

**IDENTIFYING \*AND\* EXPLAINING HOW YOU ACTUALLY FEEL**

<https://fiercemarriage.com/identifying-and-explaining-how-you-actually-feel>

[00:00:00]

**Ryan:** I don't know. I want to say it was like three... well, probably like a year ago.

**Selena:** Three months to a year. *[laughs]*

**Ryan:** Three months to a year ago...

**Selena:** Who knows!

**Ryan:** ...I was talking to an author online and came to the discovery that this particular person and a lot of people, as it turns out, have an inner monologue throughout the day. And you're one of those people. Right, Selena?

**Selena:** I guess. I mean, it's not constant but I am thinking things.

**Ryan:** And that was mind-blowing to me because I've never in my life that I can remember woken up and had a conscious stream of inner monologue like, "I need to do this today," or "This is the thing that I'm about to do." Opposites attract, my love. Opposite attract.

**Ryan:** I've never had that. That's been a discovery thing for you and I because of how we process information differently. And for me, I think in terms of nodes, and webs and relationships of information, and ideas, but I don't think in those things in a linear way. It's like an interconnected web.

**Selena:** Well, it just makes you have to learn everything about something before you can put it together.

**Ryan:** For example, speaking in public, I'm a train wreck most of the times because I can think of all the little... I don't know what I'm going to say when I go into it. *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** Which I'm like, "Huh?"

**Ryan:** And you're really good in that instance because you think linearly, you don't feel like you have to go on rabbit trails. This is a struggle of mine. The whole reason we're talking about this little instance in our own relationship, this revelation is because I've learned how to articulate and think and express feelings in a more, I think, faithful way, in a more accurate, clear, efficient way. And that is the other side of communication. Like we've talked a lot about

listening up to this point, and this episode is all about talking—learn how to talk good.

**Selena:** Learn how to talk.

**Ryan:** It'll be a good episode. We'll see you on the other side.

**[00:01:58]** <Intro>

**Selena:** Welcome to the Fierce Marriage podcast where we believe that marriage takes a fierce tenacity that never gives up and refuses to give in.

**Ryan:** Here, we'll share openly and honestly about all things marriage—

**Selena:** Sex—

**Ryan:** Communication—

**Selena:** Finances—

**Ryan:** Priorities—

**Selena:** Purpose—

**Ryan:** And everything in between.

**Selena:** Laugh, ponder, and join in our candid, gospel-centered conversations. This is Fierce Marriage.

**[00:02:30]** <podcast begins>

**Selena:** It's definitely been a journey and taken us a lot of time to be able to I think communicate efficiently.

**Ryan:** Efficiently. That's an interesting word choice.

**Selena:** Well, because I think I can tend to say a lot of things and dance around, and then that sort of hits and I'm like, "Yeah, that's the one I want to say." So knowing you, knowing the tones you like to hear or don't like to hear...

**Ryan:** It's about expressing what you're trying to express.

**Selena:** I know.

- Ryan:** You have a hard time attacking that and how it's going to land.
- Selena:** But what I feel and what I want to express is hard to make you feel and understand and experience it the way I'm feeling, right? Because we all process stuff differently. *[Ryan laughs]*
- Ryan:** This is loaded. This is loaded.
- Selena:** I love strawberry ice cream so much and I try to tell you about it to help you experience it that way and you just don't love strawberries.
- Ryan:** No. I love strawberry ice cream. What are you talking about?
- Selena:** It's a hard analogy. *[Ryan chuckles]* You couldn't take it.
- Ryan:** This is the difference, right? Because people will get on us all the time because "Ryan why don't you just let Selena say what she's going to say, and just let it be what it is?" And I don't disagree with that. The thing is I live with Selena *[both laughs]* and we spend almost every minute of every day together.
- Selena:** The Selena.
- Ryan:** I live with The Selena. *[both laughs]* Oftentimes you'll say something but the thing that you're saying is pre-loaded in your mind by 20 other things. So you'll switch topics of conversation right in the middle of when we're talking. And I'm like, excuse me, what are you talking about?
- Selena:** You just got to keep up.
- Ryan:** So I've learned that in my own mind I have to say, "Okay, what you mean is this."
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** And by doing that...
- Selena:** I like when you do that.
- Ryan:** ...I feel like I'm able to draw the more clear—I'm using this word intentionally—faithful meaning from what you're trying to say.
- Selena:** I love that you're using the word "faithful" to communicate. *[both laughing]* I'm using the word "efficient." *[both laughs]*

- Ryan:** Because that's what it's all about.
- Selena:** I know that's just the season that we're in or whatever. Yeah, anyways.
- Ryan:** Like fidelity. Fidelity in the words that we choose, are we choosing them accurately to convey accurately what we're trying to actually say?
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** And that is what this episode is. So just a quick recap of the last few weeks of the podcast, we've talked through the nature of communication, the biblical mandate for it, and the gift that it is. That was the first one. That would have been four weeks ago. Then we talked through how to talk about sex. [00:05:00] The reason for that was it's continually a hard topic for couples to approach without being defensive and do so productively. So we talk specifically about that.
- Then we talked about selective hearing. We talked about three ways and depths of selective hearing. Then last week we talked about active listening, which was taking the selective hearing thing and just like flipping the script on its head. So now it's not just about hearing everything, but it's about getting more from the conversation and by listening more actively. Today we're on the other side of that conversation.
- Selena:** Now we're talking more actively?
- Ryan:** How to speak with clarity, fidelity, and as Selena would say, efficiency. *[both chuckles]*
- Selena:** Well, okay, I was reading through Job, and Romans in my reading plan, and Philippians. I don't remember totally where this falls but... Oh, I was in Ecclesiastes. All the words that we tend to say... there's just this warning about words. Let it not just flow out of you but let your words be few and intentional.
- Ryan:** Hmm, interesting.
- Selena:** It's very convicting instructive.
- Ryan:** Maybe that's where the efficiency things come in.
- Selena:** Probably. *[Ryan chuckling]*
- Ryan:** It's going to be fewer words.

- Selena:** At least for me I think I have too many words.
- Ryan:** More words per...
- Selena:** I do have three girls that talk at me all day. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Ladies and gentlemen, my life is full of words. *[both laughs]* And not my words.
- Selena:** And you are a blessed man. You talk more than you think. Anyways.
- Ryan:** Well, I've learned. *[Selena chuckles]* As we'll talk about today, we're actually going to get into... this is just a quick overview. So that's where we've been. Here's where we're headed. We're going to talk through what the big underlying truth is to speaking, knowing what I mean, the emotional intelligence, emotional maturity. Knowing what I mean, what I actually feel, and then being able to articulate what I actually feel. What's the underlying truth there? Is that a worthy pursuit?
- Selena:** Yeah.
- Ryan:** And knowing yourself to that extent. I think we can make a case that it is biblically speaking, not just po... Like everybody in the world would say, "Yes, know yourself. Speak your truth." That's not what we're saying. We're saying, how do we know our true selves in light of the gospel? How do we speak that truth, not our truth, but the Truth, capital T Truth in a way that's loving? We'll get into some really tangible tools. And we'll ask more questions, excuse me, like, Why do our emotions exist? What is EQ? How do we improve it?
- Selena:** Diving deep in.
- Ryan:** And then we're going to give you some tools that I think you'll find very helpful, especially when you're navigating this water trying to look at and identify and articulate how you're feeling.
- So really quickly we'd be remiss if we didn't do this, but here's our housekeeping. If you haven't yet, please do leave a rating and a review. That helps most of the time. For every 10 reviews that are encouraging, there's one that just demolishes my... *[laughs]*
- Selena:** It's fine.
- Ryan:** It's okay. It's fine.
- Selena:** It's fine.

- Ryan:** I don't take it personally at all. It's totally fine.
- Selena:** If your identity is anchored in Christ...
- Ryan:** You know what I've actually learned? I have learned that...
- Selena:** That it is helpful to have some harsh words spoken at us.
- Ryan:** ...after four years doing the podcast and everybody listening to the first episodes mostly...
- Selena:** I think we should take some of those down.
- Ryan:** I think we might need to systematically go through, like rerecord them in a way that's maybe more helpful. But there are people who do listen to those and they're like, "These people are... they're not that good at this." And I'm like, "Go to the... Not that we're great at it but..."
- Selena:** If you do something a lot, you have to by nature improve.
- Ryan:** You would hope so. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** We would hope so.
- Ryan:** We may or may not be proof of that.
- Selena:** I think we tried to listen to our first episode and we were like, "Ohh."
- Ryan:** Yeah. But that's the nature of thing. You got to start somewhere. Anyway, ratings and reviews are helpful. Or if you want to join our Patreon community, go to [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). Do that. If God is leading you, we ask you pray. If you feel that prompting here, we just ask that you pray about it. Ask God, "Hey, should I support Ryan and Selena? Should our family support the Fredericks? Should we support Fierce families, the Fierce Marriage ministry?" And if God says, "You know what? That might be a good idea," then we just ask that you do it. *[laughs]* That's all.
- Selena:** You guys are in agreement.
- Ryan:** And I don't mean to say that in a way that's manipulative, but just honestly, that's what we want. We want people who are on mission because the Lord has led them there. That's it. Go to [patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). There's lots of free stuff by the way. Good stuff.

- Selena:** *[speak softly]* Just say that quietly. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Including enrollment in Gospelcenteredmarriage.com. Anyway. All right.
- Here's the big problem here. Did you want to jump in on that?
- Selena:** No, I think you should say the problem because when we were talking about it, I was like, "Oh, it's this," and you're like, "No, not at all." *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** Well, you were toughing on some things. This was in our pre-show banter, ladies and gentlemen. I was trying to get a little bit deeper. So what you were saying is true, but I was trying to go more...
- Selena:** It's fine. Rejection is real. *[Ryan chuckles]* Go ahead and state the problem.
- Ryan:** Leave a bad review.
- Selena:** No, you have to state the problem because I think it definitely is clarifying
- Ryan:** Yeah. So the problem here is this is, that not everyone is good at identifying and explaining how they feel or what they're going through or what's going through their head.
- Selena:** Especially to your spouse, because you already feel on the defense. Because not only are you thinking about how you're going to respond, but you're also thinking about how they're going to respond to your response. Right?
- Ryan:** Sure. There's a lot more dynamic.
- Selena:** It's not just me saying something. It's me saying something and dealing with the response of what said.
- Ryan:** So it's not in a vacuum. So that's maybe the contaminant here in this problem is that people aren't good at identifying and explaining how they feel, or what's going through their head because they feel a lot of pressure happening around what they feel. We did a session with a therapist through one of our partners. One of the things that we took away from it was that we tend to have feelings about feelings. Like, oh, Selena, you feel tired, and then all sudden you're like, "Well, now I feel..."
- Selena:** Guilty for feel tired.
- Ryan:** Guilty for feeling tired.

- Selena:** I shouldn't feel tired.
- Ryan:** Now I feel guilty for feeling guilty. I should be a fun mom. *[both chuckles]* You know what I mean? So feelings tend to contaminate things a little bit.
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** So you have to be really emotionally intelligent, emotionally mature to be able to untangle those things, and then kind of put them before your spouse for the purpose of knowing and being known.
- Selena:** Right. We'll probably get into this, but in light of a biblical perspective and knowing yourself, it's good to bring those things before God. Not that it surprises Him, obviously, with our shortcomings or our lack of emotional intelligence. But asking the Lord "give me wisdom in these areas. Give me guidance, and Holy Spirit, lead me in the way of emotional intelligence because I clearly am not great at it."
- And how do you know you're not great at it? Some of the research shows that people who lack emotional intelligence typically like to slam doors or stomp out or scream and yell. I was like, "I don't know...[inaudible]"
- Ryan:** Okay. To be fair, I don't know the last time you've stopped out or slam the door.
- Selena:** I don't stomp I think. I think I just kind of...
- Ryan:** You never really screamed and yell. I think you feel like your emotions are bigger than they are.
- Selena:** Probably. I hope.
- Ryan:** Give me a little bit of a...
- Selena:** Thank you.
- Ryan:** Yeah, I mean, you're not like this ranger hall?
- Selena:** No. But sometimes it feels like I don't know what to do when my emotions boil that high.
- Ryan:** But that's natural, right? Not to discount that, but I would say that that's probably the way it feels.



- Selena:** Some of it is natural. Yes. But I do think there's some room...
- Ryan:** It feels like I'm overwhelmed, I'm in a glass cage of emotion.
- Selena:** But I do think there is some emotional maturity to be gained.
- Ryan:** Yes, for sure.
- Selena:** We need to be fruitful. As stewards, as believers, as followers, and disciples of Christ, we're got to be fruitful. So how can I be fruitful in my emotional maturity? I guess is like learning to not stomp out. Why? Because there's a better understanding there, right?
- Ryan:** So there's a lot of stuff on the table floating around right now.
- Selena:** I like to do that.
- Ryan:** And I want to be specific about our scope here today. Now, you're talking about handling emotions. That has to do with emotional maturity, emotional intelligence. And we're trying to say, okay, here's a tool of emotional intelligence, emotional maturity, skills that can be grown so that you can handle your emotions. Well, yes. But the thing we're definitely trying to get to today here is to handle those emotions well and to be able to articulate them to your spouse. So we're kind of on the back end of that emotional maturity...
- Selena:** Got you.
- Ryan:** ...like benefits cycle. If you're going to go down that path of...
- Selena:** So, Selena, just try to keep up.
- Ryan:** No, it's fine. I want to make sure that we are sticking within the communication component of this conversation.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** So that's where we're headed. What's the big underlying truth here? So emotional maturity, emotional intelligence, those kind of beg this big question of, is it even biblical what we'll say to navel-gaze in this way? The interesting thing is we... If you think it about from a Christian perspective, wasn't it Jesus who said this: "Whoever finds his life will lose it, whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" So He's talking about basically self-disregard as part of being a Christian, as part of following Christ.

**Selena:** Define self-disregard.

**Ryan:** We'll get there. We'll get there.

**Selena:** Okay.

**Ryan:** But I do want to start with this quote. It's by John Calvin. Smart guy. *[Selena chuckles]* Pretty smart guy. He said, "Nearly the whole of sacred doctrine exists [00:15:00] in the two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves." Surely what Calvin was getting out with that is this idea that we need God. That's the theme. No matter how much self-exploration we do when it comes to our moral condition, our emotional condition, just the human condition, almost always that will be brought to a head at this... If we're doing it from a biblical standpoint, it'll be brought to this conclusion that we need God and we don't have Him.

**Selena:** Got you.

**Ryan:** Because we are not God. He is holy, we are not. I think that's what Calvin was getting at. But I do want to look a little bit more into what that could mean and especially in light of what some of the Scriptures we read. So there's a few more questions that would come to mind. I mentioned the verse from Matthew 10:39. "Whoever finds his life will lose it, whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." There's a few more verses. These are coming from our book called "See Through Marriage." I'm looking primarily at chapter five here.

Another one says, "Isn't love supposed to be selfless?" I look at 1 Corinthians 13. If I'm going to be a good spouse, thinking about loving you well, isn't it supposed to be selfless? How can I look at myself and examine myself if I'm supposed to be more selfless? Another one is Philippians 2:3,4, which tells us that we put the needs of others ahead of our own.

**Selena:** So you're saying these are...

**Ryan:** These are things that would kind of cause us to pause from a perspective of a biblical perspective. They might. What we're trying to do is kind of get underneath the surface here. The final example is if we are called to live as living sacrifices, that's Romans 12:1, dying to ourselves continually, how can we spend even an iota of time focusing on self-knowledge if we're supposed to die to ourselves, be living sacrifices? So there's a little bit of a counterintuitive piece here.

**Selena:** We wrote in here, too, that personal growth is good, but it's not ultimate. I think that's kind of where we have to pause and examine because we are called to bear fruit. So bearing fruit requires growth. Growth can't happen without a somewhat of knowing... knowing that I am not divine, right?

**Ryan:** Yes.

**Selena:** So I have to know that I'm not divine.

**Ryan:** And that requires self-knowledge to come to that conclusion.

**Selena:** Right. Right.

**Ryan:** And I think from a Christian perspective, and this is where we want to really be careful on this, and we may or may not need to convince our listeners this. I do want to kind of gloss over that a little bit. But the bottom line is, is what we discovered in our research, if you want to read more on it, check out "See Through Marriage" on Amazon. It's our latest book.

Here's the bottom line. As Christians, we're called to deny ourselves but not to be ignorant of ourselves. And kind of where that leads us is that much of seeing God's bigness depends on seeing our own smallness. Understanding God's holiness hinges on grappling with our own sinfulness. Accurately perceiving God's limitlessness brings our own limits sharply into focus.

I think I'll finish it with this. The difference between God's call to self-knowledge and the world's is a matter of motivation or centrality. The world's call to self-knowledge is self-centered, whereas the biblical call to self-knowledge is Christ-centered. Self-knowledge that leads to pride and self-worship is self-centered. Self-knowledge that leads to humbleness and God worship is Christ-centered. And that is the full distinction there.

So yes, there is merit to knowing ourselves, to learn about ourselves, our own feelings, the way we process things, the way we're wired psychologically, physiologically, emotionally so long as they do not become paramount in our lives. That pursuit is a pursuit in light of a greater pursuit that is to glorify, honor, and know God Himself.

**Selena:** I would almost use the word "submitted" under the greater pursuit.

**Ryan:** Love it. That's really cool. That's kind of the big underlying truth is that it's biblical, yes, to know ourselves so long as it is a means to a greater end of knowing and worshipping God even more fully. So if I know that I have a tendency to be distracted during prayer if I have my phone near me, it's

glorifying to God if I know, recognize it, and act on it in a way that puts my phone away so that I can now pray to God more wholeheartedly. That's just one example.

**Selena:** So how does this fit into our personal expression in marriage? How does knowing ourselves [00:20:00] and dying to ourselves lend itself to us being able to communicate what we're feeling or what we're dealing with to our spouse in those heated kind of moments or even in the everyday? Sometimes I think we just exist and fewer words are spoken, and we don't really know how to process what's going on. So we'd rather just kind of maintain the peace and not dive deeper when I think there can be a conviction there.

**Ryan:** Yeah. So you're asking self-knowledge, what role does that play in....?

**Selena:** Personal expression.

**Ryan:** And therefore in the health of our marriage?

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** I mean, in so many ways. Think of a husband. I always think of husbands because I am one.

**Selena:** It's probably best.

**Ryan:** The point is a lot of the guys I know, I think they're pretty... I'd say they're mature. I put myself in this category. So I'm not trying to throw anyone under the bus, to many friends who might be listening to this. But I think they're very mature, but most of the men I know, including myself significantly lack emotional maturity. I know a lot of really intelligent men who significantly lack emotional intelligence.

**Selena:** Which I think we need to stop and define what emotional intelligence means because I think it's important to define your terms here.

**Ryan:** Yeah. Again, I'm pulling from our book here, but I'm going to actually make a contrast. I'll just read a paragraph here. IQ has to do with intellect, how well one processes information and synthesizes solutions, or the ability to know unexplained phenomena outside of oneself. That's IQ. This is, again, coming from "See Through Marriage. EQ, however, depends to an extent on levels of self-knowledge. Now I'm going to go into some academic stuff. So academic John D. Mayer, not the singer... *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** I was like, "That sounds made up."

**Ryan:** ...and Peter Salovey, I think that's how you say his name, define emotional intelligence like this. He says, "It's a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions." That's how they would define it.

Then I go on here. "In other words, having a high EQ means being able to decipher feelings in yourself and others while also being able to use what you know for greater relational health. I like to think of it as emotional wisdom." If you're emotionally intelligent, you'll be able to go into a room and kind of know what buttons you can push in every person to kind of manipulate people in the room. Now, emotional maturity would know that that's a bad thing to do.

**Selena:** There you go.

**Ryan:** So there's the difference. So an emotionally intelligent husband can manipulate his wife because he knows how she thinks, how she feels.

**Selena:** How she'll respond to certain things.

**Ryan:** How she'll respond. An emotionally mature, loving husband wouldn't ever want to manipulate her.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** Even if I'm emotionally intelligent and I don't recognize that I can be manipulative, then I'm not emotionally mature. I'm not emotionally wise.

**Selena:** Because some of the markers and characteristics that we've seen in research about emotional intelligence is this self-awareness and self-regulation. And then knowing your motivation. So what would be the motivation for manipulation? Obviously, not something godly.

**Ryan:** Getting what you want out of your spouse.

**Selena:** Yeah, objectifying or whatever. For the wife, I think emotional intelligence versus emotional maturity could look like, you know, we see the problems with our husbands, we see the lack or we see the... Gosh, she's just never good at this or whatever.

**Ryan:** So is this what could maybe precipitate nagging?

- Selena:** Absolutely. Sorry, I am...
- Ryan:** No. So the wife is nagging and the husband is not hearing because he just hears nagging and she's like...she's onto something.
- Selena:** There is an actual truth to what she's nagging about, but I guess the emotional maturity side of the wife could take a step back and think, "How can I say this in a way that he would hear it better or more clearly?"
- Ryan:** I love that. Because you think about this communication dynamic. So we've talked about how being quick to listen. So the husband is being quick to listen and the wife is being careful to articulate emotional maturity, what she's feeling, seeing, observing, and wanting. Then you have this beautiful...
- Selena:** You have a moment of epiphany where shall we communicate well. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** This dance continue where you're like, "Oh, wow, he's actually listening, she's actually speaking" instead of just nagging [00:25:00] and he's walling her off now because not that it's all on... It takes two.
- Selena:** It takes two. I think, again, growing in our emotional maturity is going to take time and repetition. But understanding where you lack is the perfect place to begin growing in those areas.
- Ryan:** So understand where you lack. And that's where I think we can spend the rest of our time here. Because we've talked about emotional intelligence a lot. We do have a whole podcast episode on that. So look for that one if you want more on just emotional intelligence, emotional maturity. The reason we're talking about it here is because it's really a key component to identifying what you're feeling and having the wherewithal to say, "I need to communicate what I'm feeling." That's emotional maturity.
- A lot of times you might have a husband or a wife who says, "I'm not feeling right, I know I'm not feeling right, I know that I need to communicate how I'm not feeling right in a helpful way, but I wish I kind of knew what exactly didn't feel right." Does that make sense? So there are some tools...
- Selena:** So something's wrong and I don't know how to communicate it.
- Ryan:** Right. Right. Something is wrong and I can't diagnose it. My stomach hurts but I couldn't tell you if it's because of lunch, if it's because I got punched in the stomach, or there's a spear that's been shoved through me. So being able to identify what that feeling is so critical to being able to be known and to connect and communicate. So, again, this is the speaking side of the

communication equation. Before we go into that, we have some really tangible tools, some feelings charts, and things that I think...

**Selena:** Agrrr.

**Ryan:** ...could be really helpful. I know.

**Selena:** I know. I just hate focusing on feelings because I feel like that's what the whole world focuses on. And I'm just like, "How about we focus on Jesus? *[chuckles]* How do we focus on God?"

**Ryan:** How does Jesus make you feel? Does He make you feel safe, loved, secure, joyful, happy?

**Selena:** Yeah. Are those feelings?

**Ryan:** Yes, they are.

**Selena:** Okay. Just make me know.

**Ryan:** So feelings are important is what I'm trying to say.

**Selena:** Yes. This is just like you.

**Ryan:** I found this really helpful article. It's by... I'm going to look up his name because I want to do the man justice. He has done us service. His name is Dr. Bob Kelemen. And he wrote... it's a Christian kind of what does the Bible teach about our emotions?

**Selena:** Man!

**Ryan:** I found five Christ-like light criteria for when we express our feelings to others. These are kind of the ground rules for "I'm going to now express to my wife how I'm feeling." I can look at these five criteria to see how I might be able to tweak and adjust so that I'm loving her more like Christ.

**Selena:** And just to read what he wrote real quick, he said, "Jesus modeled a cardinal principle of emotional maturity when He purposely expressed His feelings to others in order to minister to them."

**Ryan:** So there was a ministerial sort of motivation?

**Selena:** Yeah. So good.

- Ryan:** I think we overlook this, but why did Christ show such emotion sometimes, crying, throwing over tables, weeping, and emoting? Other times He wasn't like that. He was so matter-of-fact like, "get up and walk," or "you're healed?" So could it be, and this might be his hypothesis, but there's many pages here, but could it be that Jesus did that specifically with the purpose of ministering? And I would argue, yeah. I would probably get on the side of, yeah, of course. He's Jesus. Everything He did had a purpose.
- Selena:** Everything was His purpose. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Yeah. Let's look at these five Christ-like criteria. Again, these are for when we express our feelings to others. Again, these are kind of filters to be thinking through as you're getting ready to share something, whether it's how you're feeling, just dealing with problems, or how you're feeling about your spouse. So number one, we can express our feelings to others when we can answer the question: how will expressing my feelings increase the potential for the other person's growth in Christ?
- Selena:** I was just thinking another way of saying that is how will me saying this to my husband help him grow in Christ? Sometimes I do think I have that motivation when I'm trying to tell you a truth and *[laughing]* you don't want to hear it.
- Ryan:** But that's my problem, right?
- Selena:** Right. Well, yes, but I need to say it. You're talking about the speaker's role and my only argument back is that I don't always think that I can say things in a way that you'll hear. And I know you would say the same about me.
- Ryan:** Mm hmm.
- Selena:** Even if I'm like, "I'm listening so good right now, my heart is so humble and I'm trying to hear everything you're saying," I will still miss it. I will still not hear what you're trying to say and your motivation. I think that's where some of my anger would set in is because I'm like, "I'm trying [00:30:00] to help you grow in Christ." I don't say those words, but I'm going to start. "I want to help you grow in Christ. And this is one area that I see you struggling in." And maybe as a speaker, again, your motivation has to be right.
- Ryan:** It's so like you though, because you're already thinking about how the other person's responding as opposed to just how you're supposed to talk, how you're best serving them through talking.
- Selena:** Because I don't think well on my toes.



**Ryan:** That's the nature of our communication is you're always anticipating. You're always playing...

**Selena:** Because I feel like I fail if I don't anticipate.

**Ryan:** That's funny. You're playing 40 chess, and I'm just trying to get the checkerboard set up. *[both laughs]* Like you're so far emotionally down the line...

**Selena:** I'm just so mature.

**Ryan:** ...and you'll bring something to me and you're anticipating three or four different responses, and I'm just like, "What's for dinner?" *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** Stop.

**Ryan:** I mean, when it comes to emotional conversations, you got to be aware of that and know that it's not your job to make someone listen, but it is your job when you're communicating to communicate in an accurate, faithful, winsome efficient way.

**Selena:** Right.

**Ryan:** In a way emotionally considerate way.

**Selena:** In a way that will, you know, ask yourself, "If I express this, is this something that's going to really increase their potential for growth in Christ, or is this going to hinder it?"

**Ryan:** Yeah. That's a good one. Some of these go without saying in marriage, but we'll read through them. And these are criteria. So we can express our feelings to others when we have previously established a strong relationship with the other person. Now, obviously, you're married so you have a pretty strong relationship with your spouse.

**Selena:** Ideally.

**Ryan:** The point is there might be areas of your marriage where you don't have a strong relationship. If you're going to talk about your finances...

**Selena:** Talk about sex. That's a cool thing to talk about.

- Ryan:** Or any area that you typically would just blow up in an argument over, that's an area where you don't have a previously established strong relationship with them in that area.
- Selena:** So what we would need to do is probably start learning how to grow and be stronger in those areas before we're able to communicate our feelings faithfully?
- Ryan:** I think it's probably a matter of recognizing that, "Hey, we're weak in this. So let's get stronger in this. And we can have tougher conversations later on."
- Selena:** That's good.
- Ryan:** Okay.
- Selena:** You're very emotionally mature.
- Ryan:** Thank you. *[both chuckles]*
- Selena:** Just right now.
- Ryan:** Another criteria is when we believe the person has the emotional maturity to handle and benefit from our sharing.
- Selena:** So if you have a strong relationship, you should be able to know if your spouse can handle what you're about to share. Handle and benefit from what you're sharing.
- Ryan:** Certainly, we're not advocating for the fact that you'd hide something because it would hurt them too much or something because that tends to lead toward living in obscurity and living in darkness. Instead, I'd say, find a time, the optimal time to give them the best chance of handling it well. Again, don't hide sin. Don't hide behind this "they can't handle it" lie. That's like classic drama movie trope. Like, "I didn't tell you because I want to protect you." *[Selena laughing]* No, just tell them and get off the plot. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** I love that. Remember who that guy is? "I want to protect you."
- Ryan:** That was Keanu Reeves. "I know Kung Fu." *[Selena laughs]*
- Selena:** Stop.
- Ryan:** Anyway, that's a matrix. Number four criteria is when we believe that sharing our feelings has the potential for healing the relationship. Christ-like criteria.

- Selena:** Yeah, I do think that a lot of us start out with that intention, and then sometimes it just doesn't go as planned. But I think heading out with that is always very helpful. I'm sorry, I'm just reading it again and again to say, Lord, how... I would just take that to the Lord. When I'm believing God, if I share these feelings that I have about whatever it is that I'm dealing with, is this going to heal our relationship or is this going to start severing even more ties that we're dealing with? What would be the way to healing in how I can respond and share my feelings?
- Ryan:** I mean, so much of this is going to be around the how and not so much the what. Because you don't want to be obscured to your spouse at all. There shouldn't be any boundaries that you're not allowed into in your spouse's life. Same for them to yours. To me, this is more around how can I do this in a way that's going to be heard? Not how can I filter this truth so that it's not as hurtful?
- Selena:** Right. Dr. Kelemen says, "The Bible teaches that mature emotionality connects our emotions to deeper issues of the heart. Emotional maturity should permeate every aspect of our new person in Christ."
- Ryan:** Wow. Wow. It's a good eBook. We'll probably put a link to this little [00:35:00] eBook in the show notes here. The final criteria that he talks to is when we're under control enough to think through the previous criteria for that we already read when we can govern and manage the expression of our emotions in light of all the previous criteria. That's interesting.
- Selena:** Emotional maturity.
- Ryan:** That's knowing like, okay, now I'm set up to communicate my emotions in a more Christ-like way. My motivations are centered on is this going to bring my spouse closer to Christ? Is it going to bring reconciliation and healing..."
- Selena:** Bring healing to our relationship.
- Ryan:** Do we have a strong rapport around this topic? If not, how can we build strength? Am I going to manage my own emotions well? Am I in a good spot to articulate myself well?
- Selena:** I know. My argument to that is I always go into things like that and then it doesn't always end up that way, which is why I anticipate so then I can know I'm probably going to get upset about this. So when I get upset, here's my tools. That's why I need tools for my anticipation. *[both chuckles]*

- Ryan:** Okay. Let's talk about tools because this I found really helpful. And Selena, you kind of scoff at these. I don't appreciate your smugness around our feelings charts here. These are proven helpful for less emotionally capable people like myself. No, seriously, they are really helpful.
- Selena:** I'm sure they are.
- Ryan:** Feelings are very nebulous, right? You just kind of feel what you feel. And they are what they are. But if you can put a name to a feeling that really helps you identify how can I actually deal with this thing? What?
- Selena:** I'm just like, "How do I even know that that's the right name? Because feelings you say they're so nebulous. I'm just like, "Does it really have to be this complicated?"
- Ryan:** Okay. Okay. Let me explain this chart.
- Selena:** All right.
- Ryan:** This particular chart, actually it comes from somebody who's a writer of fiction. And they use this chart to articulate the base core emotions in different ways than just the obvious way. So like, if you had a book where the protagonist is running around, they're doing whatever the plot is, and it's just like, "So and so is happy when this happen, and now they're sad."
- Selena:** I want to read that book.
- Ryan:** "And now they're angry." No, you would want some more colorful language, more descriptive language, more helpful language that you know it speaks to a human condition. And that's why you're able to connect with writing because the writer is good at connecting your emotions with the protagonist...
- Selena:** It's true.
- Ryan:** ...and with the plot and with there's high stakes, and you want them to succeed, and you want...
- Selena:** There's unanswered questions.
- Ryan:** Yeah. And there's a villain. And you want the villain to fail, and you want them to get whatever they're going for. That's what a good story is all about. So let's take that same attitude toward this. Like I want my spouse...
- Selena:** I'm buying in. Okay.

**Ryan:** Like, "I want my spouse to succeed. I want her to hear my heart. I want to hear her heart. The villain in this is the obscurity that we've experienced by not communicating. So let's slay that dragon together so that we can know one another." There's five core emotions, and each one then grows from an intensity. From low to medium to high. The five core emotions are this: happy, sad, angry, afraid, and ashamed.

**Selena:** Sorry, I'm just thinking of the inside-out movie with disgust, sadness.

**Ryan:** And there are different versions of this. We're running with this particular ones because I found it helpful. Happy, sad, angry, afraid, and ashamed. So if you're sitting down, and you're saying, "I need to communicate something. Something is not right. There is unrest in my heart. I need to talk to my spouse. Am I happy, sad, angry, afraid, or ashamed?"

**Selena:** It's usually a mix, right?

**Ryan:** Yeah. Well, then there are other charts that help you mix them together.

**Selena:** Yeah.

**Ryan:** I would say, "I'm afraid right now." Then you look at the intensity. Am I low afraid, medium afraid, or high afraid?

**Selena:** So high afraid would be like terrified, shocked, panicky. Medium would be frightened or insecure, uneasy. And low is just what? Anxious... Not just. Sorry.

**Ryan:** Anxious.

**Selena:** Nervous.

**Ryan:** Timid, worried.

**Selena:** So what is it? And I can see how that would be helpful. Like, how afraid are you? Because I think oftentimes I bring you my fears, and you're just like, "Well..." you answer it at a high level and I'm like, "No, I'm just at a low level." Or I'm at a high level and you answer and respond at a very low level. Right?

**Ryan:** Okay. From a biblical standpoint, if you come to me and say, "I'm feeling afraid," or I come to you and we recognize...

**Selena:** If you're feeling afraid, I'll protect you.

- Ryan:** Okay, but now you know that fear is the thing you're fighting.
- Selena:** Yes.
- Ryan:** You're not fighting shame. You're not fighting sorrow. You're fighting fear. That to me is powerful to be able to put a word to it and then start battle against it together.
- Selena:** Right, with Scripture. [00:40:00]
- Ryan:** So it takes a certain level of emotional intelligence maturity to be able to say, "I feel afraid, I feel anxious, I feel sad, I feel cautious, nervous, threatened, frightened. And here's why I feel apprehensive. At work, my boss said this thing, I read into it. It seemed like that my job isn't as secure as it was last week. I'm apprehensive." Now you're dealing with fear around work. Okay, now you can talk about how God closed the lilies of the fields and gives the birds a place to lay their heads. He takes care of... You know, that to me is such a powerful revelation.
- Selena:** That's true. Amen.
- Ryan:** Here's another example. I have a melancholy side. I think I have a kind of a... I go in kind of shifts those times, and I feel more of a darkness. I won't say I get depressed because I feel like that's a really big word and a lot of people feel very big emotions around it. So I don't want to discount that. But I'll just have this unrest in my heart and I don't know what it is. It's just I don't feel good. I don't want to hang out with the girls. I don't want to deal with my family...
- Selena:** Sorry. You sound like, oh, a girl. Like I don't want to hang out with girls.
- Ryan:** Our daughters. *[Selena laughs]* I don't want to go with the ladies.
- Selena:** *[laughing]* I don't want you to go out with ladies.
- Ryan:** And I don't know why. So I could look at this chart and say, "Okay, I'm feeling sad" or "I'm just unhappy, moody?" *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Definitely. Definitely.
- Ryan:** I'm just so moody right now. Selena, I'm just feeling...
- Selena:** Oh, man, people if you knew how moody he was.

- Ryan:** I'm not that moody. *[both laughing]* Shots fired! All right. I will not return them because I'm emotionally mature and I know that's a fruitless endeavor. *[both laughs]* But I slightly returned. Okay. Heartbroken is one of them. Let down. I think let down or melancholy. For my sadness, just kind of feeling like what's the point of life and it all feels meaningless. I'll go read Ecclesiastes and then come back and feel better.
- Selena:** So then my response is high. I respond to things that I think you're telling me that you're feeling you know...
- Ryan:** Melancholy?
- Selena:** Melancholy. I can interpret that unfortunately, sometimes as like these are intense feelings.
- Ryan:** His sadness, his depression...
- Selena:** He's feeling hopeless.
- Ryan:** Or he's alone.
- Selena:** Yeah, he's miserable. When the truth is that you're not to that level yet. So now I need to "Whoa, okay. Let's take a step back here. I'm trying to hear you, I'm trying to understand where you're at so I can better support you, I can help you grow in Christ in this area. We can reconcile and have healing together in this area." I think that's exactly what happened...
- Ryan:** The other time.
- Selena:** ...a couple of episodes back is I was responding...
- Ryan:** You were hearing me say I'm miserable, hopeless. And I'm saying, "Man, I feel moody. I'm just feeling out of blue."
- Selena:** You gotta give me the medium. *[both laughs]* It definitely was not that.
- Ryan:** And you can see again how this is so powerful. Because if you know that I'm somewhere in this sad column, "Okay, let's talk about the joy the Lord. The joy of the Lord is our strength. Let's talk about how good He is. Let's talk about all He's done. Let's talk about the opposite things of sadness. Let's talk about the ultimate joy we have." Right?
- Selena:** You don't want to dismiss the stuff, the feelings, right? It's okay to be sad. I think giving each other permission to have those emotions. But also like you're

saying, maybe you are saying this and I'm just trying to draw it out a little bit of you feel sad.

**Ryan:** Identify the emotion not...

**Selena:** Being sad is hard. It's frustrating. I'm sorry. Like, "Yes, it's okay to feel sad. I will sit here and with you and feel sad for duration or whatever." But also in our sadness, let's lift our eyes. Let's remember who our hope is in, where our eternity lies. Getting that heavenly perspective of life on earth. You know, the reality that we are living in is not the reality of the unbeliever. So we can have hope.

**Ryan:** That's where the last four communication episodes were at. Like, if you're hearing something, listen. Hear what your spouse is saying. Respond out of that, not just, "Well, don't be sad. You're fine. Be good. Here's the verse."

**Selena:** Here's the verse. *[chuckles]*

**Ryan:** No. That's the other four episodes is like this is how you listen. And we're trying to say, now how do you communicate so that when your spouse listens they're hearing what's actually in there? That's the only one more of these columns because I think this one's really helpful for married couples. And it's ashamed. Remember these five core emotions here. Happy, sad, angry, afraid, and ashamed.

On the low end of the ashamed feelings spectrum, I think of our middle daughter. Whenever she's going of [00:45:00] feeling ashamed in a lightweight, usually she's going to do a presentation at school or something or if you ask her a question she's supposed to answer but she doesn't, so she'll get silly. And that's on the very bottom of this all the way up to uncomfortable, regretful, and bashful. That's on the low end.

The medium side of ashamed his secretive, guilty, sneaky, unworthy. Think about the implications of that feeling when you're a husband and you're a wife.

**Selena:** It says apologetic that last one. I'm like, "I'm always apologizing. You just told me last week that you're always apologizing for things."

**Ryan:** And you were like, "Okay, sorry." *[both laughs]*

**Selena:** I think there is about of shame there. And I may not understand all of it. It just feels... I guess your little chart worked.



- Ryan:** And then on the high end of the shame you're mortified. That's kind of a dramatic term nowadays. But literally, you feel like you could die, dishonored, disgraced, worthless, remorseful.
- Selena:** This might go false might come around infidelity or addictions. Anything that's been hidden
- Ryan:** Betrayal.
- Selena:** Yeah, a betrayal.
- Ryan:** So what does this tell us on how to respond from a gospel-centered, Christ-centered approach? So ashamed. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Yes, you're a sinner. That much is true. What's also true is you're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. You were unstealable from His grasp.
- Selena:** And we will have to walk through the consequences of the sin but you are not alone in that. God has not abandoned you in that. God is with you even more so in terms of healing and redemption, in dealing with the consequences.
- Ryan:** To reference what you were saying about kind of always feeling like you have to apologize all the time for things, walking in your identity in Christ and your identity is somebody made in the image of God.
- Selena:** Yeah. I would absolutely say that's something that is a present struggle.
- Ryan:** Do not be ashamed of your existence.
- Selena:** Yeah. That's exactly it. I definitely...
- Ryan:** You don't apologize for being.
- Selena:** Well, I'm not apologizing for my existence but I don't want to apologize for my life. You know, what we choose to do or what we don't choose to do. It's like you kind of feel like I want to please everyone. But it's like I don't need to.
- Ryan:** Yeah. And you don't need to head them off at the past because you're anticipating how they're going to respond to that.
- Selena:** There's pride in there too, for sure. God is working on me, people. Let it be known.

**Ryan:** Let it be known. Man, me too. I want in on that. *[both laughs]* These charts, like I said, they'll be available. We'll probably put a link in the show notes of this that will link to the [fiercemarriage.com](http://fiercemarriage.com) blog. And we'll have these charts embedded in there. But I hope this has been helpful. There's actually another really cool tool that we didn't get to it's called the Plutchik.

**Selena:** P-L-U-T-C-H-I-K.

**Ryan:** It's actually more interactive, and that you can click on the various things and see kind of what that emotion is might be telling you and how that emotion might help you. One of the things that this author that we read earlier... I forget his name.

**Selena:** Dr. Kelemen?

**Ryan:** Yeah, Dr. Kelemen ...said is that emotions exist to put us into motion. In other words, God has given us emotions to kind of tell us something about how He might want us to respond or act or act in faith or even just respond in general, right?

**Selena:** So good.

**Ryan:** So emotions do tell us something. If I'm feeling remorseful, what is that telling me? I need to repent.

**Selena:** Sure.

**Ryan:** If I'm feeling afraid, what does that tell me? That maybe I need to get out of danger. That's the physiological side. Or maybe I need to just run to God or run to my spouse or run to hope. So they are telling us something. There's a lot there.

These tools will be available in the show notes. I don't know. Couple's conversation challenge. I think there was a lot covered here. I don't know. Go to the show notes, find these charts and maybe grab this chart with the five primary emotions and just talk through how that might help you communicate to one another more effectively.

**Selena:** You have witnessed it live on this podcast *[both laughs]*.

**Ryan:** Selena was a hardcore skeptic like 45 minutes ago, and now she wants to talk.

**Selena:** Almost a believer.

- Ryan:** [inaudible] to launch this could be nothing but emotions. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Right.
- Ryan:** All right. Do you want to pray for us?
- Selena:** Sure. God, thank you so much for the ability to understand our emotions. Thank you for emotions. You've given them to us, may we be wise with them. Also Lord, as a speaker, as somebody trying to communicate something to a spouse, Lord, give us grace give us wisdom, give us guidance and soften the hearts of the spouses [00:50:00] listening. I pray that we would continue to be quick to listen, to be slow to speak to filter through our words, our tones, our motivations. Holy Spirit, just know us and guide us and counsel us. In your name. Amen.
- Ryan:** Amen. All right, before we close it out, I just want to mention one more time our new online learning platform called Gospel Centered Marriage is live and available for you. If you go there, you'll find our six-week core marriage course where we cover the foundational bedrock parts of every marriage based on scripture. And then there's also an enrichment library where you can go through things.
- We actually just finished a course called "7 Boundaries for Affair Proofing in your Marriage." That'll be a mini-course. That's live in the next few weeks. We have one on there. It's 5 Keys to Healthy Perspective on Sex. Five truths, rather. We have another one that's on habit. We're working on one on community. Like coming from a divorced home, we're doing that with Ron Deal. That will be amazing. We're interviewing him next week on that.
- So we're constantly adding to this library. And if you get on board, you'll get access to everything as we add it for the entire year. And we'd love to have you in there. Just go to [gospelcenteredmarriage.com](http://gospelcenteredmarriage.com). It's all there waiting for you so that you can thrive in your marriage.
- With that said, this episode of the Fierce Marriage podcast is—
- Selena:** In the can.
- Ryan:** Thanks, ladies and gentlemen. We'll see you again in about seven days. Until then—
- Selena:** Stay fierce.
- Ryan:** Nice. *[Selena laughs]*

**[00:51:30]** <outro>

**Ryan:** Thank you for listening to the Fierce Marriage podcast. For more resources for your marriage, please visit [FierceMarriage.com](https://FierceMarriage.com), or you can find us with our handle @Fiercemarriage on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Thank you so much for listening. We hope this has blessed you. Take care.

**PODCAST NOTES**

- **[00:14:40]**
  - Scripture references:
    - Matthew 10:39
    - 1 Corinthians 13
    - Philippians 2:3,4
  
- **[00:30:00]**
  - Recommend Resource:
    - [The Plutchik Wheel of Emotions](#)
    - [What Does the Bible Say About Our Motions](#) by Dr. Bob Kellemen

**FIERCE MARRIAGE RESOURCES**

Main Site: <https://fiercemarriage.com/>

Shop: <https://shop.fiercemarriage.com/>

Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/fiercemarriage>

Podcast: <https://fiercemarriage.com/podcast>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/fiercemarriage>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fiercemarriage>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/fiercemarriage>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/fiercemarriage>

Pinterest: <https://pinterest.com/fiercemarriage>

Ask Us Anything: <https://fiercemarriage.com/ask>