

# Does your Marriage Take a BackSeat to Kids, Work and Life?

**Reaching Roots Podcast, S1: E9**

**Monica Tanner, OnTheBrighterSide.com**

*on creating a stronger marriage*

[Intro]

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Monica Tanner is a relationship and intimacy expert. She is a wife and mother of 4 amazing children. Born in Dallas, Texas, Monica received her degree in sociology and child development from the University of Texas at Austin. She lives in Boise, Idaho with her family and is the owner of OnTheBrighterSide, a business she started to help couples strengthen their marriages given the challenges of work, kids and life.

There are lots of ups and downs in a marriage and sometimes it feels like too much. A study at the University of California at Berkeley found that after children, couples' marital satisfaction declines and there is a gradual increase of conflict, negatively affecting kids emotionally and academically. As children grow, there is a cumulative erosion of satisfaction over time. Complicating this further are the demands of work, business and everyday life that may leave you feeling guilty, unsupported by your spouse or resentful.

As parents we may fight about who-does-what in the family, issues of money and spending time together. With children, we need to negotiate a lot more issues and differences in opinion.

In this episode, we talk to Monica about how you can navigate these, work on your marriage, make it wonderful, feel better and make your children thrive. Monica

says “It's easier than you might think...you may just need some simple, time-saving, life-saving skills and strategies. Monica shares with us her thoughts on how to gain courage, commitment and conflict resolution skills, so you create better connections with your family.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Welcome Monica.

**MONICA TANNER:** Thank you, Jaison. So wonderful to be here with you.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** It is great to have you here. And I am really excited to talk about this topic. Cause I feel like I have so few answers on it.

**MONICA TANNER:** Well okay.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Tell us about maybe just tell us a little bit about yourself and how you actually got to doing this.

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah, well that was a really great intro. But my parents actually divorced when I was 12 years old and I felt like it came out of nowhere. They never argued about anything. They seemed like they were super happy to me and they just announced that, you know, they had lost connection with each other and kind of fallen out of love. And so, they were, you know, going to go their separate ways and it really just flipped my whole world upside down. And so, I became really obsessed with this question of what makes a marriage strong and lasting as well as my coping mechanism at that point in my life was to be perfect at everything. Like I just had to be really good at school and really good at sports. And in order to kind of earn love from all of these adults in my life that were kind of reorganizing.

And so, my kind of life's work, I feel like has been to answer these two questions. What makes a marriage strong and lasting and what is the definition of success and through my podcast and my courses and all the work that I do with clients, I feel like that is, those are the questions that I'm

answering and helping other people answering for themselves is how do you make your marriage really strong and lasting? Because I think that is the best thing you can do for your children. No matter what other mistakes you make in any other areas of parenting by showing them a really healthy example of a great thriving relationship, I think is the number one thing that you can do. And then what defines success for you and how do we achieve that success.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** So we're going to talk about a lot more about that in a few minutes, but I want to go back to sort of really where you started, which is, you know, your parents divorced when you were 12 years old and you said, you know, it came out of nowhere. Can you talk a little bit about that in terms of you know, was it really a complete surprise and how that kind of make you feel at that time?

**MONICA TANNER:** Well, absolutely. It was a complete surprise, but as an adult who's been married for 20 years, now I can go back and kind of see maybe what happened. But as a child, it was a complete surprise. So, my parents met when they were 16 years old, they were friends all through high school, all through college. They knew everything about each other, and they never argued or fought about anything that I could ever see. I was very in gnashed with them. I mean, I slept in their bed like, you know, all growing up. And so, it wasn't a matter of, they didn't like each other, they didn't respect each other. It's just, I don't think that they spent a good amount of time connecting and really finding things that brought them mutual enjoyment. They didn't support each other in becoming who they really ultimately wanted to become in their lives. They just got really complacent. I think they just felt like they knew each other really well and, you know, they had never experienced any other things.

And so, they just didn't. I think they just didn't grow well with each other. And so that's definitely something that I address when I talked to these couples is marriage is and being in love is an action that you have to, it's a choice. You have to continue making that choice. And if you ever decide to stop making that choice, that's where your problem comes in. Right. And so, you know, the best, most passionate, wonderful marriages is where you have two people that belong to themselves but have made room for each other in the relationship. So, we can dig into that more. Or you can just take it at face value.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. No, absolutely. Well, there's actually a lot of stuff to dig into over there. So, you know, you may be taking like the first point around, you know, you never saw your parents actually argue. And you know, most people would think that, oh, that's a really good sign of everything going well. So, can you talk a little bit about you know, what's behind that and how couples should be thinking about that?

**MONICA TANNER:** Well, conflict, I believe is a very, very, very important part of any relationship. I mean, you didn't marry your clone. And so, you're going to have differences of opinion. And I call this a little bit of relationship math. So, if you show up fully to your relationship with boundaries and opinions and who you are, then that's really good, right? But if you choose to only show up halfway, so say you have one person showing up all the way and you have one person just halfway like, oh, it's not worth the fight or whatever. Then that's one half. So, one times one half equals one half. If you have both partners just showing up halfway like, oh, we don't want to rock the boat or, you know, make a big deal out of this. You have two partners showing up pathway will a half times a half is just a quarter, right?

And so, you have this diminishing return when one or both partners in the partnership are only showing up halfway or only fighting for half of what they think is important. So, what I like to teach is when you show up fully, conflict doesn't have to be bad. In fact, I think conflict breeds passion and conflict breeds growth and it also creates an environment where you can get really creative. So, like I really dislike the word compromise because I feel like compromise is like, I only get half of what I want, and you only get half of what I want. So, there's only like a quarter of what people are happy with here. But when you submit to the idea that conflict is not bad and that you can learn how to not even always resolve conflict, cause it doesn't always, only some of the conflicts that arise in marriage actually get resolved. If you can get comfortable with that and realize that if you apply this equation, if you apply the equation, curiosity plus vulnerability equals creativity, then that's how you turn conflict into growth and creativity and something better than you started with.

But you have to have each partner in the coupleship commit to showing up fully and really leaning into their own ideas and their own thoughts and showing up fully with boundaries and opinions and creating conflict.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. You know, so much of what I hear you saying is like, you need to be yourself, you know, through this whole process. And you know, what I've experienced myself is things are things get busy, right? Life is busy, work is busy, you've got a hundred other things to kind of take care of. And the last thing you actually want to do is get into a conflict. Cause you know, it's going to take a lot of time. So, tell me about how we should be thinking about stuff like that.

**MONICA TANNER:** I will, I haven't heard anyone really say that exactly that way. Conflict takes time. Sure. Of course, it does. So, maybe I'm hearing what you're saying is something like I don't want to, I don't want to actually like rock the boat here because then I'm going to have to spend time to, you know, resolve this conflict or come to a resolution or, you know. Yeah, definitely that's interesting. But I think it's really important, especially like when you start thinking about the holidays, right. Holidays and we're recording this right before Christmas, is definitely a place where you have a lot of different ideas and, you know opinions about how things should go.

And so, I think it's really important to grow and change and be true to yourself throughout time. And so, if a conflict arises, like say, I want to do this tradition and my spouse has really feels like this tradition is important. If you just bend or if you just say, oh, well this conflict is going to take too much time if I talk about what I think is important, we'll just let her do it her way, that will be a lot less stressful and busy. Well, that's going to breed a, resentment over time. And b, chances are, if you thought, if you had the thought and this tradition was important and you just, you want to save time by not bringing it up or something. Then you're missing out on this creative collaborative tradition that you could probably come up with if you took the time to be like, I like this tradition and she likes this tradition, and if we put it together, we could probably come up with something so magical, but instead, I don't want to take the time. And I'm just going to like, let her do it her way. And I'm just going to take a back seat. I think you miss out on

growth. I think you miss out on creativity and eventually if you're not paying attention to it, it can breed a lot of frustration and resentment.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah, no, it's a great point. And, you know, I think you mentioned a word over their growth, which is when we do take the time to actually engage in that conflict. What you're saying is, something magical comes out of that and you actually grow. And that's so true because, you know, putting the time into that strengthens that connection and the opposite of that, which is ignoring it just, you know, creates other negative feelings.

**MONICA TANNER:** So good. That's right. It absolutely strengthens that connection.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** So how important is growth? You know, I always think about growth as obviously, you know, improving ourselves in terms of our skills and you know, who we are and how well we cope with life. And obviously, you know, you've given an example over here, which is the fact that, you know, hey, us actually engaging in conflict as growth also. Give me a sense of how important that growth is and how should we be looking at that across not just sort of, you know, career and other more tangible aspects, but maybe are there other sort of intangible things that we should be thinking about?

**MONICA TANNER:** I mean, I think we're here on this earth to grow, right. I mean, I think if we're not growing, we're dying. I mean, pick your statement that you cling to. But I think I mean, what we doing if we're not growing, I mean, who wants to just be, I mean, I ain't saying that because that's such a buzz word, like we are fine just being, like, I think that's really important as well, but growth in the sense of, I don't think you always have to be busy growing, but I think learning and becoming, and growth are part of the reason we're here and also the legacy we leave to our children. So by engaging in these conflicts and letting your kids see that, like two people can live together and grow together and choose each other and resolve conflict with one another, I think you're giving your children something really, really super valuable.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** What does growth look like in kind of a healthy relationship between couples?

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah, well, I think it looks like belonging to yourselves, but making room for each other and choosing to share yourselves with another person. So, I think a big misconception, or like miss information out there is that you get married and you're 50% and they're 50% and then you have this whole right. But I think what's much more effective growth mindset way to look at it is, you know, you're going to grow and change over your life. You're going to become the person that you were meant to become, and you just choose each other always. So growth looks like honoring myself, and the reason why I was put here on this earth and developing that, and being able to share that with my spouse, without fear that he's going to somehow reject me.

And so, I think it's really important to always be growing, always be learning, always being true to, you know, that spiritual kind of sense of why am I here and fulfilling that. But also, being able to share that journey with somebody else.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Right. And to make that work, it's got to work on both sides, right?

**MONICA TANNER:** I mean, yes. And it's got to work on both sides. But my job here on this earth is to not change or you know, my husband's journey and my children's journey and their story and their challenges. They don't have a lot to do with me. And so, I'm not here to manage all of them. I'm here to witness them and to support them and to love them as they grow and develop into their own people as well. So, yes, it has to work both ways. However, you're going to be much happier in your life and in your marriage, if you're not trying to direct or manage anything that anybody else is doing.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. I think there's a nuance there in terms of how you define you're defining a role and the role isn't to sort of control others. The role is to maybe encourage and help them grow. Very cool. Very cool. So, you talk about

you know, obviously in a family, we've got kids and you brought up the point about arguments earlier, how should couples be arguing around their kids? Should they be arguing around their kids?

**MONICA TANNER:** Absolutely. I mean, when you say argue, I think that word has a lot of negative connotation. I think respectfully disagree, have differences of opinion, work out any conflicts. Yes. Arguing, I mean, if that's how you work out differences, then so be it. But I think it's really important to model for your children, what it looks like to be in disagreement with somebody, or to have a big difference of opinion, because you're going to have differences of opinion with your spouse, with your coworkers, with your friends, with your parents, you know, those things happen. Cause we all are people. And I think it's important to show your kids what it looks like to have boundaries.

I think it's important to show your kids what it means to respect yourself and your opinions and your thoughts, and to respect other people and to show them what it looks like when mom and dad don't agree and they come to a resolution or they agree to disagree, or they keep moving forward with whatever is happening. I think that's so important for the kids to see.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Right. And what would be the impact because there are definitely people you know, I've sort of experienced it also where, you know, you could have a disagreement and then, you know, nothing really happens in front of the kids and you know, we're back the next day or two days later and everything's okay. Do you think that's a positive thing for the kids? Do you think it's actually negative for the kids?

**MONICA TANNER:** Meaning you worked it out behind closed doors?

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Exactly.

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah. I don't think they need to see everything. I mean, I don't think all of the dirty laundry needs to be out. I think it's

important to be mindful of, of the kids' ages and their development and what they're going through personally. I mean, I remember a time in our marriage where you know, we felt very comfortable getting in these big arguments in front of our kids and, you know, there'd be tears and are you guys going to get a divorce? And, you know, it was funny because we'd look at them like, no, never we love each other. And, you know, we kind of had to like, sometimes love looks like this. And so, it was a great teaching moment.

So, I think it's just important to be aware of what you are showing your children that love and a healthy relationship look like. So, I wouldn't have every disagreement in front of your kids, and I don't think you need to resolve every problem. I mean, my husband and I take lots of drives and lots of walks where we work things out, you know on our own. But definitely incorporating some of that negotiation in front of them is important.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. And I guess speaking to them about it and being open with them about it.

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah. Like, sometimes, you know, like I've had moments where I've just been on the couch and I'm sad and my kids will ask me, you know, what's going on? And I'll say, oh, you know, mommy and daddy are having a disagreement right now. And I'm just trying to work on my thoughts or whatever, you know? And so they get to see, like, it's not all, I don't think we should model, like it's all rainbows and butterflies all the time, but I also think that they need to see you having fun together and enjoy each other. So, it's a good balance. Just show them what life in a healthy relationship, whatever that looks like for you looks like.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Right. That was my phone ringing in the background. So, someone's got it. So, you know, you mentioned conflict and conflict is really difficult to actually deal with. And you know, you also in the intro and I think from our conversation before, you said you might have some strategies that parents can actually work on that could actually help them deal with the conflict. Could you talk a little bit about what those might be?

**MONICA TANNER:** Sure. So, when I teach about conflict, I teach an equation, which is curiosity, plus vulnerability equals creativity, and this is how we turn conflict into creativity. So, if you're doing algebra, it's like in a conflict situation, you want to be curious. So, the first thing you want to do is be curious about your partner's difference of opinion or whatever the conflict is instead of just, you know, jumping to conclusions or whatever. It's good to ask a lot of questions. So, you know like I wonder why you feel this way or why this is so important to you or where is this, you know, all of the sudden your strong opinion on this issue, where does this come from? So by suspending judgment and being very curious, you can gain a lot of information and typically that's like going to help you definitely be able to see each other's points of view much better if you'll start with curiosity and then being able to be vulnerable.

So that is sharing your position or your opinion with vulnerability, like this tradition is really important to me because, you know, it brings me back to, you know, how I felt as a five-year-old little girl and the magic of Christmas or whatever. So being able to share vulnerably invites vulnerability from your spouse as well. And once you come to a place of understanding and not judgment, then you can really come up with creative solution that I feel like when you do this the right way, you always come up with something better than either one of you started with, right. So, you're adding, so curiosity and vulnerability, I think add instead of takeaway. So it's not like compromise where we're like, we need to take away this part of your idea and this part of your idea, but you add, instead you get curious and you get vulnerable and you add to, you add to the equation until you come up with something really, really awesome that everybody feels good about.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Right, right. That's really good. You know, I think about sort of some of the first emotions that occur in a conflict and they tend to be defensiveness you know, our ego is sort of taking over. And so, to instead think of that, as curiosity as an emotion that should take over will really lead you down it seems like a more constructive path.

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah. Like even, I mean, even in like, you know, you tend to think like, you know, when you're really tired or like when you think when conflict starts to arise, like if you'll always start with like, huh, I

wonder why he responded that way. Or, you know, like it always diffuses the situation if you start with the question instead of like, oh, he's such an idiot and such a jerk, and why is he always coming here upset like that? Or if you just go, I wonder why, when I do this, he responds this way. And if you can bring that curiosity into it usually really diffuses those defensive or, you know, fighting back or those types of initial reactions that typically occur when there's a conflict.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Tell me a little bit more about the second part of this equation, which is vulnerability, and you know, that's easy to say hard to do.

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah. You're right. Especially for males typically.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yes, absolutely. Any tips in terms of like, you know, how we could work on something like that.

**MONICA TANNER:** Ooh, that's a good question. I don't know. I've been asked too much, I would say, okay. Well, yes. I have been asked this question a lot actually. I would say my very first tip is to start small with vulnerability. Like don't like to try to like to get naked immediately. Baby steps. So, one method I like to suggest if vulnerability is kind of new to you and a little bit scary is called the five, five, five. And so, bring up something that you've been meaning to talk about or bring up or something like that. And you can say, let's do a five, five, five, and a five, five, five is where I share for five minutes, how I feel about this topic. And then you get to respond for five minutes about the same subject, and then we'll discuss it for five minutes. And then the conversation is over.

And if you have to repeat it again at a later date, that's fine, but you don't have to worry like, oh, we're going to like, pour our hearts out. We're going to be here for three hours. And it's never, you know, if you put really good boundaries on it and you'd be like, I'm going to get vulnerable. Here's how I'm feeling about this. Let's do a five, five, five about it. So, you know, only five minutes, I'm going to bare my soul whatever comes out for five minutes and then you can respond for five minutes. We'll work through it for five

minutes and then we'll move on to something else, that typically helps a lot with the vulnerability thing.

Cause I think a lot of people think vulnerability has to take a long time and there has to be a lot of emotions and tears involved and that's like a big turnoff for a lot of people.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. I mean, it's just hard to do because you're putting yourself out there. And people just, you know, usually are afraid of that.

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah. Another, here's another good suggestion for vulnerability. One of the things I talk about a lot with my students is learning how to process your own emotions, because I see what happens a lot in these interactions between men and women is women tend to process their emotions out loud and they don't want anyone to fix them or whatever. They're just processing. And men, I think it like freaks them out sometimes because they're like, I've got to fix this, and the women don't want it fixed. And so, I teach a lot about learning how to process your emotions by yourself. And then once you figure out, like, what is this, what does this all mean? What do I really need? Bringing it then without all of those emotions then to the conversation.

And so being able to process, having a good practice. So, a lot of times it can be journaling. It could be calling a friend, but learning how to process those emotions on your own and then bringing your needs or your whatever it is to the conversation with all those emotions peeled back is another good way to be vulnerable. So, there's less emotions involved. There's less, like my husband is very anti emotion. If I come to him and I'm crying and I have, he's like, oh my gosh, this is too much. I can't handle this. But if I do my crying on my own and I get to the root of it. Like, here's what I'm really asking for. And I go to him, it's like easy.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. But isn't it, I mean, you know, I can hear people saying, well, yeah, but you know, you should be there to support me through those emotions.

**MONICA TANNER:** That's not necessarily true. I don't believe that actually at all. I believe if, especially for women, I think it's good to have a best friend that you can go to with like your irrational preprocessed emotions, especially if your spouse is not a big emotional person. I believe the same with business. So, a lot of people come to me and they're like, my spouse doesn't support my business. He doesn't ever want to talk about, he like, you know, zones out when I start talking about my business. And I'm like, don't talk about your business with your spouse, have a business bestie, and then share your wins or share your insecurities or share your feelings about your business. But if your husband's not interested in your business, that doesn't mean he's not supporting you. It just means you need to find another outlet for those types of conversations.

So same thing with emotions. I mean, if you tend to be really emotional about things, then find a person, not a lot of people find a person that you can process through those emotions with, and then go to your spouse with like, here's what I need or here's how I feel about this. Look in and go over well better.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** So what you're saying is, I mean, you know, you can have people for different conversations and you should figure out what those are and your spouse doesn't have to be the person for all conversations. And it's okay if they're not.

**MONICA TANNER:** That's a lot of responsibility for one person, don't you think?

**JAISON DOLVANE:** I think so. I mean, you know, I guess I'm hearing you say that is sort of like a weight off of ones shoulders maybe.

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah. I mean, even a therapist too. Yeah. I mean, it can be a friend, it can be your mom, it can be a therapist. But your spouse doesn't have to be the receptacle of all things at all times. You can definitely

have people that help you through different things. And then of course share the outcome with your spouse. But they don't have to be your end all, be all of everything.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Makes sense. Really good advice. So, Monica, do you have an example of a five, five, five that you might have done or one of your kind of, you know, unnamed customers might have been able to kind of take on?

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah. So, a five, five, five. Okay, about business. Business, like finances is a big popular five, five, five that I talk about or needing more support in a business is a big five, five, five. So, for example I have a lot of passionate female entrepreneurs who feel like their spouse isn't giving them the support they need in their business. And so, I recommend that what they do is start with a five, five, five. And that is, so instead of giving your, like, just dumping, unloading on your spouse, that you feel like they're not supporting you, and you're carrying the weight of all this things, and you're building a business and on the childcare and the housework and all of the things, and they're not doing anything. So instead of approaching it like that, I'll say, come up with like one tangible thing that your spouse could do to show you more support, start with a five, five, five. And just like, you're going to have to probably, unless both partners are consuming my content together, then they'll know what a firefight five is.

But if one partner knows what a five, five, five is, they'll have to educate the other partner. And they'll have to say like, hey, listen, I want to have a discussion with you, but so that you're not afraid that this discussion is going to take hours. And, you know, you're like locked into this thing. I'm going to teach you about this concept called five, five, five. So, it's like 15 minutes. I'm going to, I'm going to tell you how I feel for five minutes. And then you you'll have a chance to respond for five minutes. We're literally going to set the timer and then we'll talk through it for five minutes. And then we get to go do something fun, like go get ice cream or go for a run or whatever that is fun and enjoyable.

And so, I suggest like if you're feeling unsupported, feeling frustrated, you feel like you need your spouse to participate more in something. Then write

down a tangible thing. Like it would really help if on Thursday nights at five, from five to six, you could manage dinner and chores while I have this mastermind meeting or whatever, come up with something really specific and then say, hey, hun, I'd love to have a five, five, five with you say, and then, you know, start your five minutes with like, hey, my business is really, it's getting to an exciting place. I just signed up for this mastermind. I think it's really awesome. And it really, really helped me a ton if you could, on Thursday night, manage dinner and you know, take care of the kids and have them do their chores or homework or whatever, from five to six, while I do this mastermind, and then I'll come out and, you know, fully participate. If you need a break, let me know whatever, blah, blah, blah.

And then get their feedback for five minutes. So if that means like, hey, I'm willing to do that, but I need you to give me like a dinner assignment or like, you know, have them tell you what they need to be successful with that. Talk it through for five minutes and then go do something fun. So that's a good example of a five, five, five.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. That is good, actually. So, I want to come back to your creativity. No, sorry. Curiosity plus vulnerability equals creativity. We talked about the first two. Tell us what creativity looks like, what an outcome could look like?

**MONICA TANNER:** Oh gosh give me a subject matter. Like, are we talking business? Are we talking traditions? Are we talking about a family vacation?

**JAISON DOLVANE:** What about kids?

**MONICA TANNER:** like how to parent the kids, how to discipline the kids?

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Maybe a difference of opinion around, you know, some activities that the kids need to be doing or not doing or screen time. Screen time is a good one.

**MONICA TANNER:** That's a great one. Perfect. That's a perfect example. So, my husband have, and I have very differing opinions on when it's appropriate to allow our kids to do social media. So that's like a huge one. So, this is a good, very good example of this curiosity, right? Curiosity, vulnerability, creative solution. So, my husband feels like social media, the kids shouldn't be on it ever. It's horrible. It doesn't do anything for anyone. It's the biggest waste of time. And our kids should not be allowed to be on social media ever. Like that's kind of his stance on it. Me being on social media every day for my business, I feel like there's a lot of value in social media. I feel like they need to learn how to navigate social media while they're still in our home. Okay. I'm still help them. Because I don't want them going out on their own and having absolutely no experience with it. So, we come from two very different viewpoints.

So, we could compromise where nobody really wins, but we just say, okay, you know, here's a solution and it's partially yours and partially mine. Or we could apply this curiosity plus vulnerability. So, the first thing I want to do is ask my husband, tell me why you feel so strongly about social media. I want to understand what you're afraid of, where you're coming from, what your experiences here, that you do not want the kids to ever have it. So, then he gets to tell me, like, here's my experience with it. I feel like it's a big waste of time. I feel like it's destructive these ways, right? So now I have, now I have so much more information instead of just thinking, well, that idea is stupid. I don't like the way he's thinking about that. And right now, I'm like way more open to receiving like, okay, here's where his general motivation is. These are his fears. These are the concerns that we can now let's, and then I can be vulnerable, and I can be like, listen, love, you know, this is how I feel about it. Like, I don't want my kids being out in the real world for the first time, like opening up a social media app and having no idea how to navigate it. And then mom's not anywhere around to help them with this.

So, like now I'm getting vulnerable. So, I accepted his ideas. I got really curious to find out where he was coming from. Then I could share with him

how I feel about it. And then we come up with this great solution. Like, let's continue to interview our children as they grow up.

And at some point, in high school, when we both feel like they're ready and we both feel like we can help them, then we allow them slowly to go into social media. And I can also share my fears with my husband too. Like, one of my fears is like, yeah, we're going to say no, they can't be on social media. And they're going to secretly figure out how to have this burner phone or do it at their friend's house. So, like, I have my concerns that I share as well. And he's open to listening to my concerns. Typically, when this whole thing starts, you've got one person who's open to it and one person who's not, but it's very disarming if I come to my spouse, who's not open to it. And I've modeled for him. This is what curiosity looks like.

And I start with the vulnerability and typically vulnerability invites, vulnerability and curiosity disarms. So instead of being like, that's a stupid idea, what you're, that doesn't even make sense, what you're thinking. Instead I'm asking a lot of questions and that's totally disarming. So, then we come up with a very creative solution together that takes into account our needs, our concerns, our vision for the future that we can both. And that's not to say that that's like end all be all. It will probably evolve over time. Our social media plan for our kids. It would probably be different with each child, but now I know where, how he's thinking and like what he's worried about. And so, we can make educated decisions together.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. And really, I think it's illuminating the, your equation is illuminating because it actually is creating room for conversation. And respect because you're taking each other's perspective into account. Very cool. So, tell me a little bit about your business and what do you do for parents or couples and how you help them.

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah. So right now, I'm creating a course, but I'm really, really excited about, and it's basically taking into consideration. I've been doing this for a long time. I haven't worked one-on-one with a lot of couples. I've done a lot of group coaching. And so, I've been creating this content for a long time. I've been, I've had my podcasts for over three years, and I've had these group coaching programs. And so, I'm very familiar with the struggles that couples have opening up to each other, combining

entrepreneurship and marriage juggling, all of it. I'm very familiar with the pain points and the things that these couples, one thing that I want to really, really, really get across is for some reason, getting help in your marriage has the stigma to it. Like, oh, there must be something wrong if you're seeking help from a marriage coach or something like that.

And I just want to dispel that because I think the happiest of married couples are constantly trying to improve their interactions with each other. I mean, you know, you're constantly seeking self-improvement. Nobody has any problem talking about their, what's it called? Exercise coach, their trainer, their personal trainer, right? Nobody has any trouble talking about their business coach and marriage should be the same. It's a very important aspect of our life and we should want to improve it. So even if our marriage is great, and if we're experiencing some conflict or some resistance in our marriage doesn't mean that anything's broken or anything's wrong with our marriage, but it does mean that learning some skills and some strategies could really, really vastly improve our experience.

And so that's what I'm doing with this course is I'm trying to give you the skills, strategies, and frameworks that work really well to navigate these intersecting aspects of our life, which are marriage, parenting and entrepreneurship.

And so, the course is really fun. It's called training in the art of [41:12 inaudible], which [41:12 inaudible] these skills that super spy would use to avoid all of the, like, I like to think of it like that hallway with the lasers, you know, coming down, pointing down, right. Those are like all the things that are out to get us. Our business and our conflict and all these things are like these lasers. And so [41:39 inaudible] is just like learning how to get through all of those lasers unscathed.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Right. Navigate through that. Yeah. People usually do not like talking about their marriage because it feels like we failed. And it's that, it's that vulnerability, but I think what you've done today by providing a couple of tools with some of your equations should hopefully give people some hope that,

hey, there's actually some fairly simple things that can be, that can be learned which can actually help them just operate better in their marriage.

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah, that's it, this is like, I mean, a rising tide raises all ships, right? And so, when we improve the quality of our relationships, our life gets better. If we improve the quality of our business, our life gets better. And so, there's no shame in, you know, learning some skills to improve our relationship. Like that's actually a really good thing. And if your spouse is showing some resistance to you working in your business or whatever it is that you feel very passionate about, it is not a bad thing. It's not a bad thing. So, I want people to see, you know, improving their relationships as something they can really do to improve the quality of their life and not because something is broken.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. Yeah. Makes sense. So, I have a couple of questions that I usually ask everyone. So one is, is there a feeling that you have as a parent that you would rather not feel?

**MONICA TANNER:** Ooh, that's a good question. I mean, always inadequacy, right? I mean, I always want to feel like I'm being the best parent I could possibly be, but I have learned over time that I think that, that for me, I've made a lot of mistakes and I'm certain I will continue to make mistakes as a parent. But the most important thing I can do is love their dad and really honor my relationship with him and then all the parenting mistakes that I make, they'll be fine.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. Good point. And so, you, you know, you've created this business, you're helping a lot of people. Is this kind of giving you a deeper satisfaction? Is this transforming you in some way? Can you talk a little bit about, you know, outside of any kind of monetary success you know, what else this might be doing for you?

**MONICA TANNER:** A hundred percent. So, when we started this conversation, I told you about how my coping mechanism as a little girl was just to be perfect at everything. And I think that I really got kind of calloused

in my teenage years, I kind of felt like I couldn't depend on anyone. I just had to, like, if something was going to happen, I had to make it happen. Nobody was going to help me. And that's a terrible way live your life. But I did so for a very long time. And what happened was after my third child was born, I hit total rock bottom. I had this debilitating anxiety where I had no choice but to accept help, I had people coming over, helping me with meals, helping me take care of my children, helping me get dressed in the morning at times. Like I honestly had to learn how to accept some help.

And so, to answer your question, I learned that one of the most important things we can do in this life is to allow other people to help us. And then when we're stronger past it help others or pass that wisdom along to others. So yes, I get a lot of satisfaction, enjoyment out of going through things that are difficult, learning things, and then being able to pass that knowledge along to somebody who might need it.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. Yeah. That's excellent. And what is your hope for our world going forward or your kids or anything you might think of?

**MONICA TANNER:** That's a great question. Maybe I'll answer that question with a quote. So, my favorite quote is life is not about weathering the storm, but about learning to dance in the rain. So, what I hope for the world and for my children is not that they're not going to make mistakes. Not that they're not going to go through hard things and not that everything's going to go back to normal is that they will learn how to dance, whatever that means for them through life. So, take whatever moment that they're in and find the silver linings and learn how to manage to the best of their ability and learn what they need to learn. Because I think that really is what, what was intended for us is to just not to always be wanting and wishing and waiting for something different, but to just enjoy the time that we're in and, and, and share our joy with others.

**JAISON DOLVANE:** Yeah. That's excellent. Excellent thoughts, Monica. Well, thank you so much for your time today. I really appreciate it.

**MONICA TANNER:** Yeah, you bet. This was really fun. Yeah.

[Outro]

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