

Episode 030 Transcript

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How to Decide if You're Ready for Kids

Meredith: Hey there and welcome to episode 030 of the Simply Great Relationships podcast. We're so glad you could join us today. I'm Meredith Silversmith and this is Marina Voron, and today, we're talking about "How to Decide if You're Ready for Kids"

Marina: Mhmm.

Meredith: We're gonna be covering - Is there a right time to have a baby, what makes it hard to have the baby talk especially when everyone around you says it's time, how to explore your individual feelings around this decision, and then how to collaborate with your partner on this decision because that's really important as well. So make sure you stay with us until the very end because we've got a great bonus for you and we're gonna tell you how to get it. So Marina, dear Marina, is there a right time to have a baby in your opinion?

Marina: I wish the answer is yes. I know some of you may have noticed that we took a little bit of hiatus in January and that is because I had a baby.

Meredith: You did! You did!

Marina: So this is definitely a talk that is near and dear to my heart and I think I understand it on a new level now but I think a lot of the stuff that we're gonna be talking about today are things George and I did that I think really, really helped us with this transition, but yeah, I had a baby boy named Lev who I've just met and he's great. So, yeah, we had a little bit of break because I needed to do mom stuff.

Meredith: Definitely!



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Marina: Back to the questions in terms of - is there such a thing as a good time or perfect time? I can tell you, no such thing. I think there will always be something that comes up and if you're waiting for that though in your calendar where you're gonna say, "Well, I have these nine months and after that I have this chunk of time." That's not gonna happen and I think I can speak for myself and then I can speak from experience with other women that I've coached through this and other couples that I've coached through this. You're gonna try to lock it down like that. You're only gonna set yourself up for more stress because what you're really doing is projecting an expectation on tight timeline that is very, very, very most likely not gonna come through.

Meredith: Mhmm. Yeah! That makes sense! And I think the reality is no one's ever really ready. You think you're ready or maybe you think you're not ready but you're never gonna be 100% ready. You can put in your best efforts to be emotionally ready, mentally ready, physically healthy or get yourself as an individual and then your relationship into the best place it can be in preparation but that's pretty much all you can do and the rest is up to the universe's decision, yeah?

Marina: Yeah, sure! I think that! But I think you can't underestimate the value of the things you can do for pre-emptively in terms of getting to that good place emotionally, mentally and physically, however, it is probably the biggest transition you're gonna navigate as a human being.. So to expect like, "I know exactly what this is gonna go like and I'm gonna have all this control over it." is a little bit setting yourself up for failure. I think a big part of actually knowing you're getting closer to the right time is that accepting that belief that you're not gonna have total control.

Meredith: Mmm. Yeah!

Marina: And that things are gonna come up and there's gonna be a lot of uncertainty and this huge learning curve that you go through and that that's okay as long as you feel like your relationship is your backbone and there is that resilience and flexibility in it can navigate such a transition.

Meredith: Yeah, makes sense! What do you think makes it so hard for couple to talk about this topic? Because I do think it kinda becomes like a taboo topic. I've had couples that I've met with where when I do my individual sessions, one partner will sometime bring it up and be like, "We can't talk about that." or "We don't talk about that."

Marina: Yeah! Definitely! I've had that also quite a bit. It seems like it's a really loaded topic for a lot of couples. I think there can be a lot of fear around it.

Meredith: Mhmm.

Marina: And I think the fear can come from different places. I think one big thing is having a baby, people weigh that mentally to "And I'm giving up my fun, responsibility-free, childless life".

Meredith: Mhmm.

Marina: "Am I ready for that transition when chronologically, I'm supposed to be." So I think like, "Let me avoid the conversation. That will be easier than facing that as a reality." What are some things that you've seen?



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Meredith: I think some couples, and they may not even realize it until we sort of bring it out, but there's this fear of the relationship changing. So either they're really happy with how the relationship is and they don't want that to change or maybe they're even not thrilled with how the relationship is right now and they're fearful of what will happen if they do bring a baby into that situation.

Marina: Yeah, sure! And that makes a lot of sense! Having a baby is a huge transition and I think, just to add to that, there is this expensive vulnerability and questioning the integrity of the relationship when it comes to having the baby talk. And I think that's where some feelings come up for people and questioning like, "Will we make it through here? Are we strong enough as a couple? Am I strong enough and resilient enough as an individual? Will we be good at it together? Will we be a good team?" Even if one person feels ready to take on that responsibility. It's also questioning the dynamics because you're bringing a baby and not just for yourself. You're bringing it into a partnership and I think those questions can be so scary for people to be really touch on such vulnerable point. It's like, "Are we gonna be good at this thing that's really hard and scary and uncertain?"

Meredith: Yeah.

Marina: And there is no answer, right? There is no way to look ahead. There is no assessment you can take that's really gonna give you a definitive "Yes, you are!". And that picks up a lot of fear.

Meredith: Mhmm. Yeah! And just hearing you talk about that, I think if some of that is resonating with a listener or a viewer, you can go back to our episode on vulnerability. I don't know the number but we'll link it in the show notes. I know it's called "Talking about the scary stuff" because that can help you sort of get into this topic a little bit more with your partner. But the reality is everything we've touched on so far, all the worries and the fears are totally normal. In saying that these fears can easily paralyze people but they shouldn't necessarily because these are normal fears and normal anxieties in making this decision.

Marina: Unfortunately, the social narrative is, "You should be super thrilled and super excited to take on this journey." That is where a lot of these questioning come from. People are really - they feel, "Oh! Something's wrong with me that I am not just going to changing my life completely." And it's really important to accept that this is normal to hear it from pretty much every couple I've seen transition to parenthood, this has come up. I've never worked with a couple that's like "We're so ready. We are on the same page. Everything is gonna be great. We're not fearful at all." But society tells you that this is how you should feel and I'm just gonna call a little bit of bullshit on that.

Meredith: It's not unlike the decision to get married. Again, "I should be so happy, I should be so excited, there should be no stress." and all these should, should shoulds. And then our relationship should be - we should be soulmates. He should just know all the stuff." And is that a reason to not get married? No! Are you ever gonna attain that level of excitement and reach that bar? Probably not if you're based in reality. I always think of it that way. Like try to find - maybe try to find past experiences where you set the bar kinda high. And did you get through it? And was it necessary to get there? And did the world collapse when you did it anyway? Probably not.



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Marina: And to add to that, there is that social grader, societal, social pressure but there is also a lot of what makes the conversation hard to have is also feeling that overwhelming pressure from the stakeholders, parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, that can make the conversation really hard because what happens is all these “stakeholders”, they take away the decision from you. It feels more like their decision and not yours.

Meredith: Yeah! And you really gotta remember that it's not, it's not their decision. If you move forward, they are not gonna be the ones sleeping with the baby. They're not gonna be the ones changing their whole life and 24/7 on duty and shifting their relationship and creating a new type of partnership. They want that for you or for them for their own reasons. We talk sometimes different people's buckets like their stuff that they are bringing with them. You've got your parent, your mom or your dad saying to you, “When are you gonna get me a grandchild? I want that.” That's probably coming from a need that they have. Not necessarily something that you're doing wrong or that you shouldn't be doing differently.

Marina: And them being the grandparents is a very different role than you being a parent. That's really important to also say, “Were you aware of that their wants come from a very different place than yours and it's okay for them to have that want.” They're the one who wants grandchildren. It doesn't mean you have to meet their every want but you can have that conversation and if you have that relationship with your parents, I think that's a beautiful conversation to have.

Meredith: Yeah! Definitely! And even if you think of friends, I know we talk about that a lot where people will have certain circle of friends. And it feels like everybody's dream. Everybody got married, everybody's having babies. And that can create some sort of pressure. And again, that's probably more of an indirect pressure. Your parent or a family member asking you directly, when are you going to do this. That's one thing. But the indirect pressure of your social group where the people spend time or making that decision. Again, you re-evaluate where your thoughts are coming from. Is it “I wanna fit in” or “I feel left out” or “I feel disconnected”. Is it something within you because then that's a YOU thing that you want to tackle first versus I really want this because I want to raise a child. Or I want to be in partnership with my spouse and be parents together. You gotta really think through what's driving that motivation.

Marina: Yeah! I'm really happy we touch on that because I have a couple, really young couple that I was working with where she brought up the child conversation and really startled him. And when we did some working, I asked her “What's the impetus to bringing the conversation up?” She said, “my Facebook friends post pictures with their babies.” And I said, “So what?” She doesn't even realize that she was really absorbing that social media indirect pressure and it was influencing her to that level. And they were like “No, we wanna enjoy married life. We had just gotten married.” And their whole plan was to really wait a couple of years and enjoy their married life because they have finished school. And this was their first kind of opportunity to do the things they wanted. And they had this really great list of places they wanted to travel and things they want to experience before having kids because they did have that conversation before getting married which is wonderful. And then by Facebook, by social media. Don't give it that much power, right? That's always my message. Don't give social media that much power because you are seeing somebody's redacted, curated life. You're not seeing them pull their hair in the middle of the night when their baby won't stop screaming.



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You're seeing professional photos of their baby looking like a little angel. And sure, it's allowed to stir up some feelings in you but it doesn't necessarily mean that just because all your highschool friends are doing it and that is time or the right decision for you right now.

Meredith: Yeah! Yeah! Absolutely! That's a really good point. It's very powerful. In thinking along those lines having to decide for yourself, some questions to ask. And as I am thinking of these questions, they can really be tough. They sound straightforward but these are some real deal questions. "Do I want kids?" Marina: That's a super hard question for a lot of people. I've seen that one really bring up a lot of emotions because I think up until recently that we're not even allowed to ask ourselves that question. If you got married, you signed the contract saying, yes my next step is I want kids. But I think you are allowed to ask yourself that question. Meredith: Yeah! Absolutely! And then, do we want kids, because it is just not you necessarily. It's you and your partner, so do we both want kids, because let me tell you what's a really not great time to bring a baby in to the mix is when one of you wants and one of you doesn't or isn't sure. That's something that's gotta be worked out and talked through and resolved before you take that step. Marina: Definitely! The last question that's really, really important in terms of asking and doing this work for yourself is, "Is my partner who I envision as my co-parent?" Again, there's been this kind of expectation of "The person you married does it, you have kids, and white picket fence, live in the suburbs", you know, but there's so much more pertaining and there's - we're coming to a place where we're allowed to accept all different kinds of relationships now. Where you don't necessarily have to have kids. And the reality is, if you may not see your partner as someone that you're able to co-parent with but you do have a wonderful relationship. Co-parenting or raising children may not yet the center of your relationship. And that's okay. And the loss your mom will go through by not having grandchildren is your mom's work, not yours.

Meredith: Yeah! Those are some tough questions but important questions. I was just gonna say, how would you recommend going through the process of exploring your own feelings? How would we start looking at this as an individual?

Marina: I think it's really important to know your stuff. What stuff are you holding onto from your childhood, from your family of origin that is one building your ideas and beliefs around what parenthood is, what bringing the challenge to the fullest but what's overwhelming about being a parent? How were you parented?. How do you see your parents? What was their journey? What are the triggers around that for you?

Meredith: Definitely! And then once you get the sense of those answers, how does that translate into you as a parent, right? Do I see myself being able to be the kind of parent that I want to be. Where's the gap, where are my now, where do I wanna be and what's that gap? How do I fulfill that gap? How do I make the jump? What work do I need to do as an individual? What work do I need to do to collaborate with my partner on? Things like that are really important.



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Marina: And it's also about, do I see myself as being capable of being the kind of parent I want to be in terms of "I need to accept that I am the person I am". You're not gonna transform overnight and all of a sudden go to the gym at 6 am and cook every meal at home and do all these things you've never done before. It's like "Do I understand my limitations around this? Do I understand that I'm not gonna transform into Gwyneth Paltrow level, health guru." Is that something you envision of being important if right now you're eating fast food for every meal? I think it's realizing that you can make behavioural changes but you're not gonna change who you are at your core. And if that gap is a little too much for yourself, you really need to real your expectations in a bit.

Meredith: Yeah! Yeah! That's a great point. And then, you're looking at yourself, you're evaluating where you're at or what your experiences have been. And then you need to take a look at your relationship and consider "What does my relationship need to look like in order for us to feel secure in it and feel like we're ready to bring a baby in the mix?"

Marina: And these are really hard questions and a lot of couples come to us way after the fact because they didn't go through these questions or because maybe they thought about it, really hard feelings came up and sometimes we don't know what to do with that emotional plotting. And I think taking a little bit of that "preventive medicine" type coaching can really do wonders in terms of processing through these.

Meredith: Yeah! Life is life, right? Things happen. We see a lot of couples who didn't even have the opportunity to have these questions. They didn't go through this process because the baby just came. I think that's a really challenging situation for a lot of reasons but those couples I want to connect with - and I find I do connect with like they sort of find us - but even more because they're in it already. The decision has been made, so we need to sort of jump backwards and go through this process and get you on the same page having a plan being ready. Like having as many tools at your disposal as possible because it might be a little more challenging when it wasn't necessarily a planned and intentional decision.

Marina: But I love seeing that transformation. I'm just like thinking of this now and I just love seeing that transformation and they have a bit of a surprise baby and they really were on the same page and when it clicks, that moment happens and it's really click for them. We are in it and we have to start using our tool. It was such a powerful transformation and then it's just shifted something so well for them. It just started going so nicely and smoothly for them. And it was a pretty cool process or so so.

Meredith: Yeah! A lot of stuff with couples in general, it's not that anyone so far off the mark. It's that we feel like we're so far off the mark. So sometimes even just knowing that you're not and knowing that if you just tweak this and that and communicate in this way, it'll bring you back to that goal and that how you want your relationship to feel, relieve so much anxiety and just helps sort of put the weapons down and you don't have to be at battle. You just need to make some tweaks. I find that, that's probably the biggest change factors.



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Marina: Yeah! And it's our favorite thing. The small investment make up for it. And I think when couples find out, it's mind blown. I don't have to completely change my life around. I just have to say the things I want to say like just a little bit differently.

Meredith: Definitely! What you want from your relationship, we kinda touched on it. Being on the same page, having a plan like having a game plan, being emotionally supportive of one another is really the key. And having a shared vision. What do we want this to look like? How do we want to be as parents? Those are probably the very core areas to focus on.

Marina: Yeah! And just to go with share visions, one of my favorite exercises with couples is not just what do we want this to look like but how do we make that happen for each other? How do we utilize each other as an accountability partners and as a course to stay on track to that. So that you realize that you have this really valuable asset in your relationship that you're not that two I's and that you're a WE like we talked about in our previous episode. And that WE has this built in wonderful support system that you're allowed to utilize to your advantage especially during a time of transition.

Meredith: Yeah! That's really good point. How would you recommend couples start with this? Starting this process of collaborating with their partner on the transition.

Marina: Well, you know I love me my communication mood. I think that learning and being able to talk about it without it being a super feeded taboo topic that goes from zero to sixty like this, is probably the biggest thing you can do. So go back to Episode 1, listen to it if you haven't, it so important then download the communication tip sheet. We're gonna link it down below. And really, really stick to those guidelines in having this conversation because I am dealing to bet huge money in the fact that you probably haven't been using those tools in having these conversations. And you're hitting the wall or you're talking not so nicely to each other because this is such an emotionally charged topic. My first thing is start having the conversation in a different way and in a way that you focus on collaboration and understanding as opposed to, "What is our resolution? When are we going to start trying? When are we going to have a baby?" This is how it's gonna be, right?

Meredith: Yeah! And don't think you're gonna come to a decision in one conversation. If this is a marathon, not a sprint, don't think you're gonna sit down to be like, "Okay, today, we're deciding". It's a process.

Marina: Definitely! I can tell you with George, we started having conversation way back when, but he started having the conversation kinda knowing that we're not ready. Just have the conversation on the table because I think if you are start doing that, when it is on the table, it feels a lot less overwhelming because it has already been on the table. And then it's just kinda shifting the tune to, "We know we want this then we're not ready. We know we want this whether we need to look for signs of readiness. We know we want this and now we are ready so what do we need to do to support each other and stand for it." But really for us, this is kind of a little bit funny because both of us are same facilitators in this really nice research-based curriculum for transitioning couples from being a couple to parenthood and it's really, really great. And during my pregnancy I was working a lot. He was working a lot. And George and I were really overwhelmed with everything that has to be



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done with work, with the baby coming. And these all kinds of things. One day I was like, "I'm just gonna pull out the binder." I was just gonna do it, I'm gonna pull out the binder and I'm gonna facilitate this for ourselves. Of course, we like to really kind of fit our needs. But just setting that intention, being intentional about it, and going through that transition to parenthood coaching curriculum with him, was such a beautiful bonding as parents. It really helps us to get on the same page. It kinda gave us a light at the end of the tunnel. That there is a lot of uncertainty and you just have to accept it and it's okay. And just a really nice way to bond with our baby. And really nice way to kinda just reduce the overwhelm because in the beginning, it's just so overwhelming. It's really nice way to reduce the overwhelm and be there for each other and be really supportive. And I think that was a huge, huge help. And sometimes you don't connect. You're like, "Oh, this is what I do. I should do it for myself." And I had that moment where I did great.

Meredith: That's good! I love that. So you made it an intentional process. You sat down and you used the curriculum from that course which is - I think that is great. And I know what you and I would recommend and I feel that this is probably in line with what you and George did. It's like exploring your individual needs, what you wish for, what you desire. And communicate that to your partner so that you have the opportunity to actually fulfill each other's needs when the time comes.

Marina: Mhm! And also highlighting where you're aligned. I mean, I know that we really talk about this a lot and we talk about this a lot for a reason because this is such a foundational thing. And this is what gets you to feel like allies, not adversary. Where are you aligned? Where are you already agreeing? Build on that. I like the similarities, not the differences. Give that the fuel and the attention. How can we build on those.

Meredith: Yeah! Absolutely. And when you do have areas of disagreements, knowing how to handle it, right? So you probably will have certain areas where you disagree. The goal is not to persuade your partner to your side or to end the relationship because you disagree on something that's not earth shattering. It's compromising. Compromise either means, I'm gonna bend, you're gonna bend or were gonna meet somewhere in the middle. Or I'm gonna maintain my position. I'm gonna maintain my position and were both gonna accept that and be okay with it. That can be challenging. And we devoted the whole episode to this back quite a few weeks ago. It's Episode 12, "How do we agree to disagree?" If you find yourself getting stuck on one point, go back, listen to that episode, download the freebie because that's gonna help you navigate that more successfully.

Marina: Mhm! Another one I think is really helpful here is "How to get your partner to support your life's dream?" I believe that's Episode 15. There's a great bonus there about creating the shared vision and this is essentially what you're doing. You're creating a shared vision for parenthood.

Meredith: Yeah!

Marina: And it's important to start from that level. And for you to kinda feel good in terms of expanding on where you agree and where you're similar and how you are on the same page already with certain things.



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Meredith: Yeah! And I would say as a final suggestion, we did make it even easier for you guys. And we created the bonus for this week which is the "Transition to Parenthood Prep Guide." Which sort of takes pieces of everything but tailors it to the transition of parenthood and we put it together in one document for you so you can review it, talk through it. There's guided questions. And you, by the end, you have created a shared vision for parenthood, which is really great. I definitely recommend getting that. You can get it on our website at www.simplygreatrelationships.com/030.

Marina: If you started this conversation and it hasn't gone as planned, which for a lot of couples who does it because it's a really, really loaded topic or you keep hitting the same wall over and over again when you are having this conversation and both of you are just living frustrated and it's becoming more and more of an issue, which again, totally normal, happens for a lot of couples, we offer an individualized transition to parenthood coaching from a research based models. This is what George and I went through. We've taken most what couples do. This is extremely valuable, really helps you get on the same page. John Gottman, we love him. We quote him all the time. I'm gonna butcher this quote Charles. I will just give you the gist. The gist of it is that, "The best gift you can give to your child is a strong parental relationship." Talking through something like this is kinda like persisting insurance. We're doing that like you're setting yourself up for successive partners to navigate this transition into parenthood. Send us an email info@simplygreatrelationships.com. Or you can text us, you can call us the number is 914-440-4814. Or you can visit our website simplygreatrelationships.com and submit a request there. And see if were a good fit together and take you through this transition because we've helped couples through this. Like I said, I love that moment when you see it shift and how different the relationship starts to feel.

Meredith: Yeah! And I think it's great for couples who are considering transitioning to parenthood or starting to try to have a child. It's great for couples who are expecting. And it's really great for couples who've already have their baby. Or maybe finding it a little bit rocky or more challenging than they'd hope for. We can absolutely go back and reset. And put the expectations out there so we don't want you to feel like, "Oh well, we already had our baby." It doesn't work like that. This is great for any phase around that transition. So what are your takeaways today, Marina? What's your top takeaway?

Marina: My top takeaway is that, just like what you've said, it's never too late or if you've already had a baby, you can still transition your relationship to a really good place. If you've had a baby and you're struggling to get to a good place, it's just like you haven't gone through this transition yet. And you can still do that. The opportunity to get on the same page is there.

Meredith: Mhm! Yeah!

Marina: What about for you?

Meredith: I think, just reinforcing the clarity around what's my stuff, what's their stuff. We as individuals and as couples have to be responsible for our own needs, our own relationships. Like what we want, what we don't want. And the direct or indirect pressure we get from outside does not makes us responsible for meeting that pressure. It makes us responsible for identifying it and setting a boundary or having a conversation. And then collaborating with our partner to achieve our needs and our wants. I think that's really important.



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Marina: Mhm! Definitely!

Meredith: I feel that we've covered a lot today.

Marina: I think so. This is a big topic.

Meredith: Yeah! It really is. And we just kinda touched the tip of the iceberg here. I don't know. That's all for today. We hope you start to planning if this is relevant to the face of life you're in right now, definitely download the bonus, reach out to us. We'd love for you to continue the conversation in our facebook group. Where we're gonna be providing extra tips, tricks and some live streams exclusively for our members. You can find the group at facebook.com/groups/simplygreatrelationships or click the link on our website simplygreatrelationships.com. And until next time. We'll see yah! Bye!

Marina: Bye!



The Transition to Parenthood Prep Guide

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Directions: Below are the questions to consider in preparation for having children. If you already had a child, you can go through this process with the intention of becoming aligned as partners and parents. If you haven't already, download and review [The Communication Tip Sheet](#) first. Then, review the questions below with your partner. Take turns asking each other a question and listening to understand your partner's answer. Pay attention to what you have in common and expand on that.

Questions:

- 1 | How were you parented? How did the way you were parented affect your beliefs about what makes a good parent and happy family?
- 2 | What kind of parent do you want to be? Do you see yourself as capable of executing that vision? What kind of support do you need in order to do so?
- 3 | How do you think becoming a parent will affect our relationship (logistically, emotionally, intimately)?
- 4 | What are the experiences you want to share with me prior to having kids?
- 5 | What are the rituals of connection, routines, and experiences that are important to you that we will have to let go of when we become parents? How do you feel about letting those go?
- 6 | What rituals of connection are you absolutely not willing to let go of? How do you see us preserving these rituals when we become parents?
- 7 | What do you look forward to most about co-parenting with me?



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8 | What is the ideal state (emotional, financial, work-life balance, boundaries with friends and family) for our relationship to be in for you to feel comfortable and ready to have children? How close are we to that state? What do you need to move towards that state?

Need more support? If this exercise didn't go as planned or you feel like there is a lot more you and your partner need to discuss, get in touch. The quickest way to a Simply Great Relationship is to work directly with us! We provide relationship coaching to clients across the country - just call or send a text to (914) 440-4814 or email us at info@simplygreatrelationships.com.

Be sure to join our exclusive PRIVATE Facebook Group to share your stories and get feedback from us! Click here to join: [The Simply Great Relationships Private Group](#)

