

Becoming Relationship Ready

Guest: Sarika Jain

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Meagen Gibson - [00:00:10]

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, co-host of the Relationship Super Conference.

Today I'm speaking with Sarika Jain, a leading South Asian love relationship and dating coach. Her unique approach encompasses everything from uncovering relationship patterns and closing one's Ex Files, to practicing self love and mindfulness in relationships, all with the goal of inspiring women to live the lives they've dreamed about, experiencing profound love, success, and fulfillment.

Sarika's background includes working in the corporate world and on Wall Street for over 15 years before deciding to pursue her dream full time of creating a movement around healthy love and empowerment for women, over 10 years ago.

She's a student of energy healing, psychology, feminine leadership and relationships and has studied life centered therapy with licensed clinical psychologist Dr. Andy Hahn. She's been called a relationship sorceress by her clients.

Sarika Jain, thank you so much for being with us today.

Sarika Jain

My pleasure. So excited to be here.

Meagen Gibson

So, we got a little bit of your background in my intro, but I would love it if you could share with us your story and how you got into this work.

Sarika Jain

Sure. So I actually started dating, obviously, in my 20s, and I was looking for the one. Being of South Asian descent, being the eldest of three daughters, I just felt this immense pressure to find my partner. And also, I've always had this deep desire for romantic union. Since I was a kid, I would read about love stories and read the Q&A sections of women's magazines, especially around love. So it's always been something of interest to me.

And so in my 20s, I was like, okay, I'm going to date to find the one. And I lived in New York City, and I read all these books on love and dating, and I even worked with a dating coach, and I thought I'd perfected dating. I was such a good dater. And I also went from relationship to relationship, too.

And so I started coaching other women in dating as a side gig to my corporate job. And in that process, I met a wonderful man. He was everything on my list. We got engaged, and then a month after our engagement, he broke up with me. And I was like, oh my God, I was just shaken. I was heartbroken. I thought I'd really nailed this, understood this. And when I asked him to tell me why, he

said, "You're too controlling, you keep people at a distance from you. I don't feel safe with you. I don't trust you. And you still seem to have issues you need to sort through". And I was like, what?

Meagen Gibson - [00:03:01]

Good for him for being able to say it so clearly.

Sarika Jain

I just feel like those five pointers have become the basis of my work because it was spelled out so clearly what my patterns were. And what I think everyone struggles with, every smart, successful woman that I work with, struggles with the same issues on different levels. They're the same blocks.

And so that night, I cried in my sheets, and I thought I would end my life because I tried everything. And a voice came from my heart that said, I need spiritual healing. I was like, I don't know what that is.

So then the very next day, I walked around like a zombie, and I saw a sign that said "Psychic", and I walked in. And this woman, Romanian gypsy, chain smoking woman, read my energy field, and she said, "Well, your heart and your sacral chakras are blocked. And you're a magnet for heartbreak because of your thinking, because of your toxic thinking, your low self worth. You've been settling for less". She told me all sorts of stuff.

And honestly, I still had no clue but I'm like, okay, this sounds right. I have no idea what any of this means. But, she said unless I learn from this, I'm going to keep repeating the same patterns over and over in my life, unless I heal from this.

And when I looked at my patterns, it was true. It was like, every relationship I was dumped. And it just seemed like my magnetism for heartbreak was just growing and growing. And so I was like, I just need to break this chain and maybe get my ex back. Of course, that was my motivation.

And so I embarked on this journey of self love and looking at my patterns and rewiring my thinking and closing my Ex Files. And I reconciled with my ex. I figured out he wasn't the right one for me, and it was amicable. It wasn't like, oh my God, lifelong wondering if he was the one and he got away, that kind of feeling. It was just like, okay, okay, I can take this. He's not the one.

And then 90 days after I started this process, I met my husband in a meditation group. And I did not start dating him right away. It was just friendship. I saw him across the room and I was like, he's cute, but he's 5 years younger than me, his name sounds like my ex's name. He had all these things that were not on my checklist. He was unemployed, whatever. And I was just in the mode of just dating for the fun of it. That's one thing I also want to teach clients is, dating as a path of self discovery and personal growth.

And I got back onto online dating. I started meeting better quality men, and at the same time I started talking to him, and it turned into a loving relationship. And we got married 2 years later, and now we have two kids with a third on the way.

So that's my story. And that's how I got into coaching in a more holistic way for clients. So not just dating, but also letting go of baggage, whether it's from your childhood or from past relationships, and learning to love yourself and then dating in a mindful, conscious way.

Meagen Gibson

And I find that that's such a common thread with so many of the people that I speak with, is that they start doing the work that they needed the most in their own lives. Because that's the thing that's the closest to you that you can then help others with, because you've been down that road.

Sarika Jain - [00:06:56]

Yeah, totally.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. And I want to go back to the points that you made at the beginning of what your ex had said were your problems and how those line up with, I know that you said that a lot of your clients have the same issues. So if you could rename those and then tell me what they look like in your clients lives.

Sarika Jain

Sure. So the first one is being controlling. And that one really looks like not surrendering, not trusting your own intentions and actions and believing that the universe is conspiring to support you. And instead, what you're doing is you're trying to control your relationship, when he texts you back, how he responds to you, what he meant when he said this. Controlling in the relationship just starts looking like becoming over analytical, becoming critical, becoming defensive when you think that the other person is trying to hurt you.

I think controlling shows up in so many ways in our lives. And the thing is, in our careers, it's like if you do a good job, you're going to get promoted. So you feel some sense of control in your career when you go down the traditional path. But love isn't like that. Love involves two people with their own individual will. And you can't will someone to love you. You have to allow for your love to blossom.

And the thing that you can control is cultivating your love garden, as I call it. Put in your garden what you want, compassion, love, understanding, equanimity, mindfulness, whatever else you want in your garden. And if someone is attracted to that garden and wants to cultivate it with you, great. And have fun doing that together and know that you can't control if that person wants to leave the garden.

So, there's a bit of that trust element and just letting go and allowing life to show up mysteriously for you.

Meagen Gibson

I was thinking as you're talking, as you're cultivating this garden, your garden might be perfect, and the other person might have allergies to the things that you've grown. Just to go with that analogy a little bit. And that doesn't mean that there's anything wrong with you or your garden. It's just not a good fit.

But then the other thing, and when you related it to, what makes so many women successful in their careers and in their work and even how they manage a house and a family is like collecting data and making sure you don't make the same errors twice. And you're constantly collecting data about what works and what doesn't work.

And when you apply that to your personal relationships, you can get into that controlling thing that you're talking about where, especially in arguments where you're like, "Well, had you just said it like this", where you're trying to control the way someone else communicates with you instead of doing your own work around your reactivity around how somebody else communicates. I've done that in my own relationships.

Sarika Jain

I still do it.

Meagen Gibson - [00:10:18]

Yeah, exactly. And it took a long time for me to realize what I was doing. And I was like, oh gosh, this is my work, not my work to control him.

Sarika Jain

I know. And the thing is, men don't want to be controlled. Of course they want to be respected, they want to be needed, they want to be trusted. So that's something I talk about with women, in which we have a tough time doing those three things.

And I think trust is another issue that women struggle with. Trusting themselves, trusting their own intuition, their self expression, and trusting whether their actions are going to yield the results that they're seeking.

So you might be dating someone great and you've done all the right things, but then you're like, what if this doesn't work out? And that starts nagging at you. And that's what happens when women, they meet their partner and everything's going great and then boom, the second phase of, oh no, is this going to work out? When is the left shoe going to drop?

Meagen Gibson

I'm so sorry, I interrupted you. Sometimes Zoom is hard in that way.

And so much of what we've been culturally normalized as women, we spend our whole lives hoping to be chosen. And so it's hard to trust when you've had that, not passive, but when that's how the dynamic, the underlying power dynamics have worked, and then you're just supposed to surrender trust that this person not only shows you now, but forever, and it's a lot.

Sarika Jain

It really is. And it plays out in small ways like, he hasn't responded to my text in the last 5 hours. He hasn't taken his profile down from the website. There are all these things that come up. He hasn't introduced me to his mom. He hasn't said, I love you yet, like all of that. And then it creates drama within yourself.

Whereas if you just let go, be yourself, be loving, be refreshing to be around with a guy, give him a good experience, that's something I'd also talk about, that he's going to do it on his own at the right time. And it's going to feel right. It's not going to feel rushed just because you wanted it in a certain timeline.

Meagen Gibson

And that's not to say that you can't be, maybe you would disagree with this, please tell me, but you can't have clear communication and boundaries.

I remember when I met my now husband, he had just come out of a long-term relationship and they had never discussed the future of their relationship. And then it ended quite suddenly. And they cohabitated for a long time.

And I remember when we got together, I was like, we will not languish. I was like, our intentions need to be clear. They don't need to be clear now, obviously we just met, but in 2 and a half years, if you're not ready to move forward, then we need to part ways. I was just clear. And that's on neither of us, we are both free to make that determination, but we're not just going to languish here comfortably together while my eggs expire.

Sarika Jain - [00:13:40]

No, I 100% agree. I think as a woman, you have to share your vision. My vision is to find my partner, have a family. I have clients who are 35, nearing 40. And so I tell them, share your vision with your partner. And if they don't have the same vision, they can leave. And, you can have open, honest conversations with them, absolutely, but if you're doing it from a place of fear rather than love or trust, then that's the energy that gets that vibe of..

Meagen Gibson

That desperation.

Sarika Jain

And I tell them that fear is never going to go away. Even once you get married, other things pop up, so you have to work on that trust within yourself and just trusting that life supports you.

And then the third one is around keeping people at a distance from you. I think that has to do with people's fear around intimacy and really being seen, like, what if my partner sees me for who I am and doesn't love me? It's a very core wound that we have. And so we put up a little bit of a wall. Maybe we want to be the cool girl, or we're always playacting in the relationship just to be that perfect woman, not wanting to rock the boat.

So we do things that maybe keep the peace in a relationship, but then don't support the intimacy, the deeper communication around this is why I'm feeling hurt. And maybe some of this is me, but can I request that you do this?

So going back to the case of my client who was freaking out because her partner hadn't taken his profile down, she went to him and she's like, "Do you mind taking down your profile?", and he's like, "Yeah of course, let's do it together". And he didn't make a big deal out of it. And she's like, wow, I didn't want to seem desperate. I didn't want to seem like that woman, but I had to tell him that. And he was like, great, no problem.

So it's just your own attitude towards being able to have those uncomfortable conversations while also dealing with your own fears and things like that.

Meagen Gibson

Well, when you said that also, it reminded me that sometimes we're hiding our true selves from our partners because we're also hiding them from ourselves. We're also not comfortable with our own needs, desires and wants. They scare us a little bit sometimes, especially when we're younger. And so it's not even that we're... And we're definitely sometimes play acting or putting on what we think the other person wants to see, because that's what we want to see, too. That's the easy, acceptable road sometimes, is to just be a part, pretend to be a role.

Sarika Jain

Yeah, totally. And the deeper your relationship goes, the more you might put up that wall, the more you might play act. So it's a dangerous path to go down.

I just feel like that area of putting people at a distance from you, I think that's an area that we're always going to be working on. What does intimacy mean?

Meagen Gibson

And that continues forever.

Sarika Jain - [00:17:19]

Yeah, totally. And then this idea around, I don't feel safe with you. I think for me, that comes from emotional safety. So when we feel safe within ourselves emotionally, then we can hold space.

So I call it self empathy. I love nonviolent communication and what they teach around self empathy and knowing your feelings and needs. I really believe that we just have to ground ourselves in self empathy. That's where when we come from that place, we can build emotional capacity to be there for others.

And so, when you're aware, self aware of your feelings and your practicing self care and things like that, then you don't react. Like if a man does something, he's not going to be afraid that you're going to snap at him. And that's what men are afraid of. They're afraid that they're going to do something wrong and we're going to snap at them. And it happens one too many times.

Meagen Gibson

And then they can't do anything right.

Sarika Jain

They can't do anything right.

Meagen Gibson

Who wants to do anything if nothing they do is right.

Sarika Jain

And I think that's what they're most afraid of.

So, I think around emotional safety and creating that within your partnership that he can be himself, he's not going to be judged. Of course, men make mistakes. We make mistakes. But knowing that you're not going to erupt for small things. You're allowed to erupt, I believe in righteous anger and things like that, but if it's coming from a place of compassion and self awareness rather than, boom, just reacting.

I was like that all the time. I was like an emotional roller coaster. My highs would be high. My lows would be low. And I pulled my partner into it. I blamed my partner and there was drama. I was a drama queen. Even though I read books on how not to be a drama queen, I was. That's the point there around safety.

Meagen Gibson

It's interesting that you say that. I just had an incident yesterday where I took a look, my husband and I were both home, I took a look at my calendar and I realized that there was going to be a conflict today, this afternoon around my work, childcare, people being in different parts of the state. And I literally just said, "Oh my God". And my husband was like, "What?", and I immediately catastrophize the entire thing.

And I said, "There's a problem tomorrow afternoon", and I started to just wind up. And then I looked at him and I said, "I need 5 minutes to freak out. And then when I'm calm again, can we get in solution mode and figure it out?". And he was like, yeah, sure. Whereas normally I would have just spiraled out. I would have drawn him into it. He would have gotten defensive cause he's just trying to help.

Anyway, he goes away into another room for 5 minutes. I literally just go through the fire of all historical stuff about what's happened in the past and how I've got to always abandon everything. And

then literally felt everything calm down, my heart rate slowed down, my breath slowed down, and my rational mind returned.

[00:20:48]

And I walked into the room and I said, "Okay, I'm calm again. Can we talk it out?". And he was like, "It must be really hard because you have had to do this and this and this so many times in the past. And it sounds really hard to juggle. And I'm sorry that my schedule would impact this. And now let's figure it out". And we did. But we've been together 15 years. It's taken a long time to get there, but it happens so often. And that's just one positive anecdote in a sea of many where I haven't been able to be that self aware.

Sarika Jain

And life is going to keep presenting stuff like that. I tell my clients, now we're just dating, and I'm like, wait till you have kids, you're going to be exhausted, you're going to be your worst self, your partner is going to be their worst self. You're preparing for that. And no one talks about this. No one talks about what it really takes to make a marriage work and deal with two people's ups and downs and crises and things like that.

I love your example. I thought it's great because it reminds me of what my daughter's school teacher was telling us yesterday. She's like, you need to create a Zen space so that when any of you are melting down, you can go and take 5 minutes in your Zen space and teach your daughter that, too. And I was like, you know what? I've heard this before, because I'm into mindfulness and things like that, but I've never practiced it. And I'm like, okay, now it's time to start bringing that practice in.

I love that. I think taking space away from the people around you to practice whatever self care you need. And if you need more than 5 minutes, sometimes you need a day, sometimes you need a whole weekend to yourself to do that. And that's healthy.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. It's the promising to return. That is the thing. I need some space. I promise I will return.

Sarika Jain

That creates a trust.

Meagen Gibson

And saying, I'm going to need the weekend I think, it might be longer, but I promise I will check in. That's how you leave your partner not feeling abandoned and you'll come back to it.

Sarika Jain

I love that. Thank you.

Meagen Gibson

So, what steps can women do to become relationship ready other than dealing with what we've talked about?

Sarika Jain

Well, I think it's this. I offer a step by step program where we first talk about self love and building your own inner foundation, mental, emotional, physical and spiritual. And the way I was explaining it is if

you don't have a firm foundation yourself, you can't build a house. Whatever house you build becomes a house of cards, and it'll fall at the first gust. And so that's the foundation.

[00:23:42]

And then the second step is around what I call healing your heart and closing your Ex Files. And that is around examining your family blueprint and then your exes and any other guilt you're carrying. So many of us carry so much guilt and shame, and it's about giving yourself the permission to look at it, love yourself and let it go. You just have to give yourself permission to living a guilt free life. I think that's important because guilt is what brings down your vibration and doesn't let you love because you're just so heavy, filled with baggage.

So, letting go of that baggage, closing your Ex Files, like we talked about.

Meagen Gibson

And I think a lot of that has to do with the self compassion stuff that you're talking about. With guilt and shame, especially that self compassion work is how you release that and have compassion for the person that you were when you did those things or when the feelings of guilt and shame, I can't think of anything specific, but the way that you behaved in your relationships in your late teens and early 20s, you've got to have compassion for the child like adult that you were at that point.

Sarika Jain

Yeah.

Meagen Gibson

Be compassionate for who you were and where you were and how you've grown since then.

Sarika Jain

I love this practice that I learned from Thich Nhat Hanh. He wrote this book called *Reconciliation*. Such a great book. And there's an exercise in there where you go from your childhood to present. So, I take clients, I'm like, start from zero, start from when you were conceived and go year by year and look at everything that you've done that you feel shame or regret around or whatever. And then practice like, I love you, I accept you, I forgive you or practice self compassion for that little one and be there for that one and then just come all the way to the present moment.

And for some people, this could take a really long time. They could write two days of regrets. I have them first list it out and then do this meditation. And this is a once in a lifetime activity, but once you do it, you feel so much lighter. I definitely recommend that.

Meagen Gibson

I think most people don't realize what anvil regrets are until they actually write them down and start that practice.

Sarika Jain

And it's so easy. Just do that one practice, dedicate two days to it.

Meagen Gibson

All right, now talk about the Ex Files.

Sarika Jain - [00:26:27]

Then the Ex Files. So that one is around really looking back at your most significant last relationship. And it could even be the guy that just ghosted you, the one that left you not trusting again, hurt, whatever it is, angry, sad. And just going back, looking at what came up. I use NVC again, nonviolent communications, write down what you felt, what you needed, take responsibility for yourself, and just go through a ritual or a practice and then do cord cutting.

So that's where you actually cut energetic cords with an ex. And it's so funny, so many of my clients end up meeting their ex during this time period. Like, an ex might reach out to them.

Meagen Gibson

They can feel the energy shift.

Sarika Jain

It's so crazy. The synchronicity that comes off with this process.

So you go through this process and then you're free. And look, if it's meant to work out with your ex, it'll happen again, but not from that same place of attachment as before, unhappy attachment before. It's going to be a new, fresh beginning. Or if you're meant to move on, then you will without regret, without wondering if he was the one, etc.

So I think that's really important because, I think I was telling you before, 67% of women who take my online quiz still have feelings for an ex, whether it is anger, wondering if he was one, sadness, etc. It's a big block, I think, for women.

Meagen Gibson

And I think you named, what you're talking about and correct me if you're wrong, is really closure. Because so many people feel like their relationships, they didn't get the satisfying closure and knowledge or explanations that would have made it make sense for them. So in doing this work, they're able to... Because really, that is independent work. Nothing somebody else is going to say is going to fix it for you. So it's your work to really go into those relationships, look where you're accountable and responsible, look what's yours, look at what's theirs, and then be able to sever that tie.

Sarika Jain

Totally. And most recently I'm supporting a woman going through a divorce, and I even had her write a huge letter to her partner so that she could share everything. And I did that, too. I actually wrote a huge letter to my ex, and I took responsibility. I wasn't blaming him. I tried to make it as compassionate as possible, but being honest, when this happened, this is what I felt, and this is what I needed. And also talk about the good times.

It's like this whole process where you're taking responsibility, but expressing yourself and learning what you needed to, because that's why relationships are in our lives, so that we can learn our karmic lessons. And that's how you can create a new pattern in your life.

Meagen Gibson

And I want to note for anybody watching and listening that you don't necessarily mean you should send those letters. It's just the act of writing them.

Sarika Jain - [00:30:01]

Yeah, it's the act of writing it. And in this case, it made sense for her to send it. But in every case, it doesn't. Absolutely. It's just if you feel like there's still something unspoken and you want to say something, then do it, because that's empowering. But of course, you can just send it to Mother Earth, to the ether, and know it will get to him at a soul level.

Meagen Gibson

Well, we've talked a lot about, I wouldn't say the weaknesses of women, but some of the ways in which women can grow and change in ways that will benefit their relationships. And now I want to talk about the special gifts that women have when it comes to magnetizing and keeping great relationships.

Sarika Jain

Oh, great. And that goes into the next part, which is supporting women and discovering their wow factor. And so what I mean by wow, is our sexuality, our femininity, our unique purpose.

As women, we are naturally, biologically inclined towards relationship. We are actually emotional leaders, and we are the culture makers, the nest builders, etc. So it's claiming back that feminine side that's been discarded by our society. Embracing it in your own way, like finding what that looks like within yourself and becoming really in tune with your sexuality, like what gives you pleasure, the way you want to represent your femininity, your sexuality and your purpose, even. What are your unique gifts that you're here to cultivate and shine in?

And so when you're in that like, "Wow, I am actually amazing.", you start magnetizing the right people towards you. And men find that very alluring when they're around a woman who's just confident in herself.

So I do think women are very gifted, actually, in relationship. It just so happens that we've never been taught it. So how would we really claim it?

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely.

Sarika Jain

Yeah.

Meagen Gibson

And I think you just named it, but that's the wow factor I think you called it. And so give me some more examples of what wow factor might actually look like in practical terms.

Sarika Jain

Well, I have clients who discover that they have intuitive abilities or they're clairvoyant or they're actually natural born channels or healers or natural born emotional leaders, whatever your kind of skill is. And also learning that they are actually very nurturing and very sexy.

I think being sexy is something that I personally had... It's like the Madonna-whore complex where you're like, okay, either you're like this really proper woman at work, but then in your personal life you're supposed to be a sexy Vixen. And these different archetypes get mixed up in our heads and we don't really know how to be ourselves in our femininity or sexuality.

[00:33:27]

Many women even don't even know what they want sexually in a partnership. And so you go into the relationship a little disempowered, like just having sex to please a partner without knowing that actually men want to pleasure women, not just sexually, but in every way. That's why men get cars and achieve status and all that stuff. They actually want to pleasure women.

And so when a woman is stepping into her own pleasure and her own desires and her own sanity, her sexiness, her own, like, "I'm actually amazing.", then it just actually ends up just creating that magnetism and confidence.

So when you are going to the next stage, which I call prepared for love, which is around preparing your home, your life for a relationship, so many women are busy. They're so caught up in their careers that they don't actually have time for love or maybe they have kids or whatever, and learning the right communication skills and things like that.

And then dating. And so I support women in dating and then dating from that place of joy and pleasure and self discovery. So I think being in your wow factor really supports that.

Meagen Gibson

And if I hear you right too, especially, not just women that work outside the home, because every woman works, whether it's inside their home, working outside their home, we're all working. But there can often be, what I call it is, a trouble in making a shift.

So you work all day, and I for the last 2 and a half years, have been working exclusively from my home. And so I work all day. I lead a company. And then at 17:00 or sometimes 18:00, depending on my clear boundaries, I have to shift gears and go out and be a mother, shift into this different role. People listen to me all day and then I walk out in the kitchen and no one listens to me. That's my problem.

And then I'm supposed to turn into this person who wants to receive love and pleasure, and I in the past had a struggle with. And I think that's what you're talking about where men want to please women, but sometimes we have trouble receiving that kind of a gift because of all the ways in which we have to, because of cultural norms and society almost pretend to be men all day long.

Sarika Jain

Yeah, it's so true. I think that's a big struggle for women.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. All right. So how can people find out more about you and your course and your work?

Sarika Jain

Sure, you can actually go to my website, which is sarikajain.com and I actually have a *Love Magnet Quiz*. So the quiz allows you to find out what your Indian goddess archetype is and what relationship patterns you're seeing in your life, what kinds of men you're attracting into your life. That's kind of the best way.

And this month I'm launching an online course called *Attract Your Soulmate*. So I plan to launch it in May. I'm just coming up with the program right now. That's going to be a group program, which I'm excited about.

And I offer private coaching.

Meagen Gibson - [00:37:12]

Fantastic. Well, thank you so much for being with us today.

Sarika Jain

Thank you. This was so fun.