presumably, well, I know, it's through your own story of divorce but fill everyone in because I'm sure they're going to want to know.

Sade: Yeah. This was not my dream job when I was six years old. This is not the answer I gave. This was not it. It really is, has been my calling. I've always had a bend towards speaking, coaching, teaching, just natural talent in the communication area.

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Maisie: By the way I'm just going to pause you there. How rare is it for a woman to just own her talents like Sade just did? We're not going to skip through that. You just say, "I'm good at this, I am talented here." I love it, okay, do carry on.

Sade: Thank you. Thank you very much. So yeah, a natural talent, lots of signs along the way that this was the work I was meant to be doing. However, life just kind of went all sorts of ways first. I married my ex, we met in college, whole long story there. I will say, on my part because one of the things I've done on my journey was to figure out how did I get here? I just believe in radical responsibility, not blame or shame but responsibility because that's what gives me the ability to have choices. A lot of my clients feel they don't have options, they don't have choices.

And the way to do that is to see where you could have made a different choice along the path of your journey. And so, I will say in marrying my ex I went back and I was like, "Why did I marry this guy?" I studied engineering. I was surrounded by guys, great guys, why did I pick this guy? And one reason was I felt I could not become the person I wanted to become and do the things I wanted to do on my own.

There was just that sense of wherever I came from, whether it was cultural narrative or my own personal insecurities, I felt like I needed this person to help me achieve my dreams and goals. And I recognised that as the moment where I was like, "No, you could have made a different choice. If I had owned everything that I am and all of my own gifts and talents I could have made a difference choice in that moment. I could have chosen for love and safety and compatibility instead of for, oh my God, I need somebody to help me, to help me become who I need to be.

So that was how that happened. Now, of course he had all of his own stuff. We won't spend a lot of time on his stuff. I want to stick with mine. The marriage was pretty much rocky from the beginning, all the signs of toxicity and him having narcissistic tendencies, a lot of dysfunction. And granted, I had my own dysfunction, I was very co-dependent, a people pleaser, very

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conflict averse, had a hard time asserting myself. I had a really hard time owning my own wants and needs and my own desires.

And I had a sense of learned helplessness like oh my goodness, this is happening to me and I can't do anything about it. Just that narrative was just a huge part of my life. So gosh, the whole, I won't go into my whole diverse story because there's just so much there.

Maisie: I just think what you shared is so helpful because it's either, it's a story either I recognise in myself or it's a story that I've heard from many, many of my clients over the years. And I think it's a very common one. And I think you've already just in talking about how you reflect on that time now, like you said, it gives you choice. And it gives you that responsibility, gives you options, all the great stuff.

Sade: Yeah. And that served me so well, understanding that served me so well when it came time to make the choice to divorce. So, I did not file for the divorce, but they ask you if you're going to fight it, if you believe the marriage had fallen apart. And at that moment I was able to say, "Yeah, this is not working." The marriage eventually fell apart 17 years later just because I was so much of a fix it kind of girl, and I was fixing it all the way. And then towards the end I started setting boundaries.

As the kids got older, I started to see the impact on them of just how much dysfunction was in the relationship. So that was a wakeup call to me that something's wrong, this isn't working. And it was just so much easier for me to respond to the impact on my children than to respond to the impact on me. So, I've had to heal that. I've had to work through them and learn to centre myself in my own experience. That was a whole journey by itself.

And so, when I started setting boundaries around just the safety in our family, emotional safety, verbal safety, physical safety. My ex-husband was not there for the boundaries. He was like, "Why are we changing things? I love being able to just do whatever I want."

Maisie: Yeah, it works for me.

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Sade: Yeah, it was working for him. And I remember reading the book, *Boundaries* by Henry Cloud.

Maisie: Such a good one.

Sade: And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Just let me do one thing to establish safety here. And he was not there for it and so he filed for a divorce. It completely blindsided me because I was still in denial about the viability of the relationship. I felt that, yeah, we could work through all of this. In fact, while unbeknownst to me he was working on filing for divorce I was working on this whole new, I'd found a new marriage intensive program.

Maisie: I'm really being hit by what you're saying and just really recognising the prevalence of that. I can just think of so many circumstances where someone has shared that experience. Of course they haven't named it in the way that you have but that's exactly what it is often, yeah.

Sade: Yeah. So I told him, I said, "Hey, okay, I'm going to stay with my friend for a couple of weeks with the kids, I'm going to sign up for this marriage intensive. I'm going to get your dates." Because what they would do is they would have one counsellor with one party, with the other and then they bring you together. And I was like, "I think this will really work." And so, I was gone for a few weeks, I mean he knew where I was and where the kids were. I'm trying to remember he came at one point to visit us as this mutual friend's home.

And so we were apart for six weeks and I was going for the marriage intensive classes, and he was not really going for his classes. And then six weeks later, it was boom, served with divorce papers because he was just not there, he was not going to do that work. And so that's when my attorney asked me, "Hey, we're going to fight this. Do you feel the marriage is viable?" "I was like, "You know what, no, at this point."

Maisie: Not if one person's clearly saying that they want out. There's nothing that can be fixed there, yeah.

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Sade: Yeah. So that's how the divorce happened, took three years to resolve custody, child support, all of those things. For someone who had filed for the divorce he then fought the divorce every step of the way after that, which is amazing. But I then just kind of threw myself into figuring out what had happened. That period was like, wait, what just happened here? 17 years, all this work and this is how it ends. I was like, "This is insane." And so that was my, you could say, rock bottom or my moment of awakening or awareness that I needed to change.

Something needed to change in my life, and I just literally threw myself into everything. If there was a YouTube video that pertained to anything in my life, I watched it. Therapy, did that, 12-steps for co-dependency did it. I started following coaches. I think once I got my finances because that was a little bit of a journey, a money journey for me. I remember once I had \$1200 in my account, for the first in two years after the divorce I had a balance of \$1200 and then I promptly took \$800 of it and purchased coaching, the six-week coaching programme to heal from narcissistic abuse.

And I was sold on coaching after that, it was so profound. I had been in therapy for months, watched videos, everything. And those six weeks, I felt so different. And I was like, "Yeah, this is it. This is the magical answer."

Maisie: So, did you know then because obviously you're having your own personal healing transformational experience and when that was happening did you know, okay, this is what I want to do, or did that come later?

Sade: You mean in terms of how I wanted to heal or the work I wanted to do?

Maisie: Yes, exactly.

Sade: I did. The first year, so separated in 2015 so that first year, 2015 to 2016 was when I kind of threw myself into all the books. And it would be, I would read one book and then one chapter, there was no one book for divorce. I read books on divorce but there was no one book. And most of

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them worked on helping you get through the divorce, helping you understand divorce. They were very what we call A-line, action line items. And every once in a while, there would be a paragraph on grief. And then I would dive deeper.

Because what I was looking for at the time wasn't the actions. I was looking for a change in my own thinking because I was looking at these 17 to 20 years and I knew. I knew that something about me had created that, but I didn't know what it was. And so the books were useful in sort of all of them had, they would point a sign to something. And then I would follow on to that sign. But there was no one book that I could go to, to say, "Yeah, this is where you go." Think about it, I was healing from childhood dysfunction because my parents divorced when I was six.

And there was a whole lot of things that happened in my childhood, leading up to me choosing my ex. Because I knew that me choosing him was, I chose him. So then I wanted to know what caused me to choose him. And then in choosing what caused me to stay and allow everything that happened and what caused me to not see. So I was looking for deeper answers than any one book could provide.

Maisie: Oh my God. I mean you must have got so much gold in that journey.

Sade: It's insane, I have my Google Drive, my original Google Drive, I was going over it over the holidays, is 99% focused. Because Google has been like, "It's full, you need to start paying for storage." And mostly what's in there is this stuff, stuff that I saved and downloaded and wrote. I did a lot of journaling on Google Docs. Oh my God, I should probably not put that out there on the internet. I don't want to get hacked but anyway, it was a lot.

And so, I would say those first nine months I was like, "Oh my God, somebody needs to tell women this. Somebody needs to tell divorced women, or married women, or women who have been through abuse, or women who have childhood dysfunction impacting them. Someone needs to tell them that all of this is a part of it because everyone kept saying one

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thing, but it was never a full picture. And that was when I knew yeah, I have to be the one to tell women that this is the thing.

Maisie: I love that. I have to be the one to tell women that this is the thing. Thank goodness.

Sade: That's how I came to this work, [crosstalk].

Maisie: Thank goodness you had that thought. Oh, my goodness. I love how you talk about having a remarkable dating experience that matches the extraordinary woman that you are. I just think that's the most beautiful statement and I'm just like, sign me up for that. And I think everyone listening will want that if that is you do want to be in a relationship because this is something that you can apply if you are already in a relationship or if you're on the dating scene and actively looking for a relationship.

So I'd love to get into why so many women are not having that experience. And I say women and I know that many of the people listening are non-binary or gender fluid or trans. And I know some of you are queer as well. But I only really hear this from women in heterosexual relationships. Not to say that it doesn't happen in other relationships too but that's just what I hear and it's just this collective mindset of men are shit basically. So, I would love, I mean you're so involved in this work so why are so many women not having this remarkable dating experience?

Sade: Yeah. That's a gigantic question and I will try to narrow it down to probably the major root cause. It is the same root cause as problems in marriage. It's the same reason women burn out at work. It's the same reason women over-function in their lives, it's the same thing. We are told that our value and we believe, it's not just that we're told, it's not just that the cultural narrative tells it to us. We internalise it and believe it that our value is in our usefulness to others. And that just has been the narrative that we women and other people believe.

So it's not just that the woman believes it because as a woman, some women don't believe that but then they're encountering partners along the way who believe that so that doesn't work. That would still not be a great

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experience. And so, it's that collective belief, well, the collective belief that women's value is in how pleasing they are to the male gaze or how useful they are to their partners or how useful they are to the world, the collective, the belief that if a relationship goes wrong, it's because the woman did something wrong.

It's our collective belief that women's thinking is not rational. And so that causes gaslighting on the part of our partners and it causes us to gaslight ourselves or second guess ourselves. And you have multiple threads of this going on in one interaction. In one dating interaction you end up having so many little threads going on in your head and going on in your emotions. He sends a text and it turns into a three-hour conversation with your girlfriend about what to do about this one text.

And just think about all of that energy going into trying to resolve this 'problem' of being in a relationship or not being in a relationship. So relationships are presented to women or people socialized as women as this catch 22 problem that must be solved. It's a catch 22 but you must solve it.

Maisie: And it's your responsibility to solve it as well.

Sade: And it's your responsibility so you must be in a relationship, your partner must be a 100% happy in the relationship or you're doing something wrong. If you're not in a relationship, there's something wrong with you so you must spend all of your time fixing that problem. It's a catch 22. And yeah, that is what we end up untangling. And I mean there's the practical side, there's the, got to get out of the house, you've got to be social but [crosstalk] social.

Maisie: I love that you said that you've got to get out of the house. Because for me, I recognise that as an issue, I need to actually leave the house.

Sade: Yeah. Well, think about it, why is it hard for many people to get out of the house? Well, what do I wear? Are my boobs too big? Are my boobs too small? Is this dress too tight? Is my hair too frizzy? I mean that alone causes, you know what, I will go out next week. And so, it's not just one A-

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line problem. It's not just 12 steps. It's the thinking that goes into it. And it's not just the individual's thinking because I think a lot of women come to me thinking that they're thinking wrong and I should just help them stop self-sabotaging.

I'm like, "No, that's not even your thinking. That's thinking that's been handed down to you and it's like the air that you breathe. You've been thinking this way since you were a baby basically." Because there have been studies done on how parents respond to their female children or yeah, it's just [crosstalk].

Maisie: I mean the interaction, I remember being in a playground and we have made a concerted effort, we have a son who's about to be seven years old and from a very early age, really tried to model consent to him. So even from the minute he was born saying, "We're about to lift you up." Always letting him know what was going on and checking in with him. And I remember being at a playground when he was – I don't know, three years old or something like that. And there was this girl there and he was kind of touching and playing with her.

And I was like, "Have you asked this person does she want?" Because she's kind of looking like maybe and I was like, "Look at her face, does she seems like she wants you to do that? Let's ask her", that kind of thing. And then the caregiver or the mum of this kid was just like, "He's just being nice." And I was like, the pain. But it is just that, it is so pervasive and it's just so internalised. And it's just you've just got to pull out the threads one by one and work on them.

Sade: Right, yeah. And I think that's where just that individual coaching is really helpful so that what I'm presenting to my client isn't this big giant problem, this big giant feminist problem that they have to solve before they can have a partner. It's like hey, let's just look at what you're thinking. We just need to resolve enough, we don't have to resolve all of it, just the little pieces that are getting in your way so that you can go out and have an amazing experience while dating.

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And then the same also then goes for the other half of the narrative which is men are terrible and for some of my clients, men are scary. Based on what they've experienced in the past they have a particular image of men that's valid based on what they've experienced that is in the way of them being able to connect with a healthy partner. And so sometimes we have to do that work like, hey, let's go out and just experience different kinds of men.

Let's give our brains evidence that other kinds of men exist in the world and that you have the capacity to find them and connect with them and become accustomed to interacting with a different type of person.

Maisie: Yeah. And these are all different skills. They all kind of follow on. They all seem very sequential but often it's like, no, there's some stuff coming up with this one particular thing so let's work on that and then okay, now we can move onto the next thing. And it's not necessarily a linear experience but I think that's the thing. These are all skills and I see so often my clients or people who follow me kind of beating themselves up for not being able to do this thing, whatever it is. And it's like, okay, but let's look at your childhood, your socialization.

The expectations that society has of you and all of these things, there's no wonder. And I think for me it's always so reassuring. Okay, there's some things that we have down as skills. And there's other things that we're less practiced at but that's all it is. And maybe someone hasn't modelled it to you. Maybe you don't have much experience of it. And like you said, we just need to find ways of giving the brain evidence that this is possible and that this can work.

And for me I've just found that to be such a compassionate approach in myself and with my clients to be like, "This is just a skill. It doesn't mean anything about you, that you don't have that skill yet and it's not going to mean anything about you if you fail multiples times as you build that skill."

Sade: 100% and there's a lot of shame that comes up around not being skilled at dating.

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Maisie: Tell me about that.

Sade: Because you're expected to know this and I don't know if you got an education on how to pick a partner. I got none. But there was a very – you could feel the pressure and the expectation to find one and early. It was basically, alright, you're 20 something, when are you going to get married? When are you going to get engaged? When are you going to meet a boyfriend? Just at least I grew up in Nigeria so there was pretty conservative culture. So of course that pressure was laid on thick earlier but it exists in every culture for the most part with some extensions.

Maisie: I think I have to say for my upbringing I think my parents probably did not expect that of me at all. They got it and I think it was probably a shock to them that I did these things. They might have preferred that I didn't but you're all going to have to tune into Sade's podcast because I'm going to be a guest on hers talking about my experiences of divorce and getting annulled. So, we're going to save all the juiciness.

Sade: Yes, I cannot wait, yeah. So, a lot of women, especially the conservative cultures, conservative religious communities have that expectation. That's your purpose as a woman is to get married, and have children, and take care of them. And even where things are more progressive it's still the subtext.

Maisie: Yes, definitely.

Sade: However, there is this expectation without the accompanying education or skillset, people are like, "Yeah, my daughter's going to be a doctor." The parent who tells their daughter to become a doctor, don't do that. But generally, that parent thinks, okay, I should probably send her to school and send her to college, within under the equivalent. Okay, yeah, you should get married and have kids. And then there's no, "Okay, and here's the book on how to do it. Here's your 12-year education on how to do that." You're just like, "Oh my God." That's where I found myself.

Maisie: There's a school of hard knocks out there.

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Sade: Right. And so, I mean so of course I made my early mistakes and I could figure that out. I was like, "Yeah, here's the thing that I was doing." And then I started dating again when I finally made the decision to start dating, didn't take me too long. I went on the apps, somewhere in my head I thought it was just going to be, I was going to be on these apps and there was going to be all these guys, and I was going to go on all these dates, and it was going to be fun. And then I was going to meet my person. And I got on the apps, and it was the same experience.

So whatever experience you've heard that anyone has ever told you, yeah, that is the initial experience when you don't have the skill. And so I got on and I'd had these terrible experiences and I was like, "I don't know what I'm doing. That makes a lot of sense that I'm having this terrible experience. I don't know how to do this." I'm still the same person.

Maisie: I think a lot of people listening are going to find that very reassuring.

Sade: Yeah. It was awful. I was on OkCupid and it was gross. I don't know what it's like now, but it was terrible. That's four or five years ago, it was awful. In fact, OkCupid was the app that matched me with my ex. OkCupid, you fill out all these questions. And then when you're matched with people it gave you a percentage compatibility score with that person. And it gave me a 99% compatibility score with my ex. And I was like, "Yeah, obviously, I don't know what I'm doing."

And the way it registered in my brain was I'm still, I'm the same person who picked him 20 years ago. And I was like, "Oh." It was a light bulb moment. Nothing has changed. And so, then I set out to change everything. I was like, "Okay, well, let's change everything." And that led me again to just reading all the things, learning all the things, practicing and putting together my own journey that led me to my husband.

Maisie: I'm just having a lovely moment, I'm like aww.

Sade: I know, yeah. So that, I changed everything. One of the things I did was like, "I'm just going to be 100% authentic. I'm not going to try to", the way we said it back then when I was young person was catch a husband. I

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wasn't going to try to catch a husband. I changed my thinking to see myself as the prize, half of the prize. The man is the prize too, but I am also the prize. I changed my self-concept, the way I saw myself and I was like, "I'm going to put a 100% of who I really am out there."

And just all of it. I was like, "I want to repel anyone who is not right for me and who wouldn't like parts of me. And completely attract the person who wants the core of who I am." The best way to do that is to put it on the apps, put it on the profile. Create a profile that no woman could say, "Yeah, that could be my profile." Most women have profiles that could be superimposed with other women out there. Everyone's nice and loyal and family friendly, loves their children, loves their family, likes to read books, likes to travel.

Maisie: I remember meeting, I think I met this person in real life, I can't remember. But someone, maybe they're even listening to this shared with me that their favourite dating technique was when they went on a first date with someone. Said that they had they love reading in their profile. And that was so that the inevitable question that they would get asked on a date was, "What book are you reading right now?" And she would pull out my book, *Period Power*.

Sade: I love it.

Maisie: She would always have it as an initial filter of are you able to engage with me and have a conversation about this? And if you're not then there's going to be no second date. I was like, "Love it."

Sade: Yeah. So, during the presidential election, yes, this was 2018, 2017/2018. My local Barnes and Noble had a table, you know how they have a display and then they'll name that display? Well, this display was called, Offers from shithole countries. I don't know if you remember that remark made by a presidential candidate during that time, calling third world countries, shithole countries.

Maisie: No, I missed that one on this side of the pond.

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Sade: Yeah. This person called third world countries, that collection of countries, 'shithole countries'. And so my local Barnes and Noble to their credit, they have put out a display, authors from shithole countries. And Nigeria, there were a couple of Nigerian authors on there. And I was like, "I love this." So I took a picture of that display and I put it on my dating profile. It was one of the six extra pictures that they give you. Yeah, I was like, "You want to get authentic, that's about as authentic as it gets."

So, in that image the person would understand my political meanings. They would understand my love for reading. And they would understand my origins, my culture. And if any of these is not attractive to you, and that's the thing, you don't want to use a lot of words to express who you are. When you truly embody who you are, you don't even need a lot of words, it just kind of comes out when you're interacting with people, when you're on the apps.

And so one of the first exercises I do with my clients is a self-discovery, you're talking redundant questions. I ask you the question three different ways. I ask them to tell me 50 things they love. I'm like, "And we need 50." 100 things you want to do in your lifetime. And those are just a couple of, there's a lot of questions on that worksheet. We don't pay enough attention to ourselves.

Maisie: No, not at all.

Sade: We're socialized to look outside, our kids, our friends, our parents, other people. So we know so much about other people and not enough about ourselves.

Maisie: Yeah. Something we did in The Flow Collective last year was I taught about practicing wanting because I realised that that was a skill that many of my clients needed to learn was being able to identify what it is that you actually want. And then sitting in the desire of it and just letting that desire build and really experiencing that wanting for yourself because like you said, it's not something that is modelled to us or spoken about.

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There's a Facebook community that I'm in that's just a general Facebook one. And someone posted at the weekend and their post was, "I don't want to do this and here are my reasons." And they were kind of looking for tips of how would you approach this? And it's not a coaching community or anything like that, just a general Facebook group. And I was like, "I'm going to read the comments, I'm really fascinated to know what other people say, people who aren't coaches."

Because as a coach I had my response which I gave but there were very few people acknowledging that this person said that they didn't want to do it. It was all like, "But could you do this? And haven't you thought about them and how important it is to that person?" And "But what about their memories of", and it was just all this, you could really see and snapshot the internalised beliefs like you said that we are here for the benefit and pleasure of others whoever they are. In this case it was a family that weren't male actually but there's still that.

No, you have to deprioritise yourself, your needs, your wants because who you are is about who you are in relation to others. And it was kind of a rude awakening because we move in a lot of the same circles online in terms of other coaches. And we kind of just get used to being like, "Well, this is what I want, this is what I'm going to do." And then it's a real snapshot into not just our clients who are using the things that we teach them and kind of leaning into that work but just people who don't have exposure to a lot of the things that we teach and coach on.

Sade: Yeah. And I know I'm a coach, I've been a coach for a long time but it's still a daily work for me to recognise that internal bias in myself.

Maisie: Yes, agreed, yeah.

Sade: My default still is make sure my kids have what they want. Make sure my husband has what he wants, make sure the nebulous they have what they want. That's still the first thing and then I'm like, "Wait a second, what do I want?"

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Maisie: That's the thing is that ability to catch it and wait, I'll be in the middle of doing something and I'm like, "Why am I doing this?" This is not, I want to be doing this, this is not helping. I am completely over-functioning when I do this, delete and just get rid of the text that I was jumping into.

Sade: Yeah. Well, I catch myself doing things like that all the time, all the time, yeah. Took my daughter to the airport this morning and she's going back to college. And I thought she should be getting there earlier. She was just happy as a lark getting to the airport at the time. And I was like, this is her experience. And then when I decided to just go on her timeline, we arrived in time, we were able to get there. I mean I think she got to her gate – I don't know, probably 15 minutes to when they started boarding but that's plenty of time to board.

They hadn't started boarding but in my mind, I was doing all of this labour to get her to the airport on time. And I was like, yeah, it's just there. I mean I look forward to turning it off some time in my lifetime. I would love to get to the place where the kind of tools that are available for it to be completely turned off in me. And I think it's possible because I know there's so many people who are socialized differently who don't have that.

Maisie: I love that. There's that possibility drop of I think it's possible in my lifetime.

Sade: I think so. I think it's possible. I think it's possible.

Maisie: I think I agree with that. I think there's definitely areas for me where it's more readily available for me to do that and it's kind of, there's work that I've done in specific areas. And then it comes much more easily and it's just once in a while be like, "There I go doing that thing again." And then it's like, "Well, okay, how can I get curious about that?" Much like what you shared about your approach to understanding your previous relationship and the divorce and all of that. It's like what happened there. What was going on there?

And then you move on from there but then it's like, wait, there's this whole other thing going on over here but also, I'm going to take a look at that.

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Sade: Yeah. Over-functioning is a big thing in dating. It's one of the things we have to talk about.

Maisie: Yeah, I'm curious as to how it shows up, yeah.

Sade: So many ways. I will have clients. I had a client conversation today where she was pretty certain she was not going to marry a person. She would not want to go on a first date, not because she didn't want to meet that person and interact and just be curious and explore. She didn't want to have to disappoint them down the line by saying no. And my thoughts as a coach are first of all honey, you need practice. You've been married for 30 years. You are way out of practice. You need a whole bunch of practice guys.

We've got to get all the rust and awkward parts out of the way before we meet Prince Charming.

Maisie: Oh my God, can people put that on their profile? I'm looking for some practice, guys.

Sade: No, I don't recommend. But behind the scenes there will be some practice, guys, there's no way around it. It's like getting clients. We're just going to have some no's on some consult calls. We're just going to have sometimes when we're going to mess up a consult. It's just life.

Maisie: Yeah, it is, totally.

Sade: So yeah, they try to think for the person or they try to prevent the people that interact with them, having any difficult feelings. They don't want them to ever experience disappointment or anger. They don't want to be displeasing to a partner. Or these aren't even partners yet, just humans on an app.

Maisie: But I think that's the thing is that because in some, rarely but some online interactions I've had with people is such a helpful reminder because the nature of phones and devices is that they're right in front of us and they're small. So, we get sucked into this world and as that happens, we

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can forget that these are people in my phone. I can close the app. I can block people. I can do these things. And kind of zoning out and getting that perspective be like, "Wait, this person isn't in the room with me. I don't have to respond in this moment. I don't have to figure it all out now." Giving yourself space to do that.

Sade: Yes. And that's a skill as well. One of the ways I tell clients to build that is to not date exclusively online. So dating exclusively online would be like running your business which we had to do during the pandemic, exclusively via email and Zoom. And we saw the impact of that on us as humans. That's not how we're built to do everything on this little, tiny device. And so we build two paths, one path where you are shooting fish in a barrel because everyone on the app has said, "I'm available and I'm open to an interaction." Which is nice because you have a collection of people there.

However, learning to interact in person, to actually meet men in person, meet men through your network sort of gives this more somatic energy to the journey where you're actually experiencing attention in person. You're experiencing overcoming that awkwardness. You're experiencing having people who are what I call network-in where a friend introduces you to someone. And even if it doesn't go anywhere, you have the pleasure of experiencing that person on a first date. Or you give them the pleasure of experiencing you on a first date.

You go out with your girlfriends. You join new communities and new groups where you can meet men. And I recognise this for myself, I was exclusively hanging out with women after my marriage because when you get married women do this thing, I think men do too where you stop hanging out with single people. You only start hanging out with your married friends. And even then, if you're not together as couples you only hang out with the wives. And so we create this bubble where you're only meeting certain kinds of people and I recognised that for myself.

I was only hanging out with my girlfriends even after my divorce, it was a girl's night out or nothing. I was like, "Well, I've got to move into more co-ed

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spaces because I just need to remember what it's like just to have a regular conversation with a guy who isn't a co-worker. Just a normal man out there in the world, what are they like? I don't know. I haven't seen one of those forever.

Maisie: Yeah. I've never done the online dating. I was just on the verge of maybe I'm going to give this a go and this would have been, even my mum had done online dating at this point. So I kind of missed that, I haven't experienced it, I've only heard about it through friends and clients and things. But I really love what you brought in there about the somatic experience, that bodily experience because there's a lot to be said for that interaction of nervous systems. Nervous system to nervous system, am I getting cues of safety or am I getting cues of threat or perceived threat?

I experience this all the time, does my nervous system get on with yours? Does this feel like a nervous system fit or is it something's a little bit off there? And it doesn't mean anything about that person or not. It's just right now where I am in my life, it's enough.

Sade: Yeah, it's just whether they're a match or not.

Maisie: Yeah. I got introduced to someone a while back, it was someone that someone I know was dating and they introduced her to me. And I just instantly was like, "No", instant. And I was like, "I'm just going to let you do your thing. I'm not going to push conversation or anything." I just got such a strong bodily no.

Sade: Yeah. Now, this is interesting, when my ex-husband first asked me out I said no. Isn't that fascinating?

Maisie: We're going to save my story about that for when I come on your podcast but yeah, I get that.

Sade: He was a full body no when I first met him and it was absolutely not. And then three or four years later a whole lot of things had happened, and I was in a somewhat vulnerable spot and anyway I chose from that lower place something that when I was in a higher place was a complete no.

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Maisie: Yeah. Oh my gosh, I've got stories to tell you.

Sade: We might need two hours for the next recording.

Maisie: You might, well, there's two marriages to go through so you really might. I mean just basically repetition again and again.

Sade: Yeah. Oh, my goodness and that's a thing. Let's talk about that, do we have a minute?

Maisie: We do, yeah.

Sade: That is a thing, our brains will repeat our relationships and come at it from all the angles. So, the first thing is...

Maisie: I can tell you're getting so excited to talk about this.

Sade: I know, I can talk about this all day long, all the things. So, women are told, "Hey, you need to heal before you date again." And that is true, there is some work that needs to be done, however, I do not believe that all the work should be done in isolation. I actually think the isolation and the heal yourself movement or the things that women are told about healing themselves and enjoy being single and some of it can be harmful. Because unless you have a coach or you have, you're challenging your own thoughts.

You might just be reinforcing what you already know in that bubble of being alone, you're reinforcing your thoughts about men, you're reinforcing your past experiences. So yes, there is value in getting to know yourself and taking yourself out for dinner. It really just depends on how you do it. And then there's the trap that some women fall into which is there's this endless healing. They feel like when I heal, I will feel ready to date. I will feel ready, I will confident, I will feel amazing and I will just out there and date and it will be great. That's not how it works.

I love to put in just really practical, I feel like dating is just as practical as going to school and getting a job. There's no endless preparation. There's no go be by yourself before you go and there's none of that. It's the same

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thing with relationships. There are some things you're going to have to learn on the job when it comes to dating or heal on the job.

Maisie: Yeah, I was just thinking about it as you were talking about it, how if you were leaning to swim you wouldn't endlessly learn to swim or read about swimming without getting in the actual pool and giving it a go.

Sade: The sooner you get in the pool the faster you will learn to swim. In fact, don't do any theory at all and get in the pool in a safe container in a safe way and you'll learn how to swim in a week or less.

Maisie: Yeah, and I'm thinking about watching my son have his swimming lessons how his teacher's outside of the pool watching him swim and she's like, "Try doing this instead or when you're doing this, this is what's going on." And I have a whole podcast, I can't remember which one, talking about coaching and how it is like having someone next to the pool who can see what's going on and they have a different perspective than if you are there in the pool. And I'm sure that's what you're there doing with your clients as you're coaching them through these experiences.

And I think I've heard you talk about how you do screen shares as they're going through the apps.

Sade: Yeah, 100%, and I've learned some of this as I've coached because there are some things, I just figured it out, I was like, yeah. And then we'll have clients, they'll be swiping for weeks and there's nobody. And I'm like, "How is that possible, you live in this gigantic city, how is it possible that there's nobody?" And I'm like, "You know what, let's screen share, let's go." And so then they'll screen share the way they was on and I was like, first of all they'd be going to the wrong parts of the app. This person liked me but he's terrible. And we don't care who liked you, we care who you like.

Maisie: Isn't that interesting though?

Sade: Something as tiny as being on the wrong part of the app menu.

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Maisie: But I can totally see that socialization of well, they have expressed interest in me therefore that's who's available rather than what do I want, who am I surveying out on the landscape and saying?

Sade: You would be shocked at how often that happens.

Maisie: Wow.

Sade: Yeah. Or they would have filters, and this goes back to the people pleasing and over-functioning. They would set their filters to protect the man from something they felt they didn't have.

Maisie: Can you give an example of that?

Sade: Here's an example. So, my clients tend to be 40s and up. I have clients I think my youngest client currently is maybe 39 and my oldest client is 72. And that's I call my sweet spot for clients. And so this client is in her 40s, and isn't sure, would love to have kids but isn't sure that she can and isn't sure that she would just because of the risks both to the mother and to the baby. So, she's like, "Probably not for me." So to protect men who want kids from her she's set her filters to filter out any man who wanted kids.

Maisie: Got you, wow.

Sade: Even though she would consider having kids, and here's the other part that I showed her when we finally addressed. I said, "There are some men who are open to having kids but could go either way." But what they will put on there is wants kids because they're open to it. But that doesn't mean they don't want a woman who doesn't want kids.

Maisie: I'm just fascinated.

Sade: And so she was like, "Well, there are no men", and all that. And I was like, "Let's look at your filters." And I was like, "You've cut out about 150 men right here who say they want kids." Now, granted some of them will be like, it's a deal breaker if you're not sure. But there's going to be probably about a third of them who are going to be like, "Thank God she doesn't want kids. I was open to it but I'm so glad she doesn't."

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Maisie: Yeah, because for them they're probably trying to increase their availability and options.

Sade: Yes. And I'm constantly telling my clients, "You have no idea what other people are thinking." I said, "Men are notoriously bad at filling out their profiles just like you. I had to help you. They for sure are going to be terrible at it." Secondly, these filters, and I think it helps that I have a background in information technology. So, when you use databases, when you're searching for something you have the and this, this button, not that. You get completely different results depending on what combination of filters that you are using.

And so I bring that to the process to help my clients not cut down all of their options because we are using technology. And they don't realise that behind the scenes is probably a sequel server database that is just a one or zero. because the software is not as smart as a human.

Maisie: It's binary, yeah.

Sade: It's binary, it's one or zero.

Maisie: I'm just thinking about how when I login to Netflix and it shows me the same 20 movies all the time but there's really all of these other options out there, but it just thinks I want to see those. And that's what we're doing on the apps is saying, "No, this is what I want to see." And then that's all you do see.

Sade: Yeah, 100%. I love cult exposés on Netflix but there's no genre, there's no place where you go say, "Show me every cult that has ever existed and a documentary that was made about them."

Maisie: Yeah. Oh man, I'm just so wanting to experiment with this now because I just love your approach because there's just so much curiosity there. And just really, I just love your approach. I love what you do and I don't ever think I will be, and Paul may well listen to this episode.

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Sade: You know, I wouldn't do it if I didn't have to. I will say that. So, I do present this extraordinary remarkable fun experience that leads to this amazing relationship at the end. However, if you have an amazing partner...

Maisie: Yeah, don't go looking.

Sade: Don't go looking for trouble.

Maisie: I don't need to but I will let my clients, who they're going to be so thrilled when you come in. I can't wait for you to come in and coach them all. Thank you for coming in and doing that. But yes, I'm going to be checking in with my friends and clients who were very excited about this particular podcast. So I can hear what they take away from it and I'm just so grateful to you because you just touched on so much in a short space of time. And I'm just really glad to have the conversation.

Sade: Thank you. Thank you, Maisie, I appreciate it. Dating is a huge deal. It's such a big area and it's such a big part of our lives, relationships, not just heterosexual relationships, I have worked with a couple of non-heterosexual relationships, one gay person, one non-binary person. And being able to be with people that we feel safe with, that feel nourishing to us, that see us. That's huge, we're made for that as humans. And we're built for that and so this is such a big problem to solve, it really is.

And our cultural narrative is not very helpful currently. I would love to see it change. I would love for people to stop saying, "Hey, just send this text and then you'll get the partner of your dreams." I would love for people to not play games. My clients often come to me saying, "Okay, well, I can't be too available." And I was like, "No, this is just such a natural process. It's the human process and when we approach it like that, we have more success, we have more fun. And we get more human."

Well, you see yourself as a human in this process and you see the other people on the other side as humans versus adversaries. Oh my gosh, it makes such a difference. Makes such a difference.

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Maisie: Yeah, I think that's the thing is that you can have, even if you're using strategies that are helpful of some kind but depending on the place where it's coming from it's going to have a huge difference. I was coaching someone recently on parenting actually, it wasn't dating, it was parenting. You can bring in all the parenting strategies in the world but if it's coming from a place of I don't accept my child the way they are and I want them to be this way which is a very, believe me, I have had those thoughts myself about my own son, a very human experience as a parent.

But that's going to be very different to I'm going to love and accept you as you are and I want to help you have the best experience that you can using these strategies. So that's the thing, it's the action line, the behaviour, the things we're doing can all be there. But if it's coming from a thought that you're not good enough or that you're not lovable, that you need to contort yourself or edit yourself in some way then that's not great. And I think that's why your work is just so important because it touches on all of those things. It's not like let's just get you out dating and you're going to find your person.

It's like, no, let's take care, like you said, of the whole picture and the dating.

Sade: And what to do when you meet your person because that opens up a whole new can of worms. It's amazing the thoughts you start to have, you meet the person, they're like this is the person and then the brain just goes crazy.

Maisie: Well, we'll have to do a part two at some point but I'm really looking forward to coming on your podcast soon and chatting about all the things but tell the people all the places that they can find you and how to work with you because I know there's going to be people hunting you down.

Sade: I am all in. I am all in. Thanks for having me, Maisie. And for the listeners, you can find me at sadecurry.com. It's spelt S-A-D-E C-U-R-R-Y .com. So there's no H even though there's that S-H sound, just S-A-D-E C-U-R-R-Y.com. My favourite place to hang out of course is my podcast, the Dating After Divorce podcast with Sade Curry. You'll find it on all the

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platforms that you listen to podcasts on. I am on Instagram @sadecurry, S-A-D-E C-U-R-R-Y and I am also on Facebook, so that's where I have long conversations and that's Sade Curry Life Coach on Facebook.

Maisie: Amazing. We'll make sure to put all the links in the show notes so that people can just click through and find you. I'm just so excited for all my clients who get to experience your coaching as well so thank you.

Sade: Yeah, this has been such a fun conversation, Maisie, thank you.

Maisie: I know, I know. Okay, alright everyone, we'll be back next week with another, I mean I don't know, how am I going to top these? Each episode I'm like, "Oh man, these are just such great conversations." Alright everyone, have a fantastic week. I'll catch you next time.

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