Partnering Well: Boundaries, Money, and Healthy Relationships for Women in Medicine Transcript

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Podcast Introduction and Valentineu2019s Day Message

Welcome to Heartline, Changemaking in Healthcare. I'm your host, Dr. Andrea Austin, a board-certified emergency physician, physician development coach, and educator.

After years on the front lines, I've learned that real change in healthcare starts within. Each episode invites you to explore the inner work that unlocks clarity and bold leadership, because healing systems through changemaking begins with following our heartlines.

Hi, Changemakers. Happy Valentine's Day. And I know I read a recent chapter about divorce and I'm happily married. So on this Valentine's Day, I want to dedicate this episode to my wonderful husband, Chris, and I'm going to share Very short chapter from the book.

And if you're enjoying listening to me read the book, I would suggest hopping over to Audible and you can download the entire book. So I hope you've enjoyed as we've taken a break from recording some episodes and I've taken some time to read.

some of the chapters from the book. So on that note, happy Galentine's Day and happy Valentine's Day to wherever you are in your love journey, because at the end of the day, the most important person for you to love is to love yourself.

And if nobody's told you that today, I love you and I love that you're listening to this podcast. So here we go, partnering well. I've been out of the dating game a long time.

My only advice is that if you're hustling for love, you better hustle right out of that relationship.

Partnering Well and Building Healthy Boundaries

That's a quote from me on February 14th from 2024. Following my divorce in medical school, I told myself I would never get married again. Yet within a few years, I fell in love with my current husband, Chris.

When I left my first marriage, I developed a long list of things I would not tolerate in a relationship. While I didn't have the word boundaries in my vocabulary effectively, I had developed critical boundaries that would keep me safe in future relationships.

Chris is not perfect. Sometimes when looking for a partner, we get caught up in finding the ideal person. The key to our marriage has been growing. We are far from the same people that we were when we met.

We navigate each other's changing interests and needs. The Gottmans are two married relationship experts who discuss the four horsemen of divorce, contempt, criticism, defensiveness, and stonewalling.

Early on in our marriage, as a leftover from my previous relationship, I sometimes yelled and was unfair during disagreements. Looking back on my childhood, I didn't have a ton of modeling on different ways to express myself, and when sad, frustrated, or angry.

It took time and therapy to first feel my feelings. I had to learn how to understand my body's warning signals. Chris is an engineer, and as of now, I make more money than him.

After the experience with my ex-husband, what does it matter? You're going to be a doctor anyway. I felt uneasy

about whether Chris was attracted to me or my earning potential.

When working long hours, I would say you'd be better off with somebody with a better schedule. You shouldn't be with me. Look at how much time you have to spend on your own.

Finally, one day he said, you have to stop saying that. I want to be with you. And if you keep saying that, it will end us. Looking back, I was scared of getting hurt.

My insecurities manifested as attempts to test him with these phrases. The comments I made to him were an attempt at self-sabotage. I wasn't sure I was worthy of being with Chris, so I was throwing emotional flames at the relationship Thankfully, he set down this boundary that helped our relationship.

I want to keep talking about money because it is an essential topic for women professionals. When we were first married, I kept my checking account and Chris couldn't access that account.

My paychecks went into the account and I deposited money into a joint account for joint expenses. Over the years, this has morphed and we have much more intertwined finances.

I appreciate Chris's patience that even once married, I needed the space to keep my autonomy, including financially.

Sponsor Message: Heart of Medicine Retreat

While this may not be true for all relationships, having a lot of overlap in our personalities and interests helps Chris and me tremendously. We're both intense people, voracious readers, fast-paced and enjoy challenges.

We also have similar aesthetic taste, which makes tailoring our home and making big purchases more straightforward. Anyone who looks at my husband will think he's a man's man.

He's tall, strong, and athletic. He's also comfortable in his masculinity and doesn't shy away from what has been typically considered women's work in our society.

He cooks, bakes, and loves decorating our house for various holidays.

Love, Compatibility, and Marriage Reflections

His podcasts and reading lists includes books on women's experiences, strengthening our bond and his capacity to understand my experience as a woman in medicine in our society.

Hey friends, Andrea here. There are moments in a doctor's life that mark you forever, and for me, they often involve travel. It's where I connect with awe and wonder that help me see my life and my career differently.

The Heart of Medicine in Uluru, Australia, July 29-31, 2026, is a retreat that is an immersive, soul-level experience at one of the world's most sacred landscapes.

It's a space to breathe again, to reconnect with your purpose, to hear your own voice without the noise of the busy clinical environments we all work in.

We'll gather a small group of clinicians for thought-provoking sessions, storytelling, cultural learning, and genuine rest. Spots are very limited. If your heart has been asking for something more, this is your invitation.

Learn more and register at coachingfordoctors.net.au or you can email me at andrea at andreaaustinmd.com. Another lesson I learned is that you can love someone and not like them.

I loved my first husband. I loved a few other men and realized that love alone is not enough. I like Chris. He's fun to

hang out with. I love talking to him on the phone.

He's my favorite trip companion. Life is better with him. I've been out of the dating game a long time. My only advice is that if you're hustling for love, you better hustle out of that relationship.

Chris and I never played games. It was never the will he or won't he call me, text me back dynamic. Thinking back to when that happened in other relationships made my stomach turn.

I always felt like we were on equal footing and that I wasn't waiting to be picked or selected, but a mutual understanding that we both liked and respected each other and later loved each other.

A common phrase in our culture is marriage takes work. Chris and I sheepishly smile at each other when someone utters these words. We're going on 11 years.

Now it's longer. We're actually going on 13 years married, 15 years together, and there's never been a day that's felt like work. I appreciate that some marriages require more work than others, but the work shouldn't involve you contorting to be another version of yourself.

We can all grow. but make sure that the growth is along your heartline, your true essence. A few reflection questions. Reflect. Sometimes boundaries get crossed or not even established in a relationship.

Are there some boundaries you need to renegotiate? Reimagine. Consider new possibilities for greater connection. How would your life look if you improved your current relationship or created new connections?

Reflection Questions and Closing Remarks

Respond. Choose an action to strengthen the quality or quantity of connections. It might be communicating a new boundary, having a tough conversation, or protecting more time to nurture and grow your connections.

So with that, this is a very short episode that I just wanted to pop in and say happy Galentine's Day, happy Valentine's Day. Go do something that shows that you love yourself and I can't wait to see you back.

Keep following your heartline. Thank you for listening to Heartline, Changemaking, and Healthcare. If this episode sparked something for you, I'd love for you to share it with a friend or colleague who's walking their own changemaker path.

If you're interested in coaching, consulting, or speaking engagements, you can find me at andreaaustinmd.com or connect with me on LinkedIn and Instagram.

I work with individuals and organizations who are ready to build meaningful, sustainable change without losing themselves in the process. The views expressed on this podcast are my own and do not reflect those of any organization I work for or with.

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Until next time, keep following your heartline.