

Ep #114: Divorce After 28 Years: Choosing the Hard Truth Over a Perfect Image with LeeAnna



Full Episode Transcript

Britta: Welcome back this week. So if you've listened to last week's episode, I gave a little peek preview into the wonderful interview that I'm going to get to share with all of you today. Last week's episode was really diving into a book I'm reading called Mother Hunger, which is the author Kelly McDaniel's new word, her way of calling insecure attachment, by a name that I feel really epitomizes more of what it feels like to have insecure attachment. And in that episode, I mentioned getting to have the amazing opportunity to share with you guys one of my previous clients who has been an incredible example to me personally of what it looks like to be going through the process of considering divorce while also grappling with insecure attachment underlying all of it, and to really invest in yourself while going through that process and the huge, huge changes and shifts that it can make coming through it and moving into your life on the other side. So, with that said, I would love to bring into the studio.

LeeAnna: Mm-hmm.

Britta: My now dear friend, LeeAnna. Hello, babe.

LeeAnna: It's so great to be in this moment with you. Thank you.

Britta: Yeah. I'm really like, one of the first things I'm excited about with this episode is that some of my listeners that are in the Community will already know you because you've been dropping in there with us this year, guiding Pilates sessions, helping the women in my Community. This year is all about strong ground and I knew I wanted more body practice in the Community. So not only will my podcast listeners get to know you better, but my women in the community will as well. They'll get to know more of your backstory. But before we drop into that, I just wanted to kind of like check in with you on like how are you feeling about life right now these days?

LeeAnna: Yeah. It is so funny because I would never have dreamt of this moment a year ago, two years ago, ten years ago. I would have never had the revelation and realization of what I really could have done with my life. And so a lot of that I am now doing. And so it's really complicated. That's a complicated question to answer because it's like a myriad of feelings and emotions on any given day. It's extreme happiness and joy and love and all of that. And it's also sadness and I'm still grieving and heartbreak and loss. Sometimes they mix together. So yeah, my - which we'll talk about my new website's being released, my brand's launching next week. Very exciting. That's one of those exciting, joyful things. But the website copy, I was reading that and going through it last week, actually the past couple weeks, and when I got it back from my amazing branding team and they describe me as a complicated human in my body. And I was, I stressed them. I was like, I need it to get across. And I, of course, you know, word-vomited all these things. And they just came up with, she's a complicated human. And I'm like, I've never felt more seen in my whole life. Yes, that is it. And every part about it is complicated.

Britta: Yes. Yeah, when you were saying like it's all this range, the word that came to me was like complex. It is, and in the complexity, it is rich and full. It's when we, when I talk about living, like it is the full range for you. I've really watched you embrace that. And that, you know, that reminds me of how when I met you, so we met last year.

LeeAnna: Yes, yes, extremely.

Britta: In the summer of last year. And you were someone who right off the bat on that first call when I met you and we started working together, I felt like you really took to coaching and to these ideas and concepts, like a fish to water, you know, or on the podcast, I'm always talking about being a sea lion, you know, and like you, it's like you were a sea lion out in the desert, confused -

LeeAnna: Yeah.

Britta: - dried up like yes, yes. Like and then when we started working, it just really started to click for you. So I'd love for you to, you know, we're almost 11 months out from that period, but to start us as we go into your journey, especially because most of my listeners are more in that part of the journey, or potentially, I've got women at all stages of it, but I'd love for you to take us back into how you felt, what that time period was like for you, kind of leading up even to finding the podcast.

LeeAnna: So I had been married for twenty-eight years, twenty-seven years when I decided to separate from my husband, and that happened several months prior to you and I meeting. And a part of why you and I met is because I have a dear friend who I had gone to visit, who is also and was at the time struggling through a difficult separation pre-divorce and she had found your podcast. And at lunch she told me about it. And she was like, I've started listening to this. And it was a specific episode that she sent to for me to listen to, sent to me for me to listen to. And I was instantly hooked when I listened to it.

And it was an episode that had fast-forwarded through your work. I think it was like maybe the twelfth or thirteenth episode. It was kind of in there. And it spoke on affairs, and having affairs, and what it meant to us as women, and how we're treated, and how we talk about ourselves, and how we become entangled in these relationships. And it was the first time I felt like I could breathe and have a real conversation with someone about something that was incredibly painful and going on in my life.

Britta: Mm.

LeeAnna: Obviously not just to me, but to my ex-husband, and to the one or two friends in my life who are dear friends to me and knew. And so that is what drew me in, was the concept that this is something that we need to consider in a more complex way, right?

Britta: I know the word: complicated. I was like, There it is again.

LeeAnna: Yeah. Yeah. So I dove in. I dove in. I started listening from podcast one moving forward. I'd gotten through quite a few of them and I was at the point where I was re-re-reading the book *Women Who Run With Wolves*. I read that in college a million years ago. Reading it in my, you know, 20s, early 20s versus reading it now was an entirely different experience. So I highly recommend if you read that in your college years. I happened to go to a very female friendly school who, we definitely wanted to read all of those types of things, bell hooks and anything that we could get our hands on with feminism and those theories. And so re-reading it, I just felt so empowered to start to investigate myself and that side of myself. And I'd been in therapy for many years, many, many years. My undergraduate is in psychology. I have been in therapy as a result of that. Also, as you well know, a result of growing up in a really chaotic household. And so for me, it felt very dreamy to kind of have this sort of perfect storm of you, that I could listen to in my car, traveling, all the things, you know, cleaning my house, just any moment I could turn it on and start listening, I would. And that would get me going on reading

all these books and all these things. And so my mind just really started opening. And that's when I decided to do the call with you.

Britta: We were hanging out. Mm-hmm. Yeah. And I when we got on that first Alignment and Clarity Call together, I just remembered the intensity on that call with you. You were out of town at the time and there was just this urgency, this feeling of, because you'd been separated for a while, but it was like the wheels were turning. How do we move into the next piece? I actually went back to your notes from that session. And I wanted to read back to you some of the things that you said on that call because they were just, I think they're experiences that a lot of women will relate to. So you had said, I feel like I'm again grieving the relationship and trying to push myself through it. That was a big theme for you that we'll talk about of like the emotions would kind of overwhelm and sink you back in, you know, create that the wheel spinning feeling.

LeeAnna: Mm.

Britta: Days where I have self-doubt and then days I'm extremely motivated and moving forward. I'm having a lot of emotion and thoughts, but I can't seem to pick a direction in a lot of areas in my life. And this question, these questions, I was like, so many women feel this. You said, Can I listen to my gut more? Can I really trust that what I'm thinking is the right thing? And then you had identified, you said the other part I'm experiencing that I haven't in a long time is that I need to get back into my body. You were a, you know, you do Pilates. This is your thing. So you a part of you knew I'm not fully in my body. You kind of had, you'd worked on that physically before. You knew what it felt like. So you knew something is off. And you even said there are intuitive holes that are telling me I'm not feeling good.

LeeAnna: Yeah, yes. I had a mentor who I greatly deeply respect and she is someone I go to, to do my CEUs every year for Pilates. And I am one of those type A perfectionist people. I'm working on that too. Yes. Anyone raise your hand who has that -

Britta: Raise my hand. Mm-hmm.

LeeAnna: - particular trait. and I thought I knew everything there was to know. I had studied Pilates, I had done Pilates. I have some injuries and some genetic scoliosis. And so I really dove in 10 years ago when I started my training. And I was one of those people who walked in and I was like, I got this. And she just pardon me, handed my ass to me. She was like, moving up this, she was like, you cannot feel your body. And I could not comprehend it. And then I started realizing that the more I forced myself to try and feel it, to try and do it, to try and make it work, it just wasn't working. And it didn't until I just stopped. You know, I had to get myself to the point where I had to learn how to let a lot of that go and just let myself move, just let myself breathe, just let myself flow and not get so hung up because we're very cerebral creatures, right? We, I think, women particularly, but everyone, we tend to really get in our heads and yeah.

Britta: Yeah, that's something we'll talk about more too, because that was the piece. I feel like

that was some of the best work that we did together was, and it's one thing to say, like you said, like it is a type of getting back into flow with your body. But for those of us that have experienced trauma in childhood through, you know, just emotional emotionally immature parents that -

LeeAnna: Yes.

Britta: - in this world, right? Just did not have the tools, the resources, the education to know what was needed. And the way we have become so isolated, and the only like support you get is kind of from your parents, without that extended family, usually softening into our bodies can be really scary. I saw how much, yes, that it was like you and me together, that container was what was needed. And it was after we had built some of that trust with each other. Yeah.

LeeAnna: Hugely that vulnerability. For sure. For sure. I mean, obviously our stories were very similar in a lot of ways. That was another thing that drew me to you. Getting married at the ages we got married, the religious backgrounds, while different, so similar. The histories with our fathers, the just the trauma. And so that I think was a huge part of me being able to open up to you as well and having that sort of camaraderie in that really screwed up way. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Britta: Yeah, when that person's been through similar pain, you feel safer being like, I don't have it all together. I'm struggling to figure it out. So I have to say, it blew my mind when you said, this is something I didn't know about you, that in college you went to a more, you know, feminist pro-, you know, women school. And I think that's fascinating because I want to take you now into the marriage and -

LeeAnna: Right.

Britta: I'm seeing this more and more, you know, when I first started coaching, I thought, I got into this marriage because I came from Mormonism, heavy patriarchal influences, but I meet through the community plenty of women who are like, I didn't come from a heavy religious background and I still fell into these cultural norms. So tell me, what kind of got you into the marriage in the beginning? You know, what were your thoughts back then?

LeeAnna: Well, I can approach that from two ways. Back then, I fell in love. It was immature, fascinated, fascinating love. It was, I met someone who was very special, who I wanted to spend all my time with and who I could envision the life that I thought I wanted and I that I had been told that I wanted and needed my whole life. And it felt very real. Ironically, I still want that life. I just want it with the right person. You know, like what the concepts and the things that changed for me were -

Britta: Mm. Yeah.

LeeAnna: truly learning to, which I did not have at the time. I did not have self-esteem. I did not

have trust in my own decisions. I had no ability to understand what I was truly doing and how impactful that would be to myself and to another person. I just thought, let's get married, let's have babies, let's insta family, let's have a big extended family where we could have beautiful Christmases together and a perfect house and a perfect life. And we would, you know, and I met someone who, for all intents and purposes, wanted the same thing at the time, you know, and had a storybook appearance. And so I just bought it, hook, line, and sinker, and I was 19, you know, like I look at 19 year olds now and I'm like, dude. And I'm just like, how? How? What?

Britta: Mm-hmm. Me too. I- I- What? What?

LeeAnna: You know, and it's true, like I wanted the white dress and I wanted the experience, right? Like all the experiences were so vital at the time. And that was what I was dreaming about. It wasn't reality.

Britta: Yes. Yeah. And without any support or education around what two people trying to make a marriage work looks like. Every time I coach somebody new, especially coaching you, it just becomes so apparent to me how much more complicated it really is bringing two people from different backgrounds. If you add in insecure attachment from their trauma for both of them, it just, it's just complicated in some deep ways we're gonna get into.

LeeAnna: And I, you know, I watched two people, my parents, who should not have been together, you know, they stayed together, in my opinion now from conversations I've had with my mom, because she thought that that was what they had to do. You know, you don't get divorced. You do what you need to do to stay married. And so I watched, my role models were in a really destructive marriage. And so for me it was, well, I did want that, but I knew that image of being married was important. You know.

Britta: Mm. Yeah.

LeeAnna: It wasn't the quality of it. And this will become a running theme throughout my adult life. It wasn't the quality, it was the quantity. How many years we could be married, how much money we could make, how many things we could own, what could we produce for the world, but really not the quality of the underlying partnership, which was heartbreaking.

Britta: Oof. Mm, yeah.

LeeAnna: Heartbreaking. It makes me tear up now. Heartbreaking.

Britta: I know. It was one of the hardest things I watched you do because there was so much that was beautiful on the outside that you were gonna have to let go of to choose the inside. Yeah. Yeah.

LeeAnna: Yeah. And to let go of, you know, one thing that you and I talked about a lot and that was truly genuine for me and still is, is I loved my ex-husband dearly. And we were very close. So

it was, I mean, devastating. It was devastating. Still is.

Britta: Yeah. Yeah. It goes to the heart of something I'm seeing more, you know, as I coach more, as I get more exposure to more relationships, more dynamics, I keep coming across this theme for certain women like you, where it's, the choice is this heartbreaking choice of realizing, I love this person in the way that they can love me. They do love me back. But the unprocessed trauma and dynamics of insecure attachment from our childhood have created so much pain within the relationship and the baggage, and now there's water under the bridge. It's a cumulative. That's why I am so, you know, when people are like, you should always stay married, you should always get divorced. I'm like, you can never -

LeeAnna: No.

Britta: - ever say that without getting down into the depths of each person, the individual pieces we're working with. And when I first met you, that's kind of where we were at. Cause you guys, when we first started working together, you were doing therapy and we had moments of like thinking maybe we're gonna actually potentially stay. But as we kept getting more information, it's like the math. I think if it just starts to become like math where we're just tracking, okay, with this much trauma here and this level of investment or willing to go this deep, what's the amount that you need here? And the calculation just eventually came up where it was like, long-term with the goals you want, the life that you need, it's just not a fit for the two of you. Yeah.

LeeAnna: Yeah. Yeah, that's, I remember during one of our sessions almost arguing with you, I think, in my way, where I was like, I just think maybe Britta just hates men, like, you know -

Britta: I am sure there are people listening to this podcast.

LeeAnna: - trying to latch on to like, what is wrong with, you know like, why can't she just agree that I should stay in my head? And it wasn't and obviously you're so unbiased, which is what makes you so beautiful at what you do, but it was that sort of nagging feeling of knowing, like deeply knowing I was doing the right thing by exiting my marriage, yet just grasping, trying to hold on to any last vestige I could of like, I can make this work. And just fighting it any way I could, you know.

Britta: Yeah. It's that, I'm so grateful you shared that piece. It's one of the most like beautiful, difficult things that any good therapist, good coach knows, which is allowing, it's a delicate psychological process, to make peace with reality. And that was our work.

LeeAnna: Yeah.

Britta: Our work was, you had already done 27 years of this. We were at a juncture. And that's you know what I was talking about in last week's episode. Of you needed someone in that secure attachment place to be able to just kind of hold you through the intensity of

acknowledging this, this is who this person is. This is what is. You know, looking back over your history, which is why in the one-on-one coaching, right? We could get down deep into all those past facets. And then me just gently trying to, you know, and there were weeks where we went in on like, okay, it's looking good. Let's lean into this. Let's see what's possible here. But always being ready to catch and guide you when it was okay, this person is still where they're at and -

LeeAnna: Yes.

Britta: - not in the process. Tell me. Tell the listeners about what that was like.

LeeAnna: That awareness is crazy. That awareness of like, you and I would work together, and I would be reading whatever our book was or article or whatever you'd sent me that I was working on. And then, like you're saying, calculation, a math problem. Like I would put in what was happening into it and then be like, it was the awareness of what I was seeing on paper versus what I was feeling, and writing that down versus what reality was showing me. That was what, that was what caused this sort of like psychic web that just kept like growing and growing, and it just started to become so clear and I was so angry. I was so angry. I wasn't even angry at - sorry my little puppy's underneath me. He just licked my throat. It's okay mama - I was so angry that I hadn't picked up on this before. That I had to go to these lengths to see it, and then angry at the whole process. Like having these realizations, these deep painful realizations, not having a place to put that anger. Not having a place to like, because Kristen or my ex-husband and I were in therapy at the time and in intense therapy, you know, once a week for two-hour, two-and-a-half hour therapy sessions. And it was brutal. It was brutal. And I would sit in these sessions going over all of the notes I had -

Britta: It was intense.

LeeAnna - with the work you and I were doing, the notes I had on the work I was doing on myself with my other therapist, because I had a private therapist that was going all through this with me. So I was in therapy between you, my private therapist, our couples therapist, like five, six hours plus a week during this timeframe. And it's just not, having simultaneously, having the awareness of what was going on and then having to sit in it, like, you know, rotting stew, all the time was the horrific combination that I think I had to have to make the hardest decisions. Because what we avoid is that stew, right? Like we don't want to eat that stew. We want to dance around it. We want to buy our way out of it. We want to drink our way out of it. We want to mushroom our way out. Like however we can get the hell out of this. We are gonna get out of it. And so having to sit in that, in the most painful parts of it, knowing that I was gonna have to do this. Like I was gonna have to go through this. And yeah, it's incredibly painful. And still is, like you, I still go through it sometimes. Like I'm not done eating that, even though the world is really, I'm very blessed and the world looks really beautiful for me right now. Truly genuinely for me. It's still there.

Britta: Mm-hmm. Yeah. And this, I love having your voice be able to come and speak to this because this is the real, this is the real of divorce. Yes, there is the vision of what's going to

come after, and there is the building, but it is one of the hardest things you will ever go through. And I watched you go through that process. And almost thankfully, like at the beginning of it, you don't know how hard it's gonna be, I know like we're gonna go into the deep and there's gonna be a lot of just like expanding you, teaching you how to and I think that's really where when we're talking about this pain, that was where I saw you grow the most when we started doing the work around being able to stay in your body with high sensation. Cause you were used to kind of popping out as, and you know, some of the things that you loved doing was like you would pop out into your brain or you would try to figure it out intellectually or you would checklist or you would be super productive, the perfectionistic age. Yes. And it took our relationship developing to a level of trust where, and you listening - it helped that you were listening to the podcast so much - to where when we were on a call, I could guide you in and hold you there, help you stay in that space. What was that? Do you remember what that was like the first few times we did that?

LeeAnna: I remember the first visual exercise we did together, which is the first time I was able to truly put words to an experience I'd had before, a sensation and feelings I'd had before, but I could never articulate or like frame it in my head. But that first time we did that visualization exercise together, and I could feel my body reacting to memories and my body reacting in a way that I could write down and say, okay, when I start to feel this feeling in my stomach, I know that this means I'm heightened. I know that this, this is a, you know, a trigger. I know that this is something that I need to pay attention to. My body is talking to me. And that was one of the first times through by the way, I've been trained in psychology. I've read a million things. I work with bodies every day. Like this is something I felt like I already knew. But it wasn't until I was, I think, and again, it's that combination of doing all this work and then having the awareness of what this meant to me internally. That is where I started to really make changes because I could say, I would be sitting in those sessions with my ex-husband, and he would say something that to the outside world would feel very benign. It would be very, you know, like I went to the grocery store and I got bread, and then when I got home, she was mad at me and she blew up at me and da-da-da-da. And I would start to feel these feelings, and I'm like, I'm not feeling these feelings because I did something, I got my ex upset about something, I'm feeling these feelings because I'm being triggered because of the whole backstory here, right? Like that I could not articulate before. And when I could start to articulate that backstory and use those feelings to tell me, okay, this is something I need to pay attention to, like a highlighter, you know. I could highlight that and then my mind would start to put it together. That was hugely important.

Britta: Mm-hmm. Yeah, a big piece of this was that CPTSD work of being able when I first coached you on the Alignment and Clarity Call, I flagged, I was like, okay, I'm pretty sure we've got CPTSD. And it was learning the emotional flashback piece of okay, when am I going into this state of hopeless, helpless, completely overwhelmed? I'm like a little kid. And how do I catch myself, resource myself, and stay with myself?

LeeAnna: Not disassociate. As you said, I'm very good at that. I'm very good at dissociating.

Britta: Mm. And I think it was through, you know, looking back, it was it was a lot of us building that secure relationship between you and me. You knew you had a safe place where the anger was going to be safe to land. Your anger, because you didn't come out of the gate angering. You, your process when we first started was a lot of like going back into the therapy, kind of having those moments of like -

LeeAnna: Yes.

Britta: Maybe we can save this. Maybe it is gonna change. And me just tracking with you and us going through that. And then like the, the shoe would fall again and it would hit, land though harder this time because you were more aware. And then when you came into the anger process, I was like, yes, we are here for this because Pete Walker and CPTSD emphasizes that to heal, you have to express the anger. And you -

LeeAnna: I'm hoping.

Britta: - didn't have anywhere else I would say really to express that anger except in our space, you know, you couldn't really talk about it with your mom.

LeeAnna: No. Yeah. I, no, because she was also a part of it. You know, like love her. But you know, like that was a huge part of it. That was also a huge part of how I developed some of these coping skills and mechanisms that are maladaptive, obviously, later in life and in partnerships. But my anger was, it was vital for me to have someone that could verify my feelings.

Britta: Yeah, that's it, yes.

LeeAnna: That I could say whatever I could possibly dream up of saying, I could say and then you would not only listen, sort of decode it for me, but also allow that space, that safe and consistent, which is now a tenant of my trauma work that I do on my own, space. It's just safety and consistency and it being okay. Like someone saying it is okay to be this angry. It is okay to feel these feelings. It is okay. And that was such a gift.

Britta: Yeah, and something that I think was a key piece here too is you knew because of the coaching we'd done previous to that, that I was not just gonna be like, yes, yes, let's dive in together and let's hate him and -

LeeAnna: Which is often what you get. Which is often what you get, right?

Britta: Yeah, you knew I was gonna be tracking the facts for you. That if it was something where it's like, this isn't our side of the lane, LeeAnna, this is our work, I was gonna call you on that. But when it was just like, yeah, we've got some real issues here. On the flip side, when you would want to cover up those and be like, it's not this, I'd be like, hey, these are the facts. Let's come back. So it's this balancing work that we did together, that as we continued to do steadily

led you to like, okay, like you said, it's time to just eat the stew and not continue hoping that some day, some year, it's gonna just magically change without acknowledging the amount of work that would need to go into this. So I'd love for you to talk. I know you said there were moments prior to that where you guys had like separated and then gotten back together. What was different about this time that you feel like allowed you to leave? Because I know there are lots of women listening who have had that experience.

LeeAnna: I think the biggest challenge for me to overcome was that my ex-husband also was very similar to me in his ability to disassociate, which he will disagree with me on. But we would have these, we would say things to each other that would really get deep, like would be really hurtful or would be detrimentally like bad for a relationship. Just the way that we would sometimes and it wasn't even - the thing is, I was in a relationship where there was no loud fighting, there was no punching, there was no physical abuse, there was no, there was nothing like that. It was just this low level insidiousness of neglect and emotional neglect and pain. And so I would have these moments and I felt like it would happen, you know, every so many months. At first it was every so many months and then it was every so many years. And then it was like a decade, but time just, you know, but where I would just be done. I would be like, I knew, I would, I knew this was not the right place for me to be. I was so unhappy with the partnership. And then I would say something and he would fight me and he would disassociate and he would create environments and I would too where we could just say, let's put a pin in it and move on. And just put a pin in it and move on. And I had come to a point in my life, and you know, very stereotypically, you can call it aging. I'm sure there are so many things people have said about why I did what I did. And if only I could hear. Maybe I don't ever want to hear it, to be fair, but maybe it's aging, maybe it's where I was in my career, maybe it's there was a myriad of reasons. But I very painfully realized that if I wanted any of the things in life that I had ever truly deeply dreamed about, it was not gonna be in this marriage. And through our work and just working on me, which that was another part of your work and our work together that I don't think that people often realize is that the focus was not on, you know, hating my ex-husband or diagnosing him or like trying to do. While we did talk about some of that, the focus was on what does LeeAnna want and need? How can LeeAnna be the person that she wants to be? Live the life that she wants to live? Like what does LeeAnna want? And what I very sadly realized is that I wanted that for him too.

Britta: Yeah.

LeeAnna: Like I wanted him to do the work I was doing that I couldn't do with him because I'm the reason why he can't do that work, right? So it was just, like it was this crazy, like, yes. And it was like, I loved him so much. And I knew I'd say this in therapy. I was like, I have to, we have to be apart because together, you can't do this.

Britta: Yes!

LeeAnna: And he would just stare at me and be like, I've given you everything. Everything you've ever asked, I've given you. And then he would call me spoiled, or he would say that I just, I just

want more. And he just, he could not wrap his head around that it wasn't him. It was me. Like I was so unhappy with me.

Britta: No.

LeeAnna: And I wasn't any part of the person that I had dreamed of being or wanted to be. And so doing the work made me realize that it was almost selfish of me to stay in that marriage and to continue down that road with someone who was just turning himself inside out and into to try and make me happy. And who had completely lost himself, by the way. That's the other irony, is he lost who he was. He lost the man that I fell in love with at 19. He lost the artist in him, the creator in him, the human humanitarian in him. All of those things that I fell in love with were gone. Just like all of the things that he had fallen in love with were gone.

Britta: Yes. Mm-hmm.

LeeAnna: Because we were too busy trying to make each other happy, not even knowing what made the other one happy. You know, it was just crazy. It's crazy. And that selfishness came through.

Britta: Yeah. It's, you're describing, I'm just like, this is pure gold for everybody listening. This is what I'm talking about. On the last episode, I said when you have insecure attachment in one partner and insecure attachment in another, it does not magically make a securely attached marriage. And that is the heart of what just gets me each time. And I love when clients can reach that point of realizing the way I describe it is this like it is a kindness when you can get into a grounded enough adult space to really see and be real about how much can either one of us, with the dynamic, the way it is, actually thrive ourselves or create something we want, as you described. And that moment, I saw it in you.

LeeAnna: Yes.

Britta: When you realized it is actually, in my opinion and yours, you realized it is more unkind to stay in this dynamic where both of us feel so unseen, unheard, not enough, needing more. And too, I think you said it at one point where you were like, you now see that the best way to love your partner is to let them be themselves, to give them autonomy, and to ultimately see like if they can't thrive within this relationship, then to let them be free. To let both of you be free from this dynamic that is just not working. And I know on the flip side, because I know the, you know, unfortunately, call it patriarchy, it has deep roots, but for a lot of men, they cannot see that piece, that level of realizing together, we are tearing each other apart. Let us go our ways. They cling to the relationship.

LeeAnna: Great. Yes. Well, and benevolently I say this because I truly believe that it is ingrained in some men. I truly believe it was in my ex-husband this sense of duty to be, you know, XYZ, whatever in their minds that tends to stereotypically be breadwinner.

Britta: Mm-hmm.

LeeAnna: The person who takes care of everything financially, the person who's the provider, who outwardly is, you know, in my case, an executive who is a, you know, beautiful looking human being who was a very powerful person in the world and who also just wanted to take care of someone. But in that, they lose themselves entirely.

Britta: Mm-hmm.

LeeAnna: And it felt to me at the end, I hate to use the term like gilded, like a cage, but it was. It was to try and not be offensive to a person I still deeply love and care about, it did feel like a gilded cage. It was a space that was not free. It was like -

Britta: For either.

LeeAnna: For either of us. We both did that.

Britta: For either of you. Yeah, it's this and it's the stereotype of being told these cultural ideas, of these roles. If you'll just play these roles and you'll just be the Barbie and the Ken in the beautiful house, somehow that will be enough. And it may - I absolutely believe there are people out there that that works for. But the women listening to my podcast, like you, are women that need a much deeper emotional empathic connection -

LeeAnna: Yes.

Britta: - within the dynamic. And so when that is not there, it does start to feel like this just utter disconnect. And you are not alone in that. I'm thinking there's like at least two women in my Community right now that are in very, very similar dynamics of yes, you have provided in all of these physical ways, but I have never felt more alone in my life than being in this marriage where I don't feel the connection, the soul seeing. I, you know, I hesitate to use that word because the I think the episode that got sent to you was the Mayim Bialik one. And I remember her partner Jonathan being like, I don't think men know what you mean when you're saying you want to be soul seen. But that's what was missing is a deep [connection].

LeeAnna: Yeah. Yeah. It was the curiosity too. It was just any sort of dynamic that I felt like - which I have, and am in relationships now where there is that curiosity, there is that openness - and I think that that is so vitally important, not just in romantic physical relationships, but in friendships and true partnerships that you create in your life, whether it be professional or personal, is having that ability to see the other person and then that grace and compassion that comes forth from that, that's birthed from that. You know, when you truly have a partner where you see what's going on with them and you've been curious and you've figured it out, then somehow some of those other things are workable. You know, like you start to figure out that flow. And that was desperately missing from my marriage. Yeah.

Britta: I have to vibe hard on that because in the last episode, one of the things I brought up was in the book, she said, the biggest indicator of health and happiness is not status or wealth. It is the number of loving relationships in your life. And I admitted, I was like, if I think back to my marriage, I was at the lowest I'd ever been. I had like my therapist and my best friend at the time. And now I have it in not only my partner, but -

LeeAnna: Yes. Yes.

Britta: - so many other relationships that have opened through these dynamics of following my purpose, following my soul calls into a life that's connected me with women like that. And I've seen that with you too, yes.

LeeAnna: Yes. I am absolutely every day, honestly, and maybe it's just the time in my life, the transition that I'm going through, but I feel like every day I meet someone, engage with someone, even friends I've known for a very long time, who just come out of the woodwork with kindness and generosity. And I do believe you get what you give. Like you, you give that out and you're open with yourself, then you do get that back. Like it may come in weird ways, but it certainly comes and I have been overwhelmed by it.

Britta: I'm curious what you would - I wanna ask you, because I think I saw this in you come out more as you went through the divorce, right? - it's like this element of you that was willing to be seen more came through as we went through the divorce, yes?

LeeAnna: Yes, because part of the disassociation of living in a marriage where you're so unhappy is denying that vulnerability in yourself, right? Because it's very much a, I'm gonna put blinders on and I'm gonna just move forward. I'm just gonna get up. I'm gonna go to my job. I'm gonna go get my hair done. I'm gonna go, whatever it is, you know, that was on the plan for the day. And you book your day, like, you know, you make sure you have stuff on that calendar because otherwise you're laying in bed and depressed and can't, you know, function. And so you're just hyper-functioning all the time in order to avoid that. And when I stopped doing that, when I started to learn how to recover and how to give myself that time, whether for me or my recovery, things like taking long walks. I'm a member of our local arboretum and I would go spend tons of time walking and just being at the arboretum, reading, studying, taking a class, diving into my work as an instrument as a teacher. I would start to allow myself those moments of vulnerability. And I think too, it was also realizing that the more open I became, it wasn't just that I learned more about myself, it was that I was more comfortable with the negativity, too.

Britta: Yes.

LeeAnna: A huge one for me was obviously affairs. You know, I did have one and I simultaneously hated myself every single time and thought that I was also getting that like relief of faking something that I did not have in my life. And so it was like, you know, playing a role in the world to again disassociate from the reality of what was really going on. And when I realized the pathology behind that, this the psychology behind that, and knowing that this was

something that is not only very common, it's something that is a symptom of a really horrific disease in the marriage.

Britta: So common.

LeeAnna: It was so freeing. It was like, okay, yeah. And you know what? I'm not a terrible human being because I did this thing. I might be hurtful to my partner, obviously. And I desperately wanted to, I remember at the time too, I would say to everyone I knew, he was the better partner. I would say all the time, I'm a terrible person. I don't know how I got to be this bad of a human. Like I would talk down to myself constantly, and I started verbalizing it to my friends. I'd be like, well, you know, he's the good one. I'm the bad one. You should like him more. You know, these things started coming out of my mouth.

Britta: Mm.

LeeAnna: Because I was so ashamed and so hurt and so hurtful. And so when I started to realize, okay, this is just like having cancer. This is just like having something that I need to treat. When I started treating it, and I started learning about it, and I started educating myself on it, and I started to get the stereotypes out of my head and realize there's a reason I don't want to be the person I am. It's because I am a good person and I want to be that person and I'm doing this other thing because I can't figure out how to function, right? Yeah. Yeah.

Britta: How to change the environment. That's the biggest piece. When so many of us have been trained the marriage is the thing you save at all costs, you will you will automatically default to, well, the issue's not in the marriage then. It must be with me. And that's where the affair came out of is, I'm not -

LeeAnna: Yes. Yes. Yes. Quantity over quality.

Britta: - on a deep subconscious level, I'm not happy. I am not connected. I'm not being the person I want to be. I'm not living the life I want to be. I'm struggling to acknowledge that because I have everything that looks perfect on the outside. So surely I should want this. And then we slip into those patterns where it comes out sideways in all the ways, right? And that is why I'm so tender towards women who have affairs because I understand it is a shit show for your self-esteem. It is so.

LeeAnna: Yes.

Britta: I have yet to meet a woman who's gotten on with me and is like, I love that I'm having an affair. This is so much fun. No, contrary to the stereotypical ideas, it's actually incredibly complicated emotionally. And for me as a coach, it is that difficult process of helping you realize yeah, for many women that I meet, they're like, I don't want to be hiding this and I have struggled being honest that I don't want what is in my marriage right now. I'm not happy here. And it's walking you back to yourself, getting you grounded enough in yourself and realizing and

getting you into that adulthood piece of okay, I'm not gonna keep in that childhood way saying this is fine, living this life while doing all these things on the side and hating myself for them. I'm gonna, we're gonna bring all these pieces and we're gonna bring them back and get you grounded in you so that you can make an adult decision for everybody involved.

LeeAnna: Yeah. Yeah. And for me too, it was in making those adult decisions, I also developed my new repertoire around what kind of partner I want. And that was the partner who, if my partner came to me or I discovered that they were having an affair, my first response would be, what is neglecting here? What are we neglecting here? What do we need to, what do we need to really discuss that is causing this? Not you're a terrible person, you are, you know, hurting, you know, it would not come from a place of hurt. It would come from a place of deeply wanting to understand empathetically and compassionately what's going on with that person. Which is probably needless because now in any partnership I'm gonna have and I'm so transparent. I am like, I want to know everything up front and consistently all the time. Yeah like let's just talk about it.

Britta: And also if you want, if you want to have an affair, just tell me and like we will talk through that. Like I'd rather know and us peacefully part. But yes, even and that, LeeAnna, I wanna be clear to all the listeners on the episode. That may sound so far out there to be at a level where you're where you could, you know, if a partner came to you and said, Hey, I've had an affair. Yes, you would feel the confusion, the sadness, but ultimately what you're describing is what happens when you get grounded into your own lane, your own life, when your whole life is not predicated on whether somebody chooses me, or if somebody chooses someone else, then I am, you know, destroyed by it. And so if that's not been the case for anybody listening, right, they've had the opposite. It's just understanding, yeah, that comes from that lack of the secure attachment with yourself, which in the last episode we learned, you know, secure attachment, when it doesn't happen in childhood, it's not that you don't love your parents, it's that you learn to not love yourself. That's what insecure attachment is. And that was a lot of our work together. You and me, was me helping you come back into seeing -

LeeAnna: Correct.

Britta: - the parts of you that are so beautiful and also the parts that are dark and traumatized and act out and hurt people, and that you were both, and that when we could hold space for both, then you could start stepping up into that like capital S Self you that could make decisions from, what do we want most instead of just the wheel spinning of putting out fires, starting fires that so many of us do when we don't have the awareness, the tools, and the grounding in ourselves.

LeeAnna: Yes. I think another really important thing that we worked on, I mean, that reminds me, and I can't remember in this moment the name of the book that we read, but it talks about finding your selves, discovering your inner selves, and integrating those. I think once you allow that verbiage in your head, once you allow that concept to start to live and breathe in you when a partner or someone important to you has something really challenging happen to them,

instead of allowing those individual little parts of us to react, we can react as a whole. And that wholeness allows for that person to learn, to grow, to stay in their moments, and you can just sit there and support - that is so critical to just being able to be so grounded in not taking on that emotion, not taking on that fear, not allowing all those little selves in yourself to amplify it but yet as a whole to collectively say, you know what, we got this. I got you. We're just gonna sit. You're gonna do your thing. That is, that is like, again, such a gift to learn and give yourself. Because I've had moments, you know, obviously, as you know, I am seeing someone very important to me. And he has had those moments of real, life-altering things that have happened and I am now able to very proudly, I'm very proud of myself that I can sit and be truly supportive without feeling like I have to play the role of a mother, a you know, a CEO, a best friend, whatever little role I would have to come in and fix. I don't have that. I have a very holistic approach of, I will sit with you and we will figure this out, but I don't have to take on that. And that is a partnership.

Britta: Mm-hmm. The book you mentioned as you started talking, I was like, it's parts work by Richard Schwartz. No Bad Parts by Richard Schwartz. It's actually, yeah, one of one of my amazing women in the community just did a workshop all around it this last week. I know she came in, she broke it down for everybody there. So for those of you listening that are like, the Community is where that's at in our extra resources now. But you -

LeeAnna: Yes. Yes. Such a good book and -

Britta: This is where I want to go a little bit. So we've talked a lot about the marriage, but this is one of the things, this is why I was so excited to bring you on too, is because you are one of my clients who I've seen do this the most rapidly. And it's, you know, really, that's why I was so excited to have you because I was like, wow, this is the impact that when you go through this and you have insecure attachment, having a secure attachment with you to do this work really can make the other side different in massive ways, which is, watching you now, you know, when I saw you in your marriage previously, being able to hold ground like that, that was not, no. And a lot of that I think too came from what you needed to heal up into secure attachment he could not provide and vice versa, and then all of the water under the bridge already in that marriage. That now in this new dynamic with a partner who is naturally more empathic and emotionally attuned, this is also where we get to just like in our marriages realize some people are just naturally more attuned and aligned in that way. That is enough of a dynamic within that relationship that you have been able to start healing into more secure attachment. And with that more secure attachment, you are also holding space for your partner. It's this beautiful, like then it starts to build. We get kind of a momentum. It's the same thing I feel with me and Joe. We both absolutely come from severe childhood trauma. We come from foundations of insecure attachment.

LeeAnna: Yes. Yeah.

Britta: But we are now in a relationship at a time where we are able and have enough secure attachment within ourselves to resource and be there for each other when we have moments

of, right? Is that kind of what you're just?

LeeAnna: Yes. Yes. It is exactly true. I also I think you can't get there until you've done all the other things, right? Like there's no easy, you know, like there's no portal, time portal that like move you through what you have to go through. The stew, you know. You have to eat the stew. It's like if I write a book, I'm gonna maybe I'll call it eating the stew. You know, I've been working on that. Maybe I just kept like, I need to workshop that one. Yeah, I -

Britta: It's just - I was digging it.

LeeAnna: I can't tell you the difference it makes. Yeah.

Britta: That your journey is like perfectly, that's the other thing I love, LeeAnna is your path leads you where it leads you at the exact moments you're ready for it. So I, you know, you and I met at the exact moment you were ready for it. And we didn't have to force you into the stew as much as we just kept taking the next step. The next step.

LeeAnna: Yeah.

Britta: We, you know, if you think about when we started working together, you had no idea what that journey was gonna look like.

LeeAnna: No. And ironically, I thought I'd gone through a lot of it. And I did. There were - I'm obviously, I was in and as I mentioned, I've been in therapy my whole life, I feel like, off and on. I had the same therapist for fifteen years. Right and just sadly, so sadly, he became very ill. And I hadn't seen him for maybe, I'd been seeing him for so long, we'd go through periods of time where we would just, and I would just get sick of therapy to be fair. Like you can only go talk about your problems for so long, so consistently and like work on things until your brain just needs to like not do that for a while. And I respect therapy breaks hugely. I think they're vital because for me it makes my brain work and stew on something and then I can - I have a lot of food references. Like clearly I'm hungry.

Britta: Uh-huh. We are recording this in the morning, so -

LeeAnna: For lunch. I know. I would like allow that to marinate, and then I would go back into therapy. So it had been probably a year, year and a half since I'd seen him. And this was right at the time I separated when I needed my therapist. And he had become very, very ill. And he saw me a few times when he shouldn't have, to be fair. He was way too ill, but I knew he, I know that he cared very much for me. And so that's why. And we had developed that therapeutic relationship, right? And he had known me and been through so much with me that I think he just wanted to be there when I said I needed therapy and what was going on. But he unfortunately could not be there. And so when I found you at that time, I was seeing a new therapist and it was just not the same, right? Because I was having to start over after 15 plus years of someone knowing me that intimately. And so I thought when you and I started working

together, I was like, there's no way, I know, I know all this. Like, I've been through all this. And then realizing very quickly that I was a babe. I was a wee little baby. Crawling out of my womb, you know, like I was trying. Trying. I couldn't even get my head above the water. Like it was just.

Britta: Ha.

LeeAnna: Yeah. And so my point at that is that I think I had done some of the journey. But I just didn't, I had no idea of what I was about to enter into. And so for me, things just started quickly moving because I could take a bite and then digest and take a bite. And it was just like over and over and over. And it's like, how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. And it was like that whole elephant was right there and I was eating it, you know? And it was just like - and so I, I knew also intimately because of the relationship you and I had developed -

Britta: Yes.

LeeAnna: - exactly what I wanted. I did the things that got me to the place that said, you know what? This is the kind of life I want to lead. This is the kind of person I want to be. These are the kind of values I have. These are the morals I have. This is how I choose to spend my money. This is how I choose to spend my time. This is who, these are the people I choose to spend my time with. These are the people I'm seeking to spend my time with and starting to safeguard that. And starting to make myself important to myself and to safeguard those tenets that I had created in my life. And to also know that if I, and pardon me, this is a little NC17, but if I fuck that up -

Britta: Yes. I say it all the time on the podcast. You're good.

LeeAnna: It's okay, yes. I'm like, you know me. I cuss like a sailor. If I fuck that up, like it is okay. It is okay. And what do you do? You just, you start back over, you know, you give yourself compassion and grace. And that type A in you that's like, I messed up, so I have to start totally over, or it's like I have to clean slate it, you know, starting July 1st, I'll do da-da-da-da, you know, all of that is out the window because it's like, no, you just, you and I have, I have a, yes, I have a really very quickly interesting story, but I think a lot of people can relate to this. You know, when you meet someone and -

Britta: We embrace the messy.

LeeAnna: - they on the outside appear to be all these great things, but on your inside, you're like, I don't know. I don't know about this person. Like, I get a really weird feeling, I get a weird vibe off this person, but they seem so great, right? And so everyone around you is like, that person's great. They're great, they're this. But you're like, no, I just, I don't get it. All the work I'm doing and all the stuff I'm thinking through tells me no. And so I allowed myself to fake that, to be nice, to be around this person, to love this person in the way that I do. Because I'm just sort of innately a very loving person, and I try, one of my one of my tenets is to leave someone better than when I met them, whether it be in the day, the moment, or whenever. And I had a

moment where I, it was so incongruent, like my inside self that just really did not like this person, and my outside self that had been faking this likeness clashed. And I said something really terrible to this person. And in the moment, I knew it. And I was so okay that I had said it, that I was not okay that I had said it, you know. And so what I did, I could have never talked to this person again because I was embarrassed. I could have absolutely sent twenty-seven really insincere apologies. You know, I could have sent flowers, I could have whatever, tried to just disassociate and make it go away. But instead, I sent them a very sincere apology and left that relationship, left that friendship in a way that needed to happen day one. And that's the harder part of this work, too, is those people that you allow into your life, into your inner sanctum, when they are incongruent with who you are.

Britta: Mm. Yep.

LeeAnna: That's okay, and that's not their fault. It's no one's fault. It just is, and that's okay. Like you do not have to be in that person's life, and they don't have to be in yours. Even if they're your family, which obviously you talked about.

Britta: Yeah, even if they're your family. You know, you know, in my instance, exactly, it was family, but I remember this dynamic for you and it showed me just how much work we had done because instead of prioritizing somebody else's view of you or not making them uncomfortable, you'd move to a space of I'm not gonna live in discomfort and keep people in my space. I'm going to just, clear is kind.

LeeAnna: Thanks. Yeah. Yes.

Britta: I'm gonna be clear and I'm going to, if the answer is this is a no, then I'm gonna let them know and I'm gonna part ways. Because when we don't, what happens? We end up saying mean things to people and we become, yeah. And it's not, it was a moment of like, this is not who I am, and it's not that person's responsibility. It's me being honest and the same.

LeeAnna: This mean thing, I was like I was so mean. No. And what a micro example of my marriage too, right? Like -

Britta: That's it. I was like same thing. It was the same thing that was happening, yep, in your marriage. LeeAnna, I just have to say I'm first off so grateful that you have shared so many of the like deeper pieces of our work together. Because I think a lot of people when I say, you know -

LeeAnna: Same thing, just amplifies.

Britta: - my deep dive coaching, working with me one-on-one. I think a lot of women may come from that perspective that you had of, well, I've been doing therapy for many years. I know a lot, but you have helped me also catch the vision of what I do and how it is different. It is unique in the way and I also think because of the podcast -

LeeAnna: It is very different and it is impactful.

Britta: - it allows for this accelerated dropping in together. I hear all the I hear all the time from women who've listened to the podcast and then get on a call with me. They're like, my God, I feel like I already know you. Because the podcast is who I am. Like you felt, it wasn't like, the podcast is one person and then I work with her and she's different. No, it's the same person. And so -

LeeAnna: Yeah. Yeah. No. I remember the first time I invited you to lunch and you were like, I don't know if I want to do this. I've never met a client like this. Like most of my clients are out of the country and I'm like, okay. You know, I'm local.

Britta: Yes.

LeeAnna: Well, do you want, because I thought, you know, coming from a background of therapy where you do one-on-one talk therapy, that was not weird to me at all. It was just like, let's talk face to face because you get so much more even, you know, you can't feel another person energetically via Zoom, you know, or over the phone or whatever. I mean we can because we're weird. Not always.

Britta: As easily, as I was like it's easier in person, but you and I that is one of, that is the gift is that we can sync up. Yeah.

LeeAnna: It's much easier in person. And then yes, and I remember when I met you. Yes. And I remember when I met you, I felt like I was almost like meeting a celebrity. I was just like, I've been listening to her podcast and I know her voice so well. And it was like, what is she gonna be like? And then you were just like one of the coolest people I'd ever met. I was like, we're gonna be besties. Like I'm like, we're gonna be their friend.

Britta: Totally exactly. I love that too. That for me it never feels, every woman I meet, when I did the retreat last year, same thing. That is not the dynamic for me. It does not feel like a celebrity meeting somebody. It's just totally, my God, I love you. Tell me about your experience because I -

LeeAnna: Yeah.

Britta: - want you to have the things you want most. And yeah, that's, so for all of you that are curious, yes, LeeAnna is local. That was like a new experience for me last year and actually such a huge gift. Because yeah, we really, I have and we're now besties and, you know, I'm like getting, I come down, we play. You taught me mahjong recently. Trying to.

LeeAnna: It was great. Yes. Great. Yeah. Yes. Trying to, yes.

Britta: I know, I can't wait to come back out. Mm-hmm.

LeeAnna: Mahjong and Pilates and future work together, like I - you also have supported me, I mean, in every possible way. With my own now small business and with my goals and dreams. And yeah it's, you as a human are a gift, but what you offer is very different than one-on-one therapy as someone who is now working on her master's degree in counseling, because I very much want to give back in that way, and it's important to me. But yeah, it's different. It's very different.

Britta: Yeah, it is. It is like an accelerated, we are just in it together step by step. And I think that's so important for women that are at especially like where you were, you know, you have huge dreams that you want time to fulfill and time was slipping away and it was a crucial moment of, I got one life, potentially, you know, nobody knows. So maybe I've got this one life that's my life, and I have these things I haven't accomplished that matter, that mean the world to me. And not just professionally, you know, there were relational, personal relationships and experiences you wanted to have. Yes.

LeeAnna: To have children, wanting to all the things that I was not going to - the door wasn't even open, I mean, it was like bolted. Like there was no option for me to live the life that I had dreamed of. My entire adult life had been morphed into something that was unhappy for two people, not just me. But also I think another thing that comes to mind when you talk about your impact, and what it what the difference is, I think too, a huge difference is being able to see that all of those things that were so painful for me and things that I would consider wounds - a deep one of which was not being able to have children with someone - I stopped hating my ex-husband for. And in the end, I just, and I said this so many times in therapy, I just want to kindly and lovingly put this to bed. Like, I just need a different life, and you need a different life. And it was so genuine. The leaving with love was so genuine and very painful. But it was so, it was such a treasure to not have to carry those wounds like that and hate another person for them. And to be able to know that I had the control and the power to still do whatever I wanted to do in life. That I didn't have to do it in spite of, or and I didn't have to be, you know, angry at someone else because I couldn't. I could make those decisions. Yeah.

Britta: Yeah, and I wanna be clear that that is a direct result of the work you did on your side. Those experiences, you leaving with love, was not dependent on his side of the lane. Like it was entirely the way you wanted to do this, and you were the one that ultimately set yourself free. It didn't take somebody ultimately saying, 'cause so many women I meet are like I want him to ultimately leave with kindness and I want him to - I, too, wanted my ex to be able to say, you're right, this isn't a good fit for us. I wanted him to agree with me, and I had to reach a point where it was like, you get to have your story, I get to have mine. And I loved, it was a huge gift for me as a coach to get to watch you choose a story that freed you in that way. So with that -

LeeAnna: And that came with a lot of loss. A lot of loss. So it's not -

Britta: - with that in mind and I know, I know there's lots. You've done a beautiful job. You have done a beautiful job, which I'm always so grateful for when I interview, you know, guests that

are going to give the full picture. I never want to paint divorce at this like fix all, it's gonna be great, it's gonna be amazing. Like, no, there's hard both ways. It's choosing, it's choosing a hard with love. That's the difference. But I would love for you to take some time to share with us a few things before we finish the episode. And one of those would be for you, what now? So you've been - when was your divorce finalized?

LeeAnna: Mm-hmm. In March.

Britta: Okay, so March, April, May, June. So you've had about three months of finalized, which anybody who's gone through a divorce knows, you know, the divorce feels like it's going on much longer than when you're actually in that process, but finalized since March. Tell us what are some of the most exciting, like beautiful experiences that, like you said at the start of the episode, a year ago you would never have dreamed would be possible. What are some of those that you've been having right now?

LeeAnna: Yeah. Well, as we have, as you have I think made clear, I kind of expedited my life.

Britta: Massively.

LeeAnna: When I figured out what I wanted, I was like, in a year from now this will all look different. Like, and it really turned out to be a matter of I just figured out what I wanted and I moved forward. And I did it in the most kind ways I could, but I, my divorce got pretty expedited because I wanted to buy my own house and I wanted to have a space to do the things I wanted to do, whether it was entertain my girlfriends or be able to have the option of adopting a child possibly, having my business at home because I could do that. I went through many variations, but I knew I also had animals that were very important to me and I knew that I wanted to buy a house. And so it that was a lot of it. My attorneys, who by the way, were incredible. If anyone out there needs an attorney in Dallas or in Texas for that matter, I will give the information to Britta because they -

Britta: Yeah, we'll put the link in the show notes. Good attorneys.

LeeAnna: Incredibly yes, incredibly compassionate, educated, top-notch people. Which I paid for, but you know, they were working.

Britta: Best investment. I remember LeeAnna when you were like all about the price and I was like, girl, cause I get spicy, I was like, don't. You are gonna thank me. Like in your dynamic, that was the other gift of coaching with me, is I was like, we are not fucking around in this dynamic. Like the amount of assets, the situation you were with him being the breadwinner, like we needed to make sure you had everything you needed financially going forward.

LeeAnna: And I did, blessed with good attorneys. But they expedited it. And so I immediately, I found a home. That was another big one for me. My ex-husband and I had purchased a home that I thought I was gonna be able to maybe have children in, that I wanted to entertain our

families in. And of course, none of that worked out. That was a part of the divorce. But I had made that home my dream home, and his for that matter. And losing that was like losing a portion of myself. Like I had put so much time and love and effort into every detail of this house renovating it and letting it go. Literally award-winning. I was just like, how am I losing this? And I felt terrible he was too because he loved the house too, right? But that house funded my ability though to start my own business so things come around, right?

Britta: I got to see it, y'all. It was stunning. I remember this process.

LeeAnna: My renovation and how we renovated that home together made it beautiful enough that I was able to get enough money out of it to buy my home, which is now - I can't think of a better dream home than what I'm in now. I mean, not only did our work together help redirect what a dream home means, it really truly allowed me to build something that is so special to me and so I have done that. It is now filled with love and some children, not my own, but others, and I am learning to love that beautiful chaos that can sometimes come. That's harder for me because I'm a neat freak. But you know, it allowed me to fund my small business now. I own my own classical commercial studio where if you knew me before, you knew I ran my business out of my home and it was very low-key. And now I am able to be big and I have invested in myself with an amazing branding team who is about to launch my brand next week. In fact, and so I am, like I said earlier, so proud of the work we've done. And when that launches, it will show the world in a very vulnerable way all the things I have been working on the past three months. So I have found myself in relationships with friends that I never thought I could go deeper with and have. I have a very special best friend I've had since college, who now I am their family and they are mine, and we spend holidays together that I've never been able to do, and that has been incredible for me. Her and my relationship has grown tremendously through that and our love for each other and my love for her family and her sisters and vice versa. I have a man in my life who is flawed in many ways, but who is human and generous and kind and has allowed me to breathe and has allowed me to be every part of me, good, bad, and ugly, allows me the grace and love in ways that I never thought possible, which has allowed me to do all these other big things in my life.

Britta: Human, human in many ways.

LeeAnna: As I mentioned, I've started my master's degree. I have incredible theories that I want to start researching and integrating into my work as a classical instructor, bringing trauma-informed services and really community-based offerings that I hope to heal a little bit in my community because I am - one of my tenets is that I think we need to give back and contribute. That's how we get this work out there, right? And being that example and doing those things. And so I am living, breathing and doing those things. And a large part of that is having a partner who supports that wholeheartedly, without question, but with honesty and kindness and sometimes just hard work along the way, sitting there next to me -

Britta: Yes.

LeeAnna: - working away as I'm working away. And that has been an absolute treasure in my life. And his children and getting to know them. And yeah, it just makes me cry. Like my life is so big. It's so big. And it's happened in three, four months really. The expedition of it. The like actual journey of it.

Britta: So big.

LeeAnna: And I had a dream about a year ago where I was in a new house - not mine, oddly, I'm not psychic - but in a new house. It was Christmas time. If you know me well, you know I love Christmas. I always, always go get a real tree and do a whole big Christmas thing. And I was with a family - and I had a family! And I remember waking up from that dream going, maybe someday I'll be able to have a Christmas with a big family. And I think I'm gonna have that. And it's like, it's so incredible. Like my life is so big and it's so hard and stressful and challenging. And financially, I've never had more debt in my life, but I'm working through it. And for someone who would have said a year ago, financial stability is the utmost, most important thing, more than anything else in the world - and I was extremely financially stable - that struggle feels right right now. I am able to give back in ways that far exceed that. And so I am so grateful. I'm so grateful. And I want nothing but love and happiness and hope that my ex-husband finds that. So ladies, he's in Dallas!

Britta: And I truly believe this is the beauty of like, I believe there is someone for everyone.

LeeAnna: I do too, and I think he deserves the world. I truly do.

Britta: I do believe there are people that we can heal with at the levels of like what we need. I see it with you. I see it with my partner. And it makes me go, yeah, there's absolutely someone else who, the way their dynamics or where they're at is gonna fit perfect with that person. I am not, contrary to those who listen to this podcast and are like, she's a man hater, like, no, I really love women. I really love humans. If there's anything that I'm not big on, it's sacrificing humans to keep a system, to keep a marriage, to keep an image when the people within it are struggling. I don't, I don't subscribe to that as you know. I think it's terrifying, as you've shared it, and it was watching you when I coached you. It's terrifying to do the work and to step out into the unknown, to eat the shit stew and finally go, this makes me sick. I don't want to do this anymore. It's the hardest work you'll ever do. But damn are the payouts the way. You know, I say this often in the community, it's like a pie. You can't just expand the good without expanding the hard. And so when you go, and you, I watched you LeeAnna, you did really deep, difficult, hard, hard work. When we grieved you losing your home, it was almost harder than losing the marriage because the home had become your safety and your emotional attachment.

LeeAnna: Yeah. Yes. Yeah, it was my iconic view of what I wanted so deeply. Yes.

Britta: It epitomized everything you had sacrificed for. And it was the thing we were going to have to let go, to let die to emerge into the new life. So I really saw you do that work and I'm so glad that you got to share here at the end what is potential and possible on the other side of

that. The opening, the shifting. And you're someone, I will say for everybody listening, I don't know if you can do this in the speed that LeeAnna has done. I don't think - I don't want anybody to listen to this and be like, okay, in eleven months I'm going to have like exactly LeeAnna, you are very like, that is something that I just have seen in you, a tenacity. You're very tenacious. A lot of what I just helped you do was like clarifying -

LeeAnna: An entirely new life.

Britta: - what is it that you want and giving you the permission. And then once we did that, you were ready and it was just tracking with you. So I, also you didn't mention this, but I have to have you share a little bit about it. Not only have you got your amazing commercial space. So for those of you locally, we will be linking this in the show notes. For those of you not locally also like I mentioned earlier, LeeAnna has been doing Pilates in the Community with us. So if you want to get some more of that, it's in the Community!

LeeAnna: Yes! It's amazing. Such a gift. I have met so many lovely, lovely, beautiful women and I am so grateful for that experience. It is healing me every single time we have a session. It is truly unbelievably helpful and lovely and I'm so grateful I can be there.

Britta: Yeah, it's more than, you know, I love it because it's all these women in the Community that know and love each other and then we're moving our bodies together. So that's a place to go spend time with her in the Community. But you are also soon to be launching your own podcast.

LeeAnna: Right! I am and I cannot wait to have you on it. I still, we've, in Britta's wisdom, she keeps trying to convince me to do other things, but I still think she's gonna be my first person I interview. She hasn't convinced me otherwise yet. She might, but yes, I think I talked a little bit about it earlier, but my vision is I feel strongly that we all every day experience just low levels of CPTSD triggers in the world. I think we have simultaneously created, and this isn't just in our physical space, but in our social media space, in the spaces that we encounter every day, we are experiencing trauma on low levels that is unprecedented. And it doesn't seem, there doesn't seem to be a space in the world that that doesn't happen in. Even the safest of spaces. Like, for instance, I live close to a Whole Foods and I used to be able to go to my Whole Foods and that was kind of a little sanctuary, right? Like obviously I love food. I use it a lot in my in my language, but to just go to the grocery store and spend that time to like find cool things and make cool, you know, recipes. It almost feels angry. Like you walk in there and everyone is just amplified in anxiety and anger and fear and frustration. And I feel like there are very few just truly safe spaces where we energetically, where our central nervous systems can just breathe and pause and feel safe. And so it is incredibly important that when you come into my studio, you get the experience of a safe, consistent place, just like you offer safety and consistency in your work. And I want to create a community of people, small business owners, people such as yourself, whether they have a brick and mortar business or they're online, whatever, that have those same ambitions so that at some point down the road if someone knows they need a safe place to go get their hair done, they have a place that they know they can call where they're not going

to be judged, they're going to be able to have a beautiful experience. If they need help with anxiety, if they need help with their divorce, if they need help moving their body, if they need help buying and going to a place where you can sit alone and have dinner and feel safe. So that's the goal. And I'm backing it with empirical evidence research with each guest that comes on. So it's very exciting. It's very, very exciting. And I'm excited to hopefully launch it in the fall. So we're working. We're doing a lot of work back here, but yeah.

Britta: Oh my god, so much work. Like divorce, moving, commercial studio, now podcast.

LeeAnna: I like disappeared for a period of time and I'm sure people are like, is she just like, she can't get out of bed, right? Like she's super depressed. She can't get out of bed. I'm not gonna deny that. That's happened, but it's not frequent.

Britta: Like we weave that in with, yeah.

LeeAnna: Of course we do. It would be so disingenuous to say that I don't have days where I'm like, you know what, I'm in bed today. Thank God I have Keaton, my little dog. He gets me out. And he now comes to work with me. Another part of my dream life I never thought I'd have was the security blanket of my sweet baby coming to work with me every day and sleeping under my desk while I teach. Yeah. So podcast coming soon, studio coming soon. Yeah. Thank you.

Britta: And I'm very, very excited for the podcast. I, as someone who has guests in, you know, occasionally, I am so excited to listen to yours and get to be introduced to just other amazing people creating spaces like this in the world.

LeeAnna: Yes. Men and women, humans out there who we can go to. Yeah. I'm excited.

Britta: Beautiful. Yes. Yes. LeeAnna, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. This was a huge, tremendous gift. It was everything I hoped it would be and so much more. Just the way you describe things, the way you dropped in. I'm very, very grateful. And you know, just a huge thank you from my listeners too. It is a tremendous gift the women that come onto my podcast and are willing to share so vulnerably, so openly, it gives permission to everybody who listens to also feel that way, to live their lives in this way. So thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

LeeAnna: Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you. This feels like a nice bookend, which has type A people like. Thank you.

Britta: This feels complete in a really good way. Yay. Of course, for those of you listening, like I said in the show notes, we will have all the beautiful links in the future when I'm on LeeAnna's podcast. I will of course update you all. I will tell you where to listen. I will also have my link to work with me in the Deep Dive Coaching Container, to go sign up for an Alignment and Clarity Call and just get to see if we are a fit as well. Because similar to you, LeeAnna, like I said in my episode last week, part of what inspires me, how I think the world will change, is women changing their own lives and then reaching their hands back to help other women, humans,

come forward into lives that are deeply theirs. And I see you doing that.

LeeAnna: Yes, and I desperately want to encourage people to come to you as a space, not just for divorce, but even big changes in life. You know, I think what you have to offer, I know divorce is your specialty, and it truly, truly is. But you have a gift of being able to just help people figure out who they are. Yeah. And the trends that happen -

Britta: Transitions. Yes.

LeeAnna: So you will be on my blog and my website and so yeah, anyone who knows me and hears this - very vulnerably - they can reach out to you that way too because I think about four people in my life actually know the whole story so yay!

Britta: I know, I know. I'm so proud of you. I just want to remind you every bit of letting yourself be seen has led to the people who are truly yours finding you more easily. So beautiful example of that. Yay! Thank you all. Till next week. Till then, babes. Bye.

LeeAnna: Absolutely. Bye.