

## Transcript for Gabrielle Reece | Less Than Perfect (Episode 619)

Full show notes found here: <https://theartofcharm.com/619/>

GABRIELLE: There's, I think, great strength in yielding. I always use the analogy of the grocery store. I'll move to the side to let you go, it'll take me three seconds, it's a nice gesture. Could I go through you, over you? I could, but why?

JORDAN: Welcome to The Art of Charm, I'm Jordan Harbinger. Today we're talking with my good friend Gabrielle Reece. I just love her. She's such a great woman, a great mom, and a hard worker who's got a really impressive career as well. She's one of the best volleyball players of our time, a model, an actress, and more recently, television personality, all while raising a family, kids, and being involved in her community. We'll discuss how someone with this much going on manages to balance it all and get it done, managing communication and relationships, especially when being married to another strong personality and great athlete, big wave surfer Laird Hamilton, and we'll discuss why consistent improvement and conscious choices are key for growth and forward motion. This and lots, lots more with Gabrielle Reece, here on The Art of Charm.

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Also at [theartofcharm.com](https://theartofcharm.com), you can find the full show notes for this and all previous episodes of the show. Whether it's your first or 500th episode of AoC, we're always glad to have you here with us. Now, let's hear from Gabrielle Reece.

Thanks for taking the time to come on the show today as well, I know you're super busy moving back and forth as well.

GABRIELLE: Oh, no, it's an honor. Thank you.

JORDAN: So when you're splitting time between Hawaii and Malibu, do you have to fly from Hawaii a bunch on business or do you try to set it up so that you're in the U.S. when you have to do all the U.S. stuff and then when you're in Hawaii, you can actually have a life?

GABRIELLE: You would think that after 22 years of doing it that I would, but the reality is because -- you know this as being a self-employed freelance person, that things arise. So what we do is we just base out of each place and then travel accordingly, I mean -- and again, you know, it's all how you look at it. So I always go, "Well this is an opportunity." But I've gone to New York from Hawaii sort of three times in five weeks because they were spontaneous, great jobs that you go, "Yeah." So it's the nature of the beast and I always kind of looked at it like, "Well you set it up this way and this is part of why you're not doing a nine to five job and so this is the other side of that," and it's a great thing.

JORDAN: Yeah I suppose it comes with the territory. It's a bummer to fly from Hawaii to New York, which -- what is that, like 14 hours or something? It just seems so far.

GABRIELLE: Yeah well going, when you have the tailwind from Hawaii to New York, it's probably only about 10 or 11, and then coming back it's a little bit longer. But, again I just sort of look at the opposite, which is, for me personally, I like being self-employed and being an independent contractor, and you just have to be willing to do what it takes to do that.

JORDAN: Yeah. And it sure beats going to an office and sitting in air conditioning and all that stuff for every day. That seems like the opposite of what you would be able to do. I mean looking -- knowing what I do about you and stuff like that, and knowing

how active you guys are, sitting all day at a desk, would literally kill you, I think.

GABRIELLE: Yeah, I think -- you know there's people who sort of say, "Hey listen, I love to have it -- I love the window of, 'Okay, I work from this hour to this hour, I leave it at the office, I go home, and then that's it.'" I mean you know this from the job that you do, the job is sort of all the time because it's also a part of who you are. I like the movement and the freedom and the -- a little bit of the unpredictability of what we do, certainly more than that sort of locked and loaded, Monday through Friday deal.

JORDAN: What is it about unpredictability that you actually like? Because I've heard that a lot from people in similar, active, kind of -- pro-athletes and things like that. They love the routine of training in some way but --

GABRIELLE: Yes.

JORDAN -- there's also this element of excitement that comes from, "Oh, we're going to do this city and we're going to do that," and they don't seem to outgrow it. I mean, you're a mom now, you're married now, you still like that.

GABRIELLE: Yeah I think, you know, for me it's a good point of, I need a certain amount of linear activity. Consistency in my training and my food to kind of keep me tethered to something. But then beyond that, you sort of feel like it's maybe what you liked about competition and training is it's a little bit unknown, and so to put yourself in an unknown situation on a regular basis feels good because you feel like you're sort of testing yourself, you're having an opportunity to rise to an occasion, and maybe it's a little bit uncomfortable or scary so that feels good. I feel like that's how you continue to get to know who you are. I like it. It's an adventure and quite frankly, you don't want things to always be the same because then you never grow. You're not learning new stuff, you're not challenging yourself in a new way and I think that that sort of, is an essence of life.

JORDAN: It's -- something I read in your book was "Life is lived outside your comfort zone," and that's a very popular -- I hate the word meme because it sounds degrading, but I guess it is kind of a meme, or a motto --

GABRIELLE: It's okay.

JORDAN: -- of people, especially in your position. Just constant improvement, constantly trying to make yourself uncomfortable, and grow. I think that's admirable and I think that's what separates a lot of people who are successful in areas like you are, versus people who just kind of are dreamers or wannabes. And I also read that you only feel like working out or training 50 percent of the time, which is really, I was surprised by that. Being a pro athlete and, you know, you were a model or you still are -- only feel like training half the time, that sounds like me.

GABRIELLE: Well listen, I think, let's be honest, I think that's most people. First of all, I believe in all of us, most of us, we're athletes. There's some who kind of express it more than others but, every once in a while you meet a person and they can be an attorney but they're an athlete and they are -- they wake up and they're driven and it's a -- you know, they sort of -- that's what they are doing. I believe that most of us probably feel like training, if you're lucky, 50 percent of the time. So, I always don't want to sell a bill of goods to people like, "Oh, I'm just so inspired every day," and you know, to go and do it and be tormented. I'd rather be sitting down or I'd rather lay in bed for an extra, you know, 30 minutes, or whatever that is, because I think that's the important part of the message, is -- it's just about creating that system and that infrastructure for success, it's not about feeling like you want to all the time.

JORDAN: That's important to realize, I think, for a lot of people who are --not even just with working out or athletics, I think a lot of people think, "Well this isn't the job or career for me because I'm not -- 100 percent of the time I'm not waking up motivated to attack the day," or, "This isn't the sport for me," or, "This

workout is not going to work for me because I often don't feel like going." When we read articles in Maxim or Self Magazine or which side of the glosses you fall on, the articles that have, a lot of times, people that have careers similar to yours, it's always like they're sitting on the beach in the sun, in the sunrise and it's just like, "Every day is an inspiration," and you just think, "Oh, crap, I can never be like Gabby Reece -- "

GABRIELLE: Yeah.

JORDAN: " -- because I don't feel like that at all. I wake up with oatmeal stuck to my chin," you know, "This is not how my life is."

GABRIELLE: I'll share something with you, like -- I had a knee replacement last year and my knee has probably been hurting me for upwards to 14 or 15 prior to the surgery, right? And even now, to this day, it's not functioning really the way I would like it to. It was a great surgery and it's great. And there is frustration and insecurity, and all kinds of emotions around this, and I deal with it every day. So, I guess what I'm saying is, we all have these, whether they're self-inflicted obstacles or ones brought on by life, that we are contending with. It's kind of like, how you look at it.

So I could dive deep down that hole and be, "Poor me and my knee is not bending and it's not straightening the way I want it to. And if steps are too high, I'm weird and feel awkward," and all these things, or I could say, "But, I don't have a major illness, the rest of my body is working very well, and so I'm going to work around it. And I'm going to acknowledge that some days I feel crappy, I feel vulnerable and not my best self, but I'm going to work around it." And I really believe that, that is life. I guess maybe if it was like, I was like a Buddhist, that the pain and the good and the bad, it's all part of the same story.

JORDAN: Yeah, I think it's important to realize that. Because a lot of times we're bombarded with this inspirational material that says, "You should feel good all the time, you should feel motivated all the time, you should feel -- even though you have this set back,

now it's your strength," and it's like, "No, it's not a strength, it's a broken knee and it sucks, but I'm still able to persevere and push through that."

GABRIELLE: Yeah I think everybody has that because, you know, sometimes people say to me, "Wow, you know, I can't believe all that, you know, that you juggle and you get done," and I say, "Okay let's be really clear about something. First of all, I'm wildly incentivized, right? Like, if I work, I probably get paid very well for what I do. There's rewards, there's attention, there's all these things, right? I say, "You want to talk to me about somebody who's juggling a lot, how about somebody who, let's take a single parent, for example, who's working three jobs just to keep the lights on. That's the real stuff." And for me, I think it's about keeping perspective on what we're reacting to.

So, you know, Laird calls it the 'wahmbulance.' It's like, you know, "My knee is sore," it's like, "Yeah, big f-ing deal," like -- you know what I mean? Like, it's keeping everything in its perspective and in its place because then emotionally, you're reacting to it kind of accordingly. Because when I see what other people go through, I'm like, man I have got nothing. Like, I'm not doing anything. I haven't done anything. So I think it's -- for me, I kind of look at it that way. And I've said this many times, you know, we have low cards and high cards. It's like, which cards do you want to play in your hand? Do you want to cry that you have low cards or do you want to play your high cards and get on with it?

JORDAN: By low cards and high cards, you just mean that it just depends on which choices you're going to make that day, especially when it comes to the mood that you're in or how you react to events?

GABRIELLE: Well that's it. And, you know, it's like when I was younger, my mom left for a few years, my dad died, I had some pretty wonky stuff happening. I was 6'3" at 15 and had a certain look that those were some high cards that if I navigated those correctly, they helped me overcome the low cards. And I think people, a

lot of times, are always retelling an old story -- I have to be mindful of that too -- and going, "Well this happened to me and that happened to me." It's like, "It did but is there not something else in your story that could feasibly help you move on from that and even appreciate -- "And granted, listen I'm not suggesting there aren't things that people go through that it's almost virtually impossible to get over. I'm not saying that but I'm saying most of us walking around, it's like, low cards and high cards. There's all these beauty jingles, you know, "Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative," you know, it's all this stuff. It's kind of that silliness but it's very true.

JORDAN: I'm not a huge fan of Instagram memes that make people feel inferior or attempts at being inspiring but it -- there is some truth to the fact that you can make choices with whatever you've got and that a lot of times those some situations do make you stronger in one way, even if they are objectively not positive things.

GABRIELLE: Well, again I'll use my knee. I have tried more exercises and therapies and turmeric drinks than you can imagine and it's why? Because I have an obstacle. If everything was cool, I'd just go on as usual and because of this, this is a teacher that's making me stretch and learn more and understand about other things that I probably wouldn't have because I'm inherently -- would be lazy and it wasn't necessary. So, I agree with you and I think, my hope is like, I'm always want to talk about it in a very blue collar matter of fact way, like I don't want to have my head in the clouds, I want to be positive but still in sort of -- in that like very every day way because, when people talk to me like that, I can connect with that. When they go, "Oh, you know, the spirit above and the sun is shining," I just go, "I don't know about that." So, it's like trying to find that real matter of fact communication. But yes, being positive.

JORDAN: Yeah. Where did you grow up? You grew up -- forgive me, in the Virgin Islands? Trinidad.

GABRIELLE: Yeah. So, well my father's from Trinidad --

JORDAN: Okay.

GABRIELLE: -- so that's very good. But close, I mean I grew up in the West Indies but I did live in Long Island, New York for five years when I lived with friends of my mother. I was raised by my Aunt Nur (sp) and Uncle Joe. Let me tell you, my Uncle Joe was like a construction worker, worked for the sanitation department in New York. You know, my [00:12:35] used to say like, "Kid, you know, go away. Don't go angry but just go away." Like they're very direct, New York people.

And then in the Caribbean, when you grow up on an island, it is different than the mainland U.S. It's kind of like -- I see it when I live in Hawaii. There is sort of a directness and shorthand and I'm glad but I think I learned it definitely from those two places and it was also something that maybe because that's the way I could hear things, maybe that that's the way I tried to communicate more. Starting at 15 I got really involved with sports. Coaches don't fluff it up and go on and on. They go, "Get it done, get to the line, get your arm up, get it together, you can do it and let's go." So, that shorthand got developed.

JORDAN: I read that you didn't begin sports until 11th grade and you said age 15. So that kind of checks out. How come you didn't get into sports sooner? I mean weren't you six foot something when you were like 12?

GABRIELLE: Yeah I was six feet at 12 and 6'3" at 15 but I -- again, because I grew up in the Caribbean, I dabbled a little bit in volleyball my 10th grade year. But organized sports, back then, you know, on St Thomas, it wasn't like, oh, you know, you could do something with this. I think I was already dealing with some of my frustrations. It was already that tumultuous time in my life but also some of my history kind of aggravated. So I started a little bit and then when I moved to Florida my junior year of high school, which things were more organized. Athletics was sort of a real part of the culture in the school and things like that. And

I walked in at 15 at 6'3" -- they were like, "Oh, you're playing volleyball and basketball." So that's kind of how it happened.

JORDAN: You said you were aggravated when you were a kid. What was going on on the island at the point?

GABRIELLE: I didn't have a lot of stability and I think I was truly hurt from my situation with my mother. I was -- my feelings were probably hurt and I probably hadn't gotten over it yet. You know, she did the best she could and at, you know, two and a half years old, she worked and left me with these people who raised me as their own child until I was 7 and then the problem was is then she decided she was ready, so then I got the abstraction from that stable environment.

And that was very difficult and I think I carried that with me for a while. But it was the best thing that ever happened because first of all, fast forward in a weird way, my husband -- I have a stepdaughter, she was a very small baby when I met my husband. And I never thought for one second like, "Hey I could be her mom," -- because she has a great mom, but I knew I could be impactful because I had experienced it with my aunt. Like if I just love her, that can be powerful.

So, I got that gift, I got being very resourceful, independent, organized, because a lot of the people around me were not. So there was a lot of great stuff that came out of it but at time -- and then I was pissed because we moved from my home in the Caribbean to Florida, which was really a very significant and important move that really changed the trajectory of my whole life. But at the 15 years of age, you know I'm leaving my boyfriend and my friends.

JORDAN: Right. That was of primary concern at that point, for sure.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

JORDAN: Were there any special social skills that are required growing up on an island and then, how did those change when you got

to the mainland U.S. and you're like, "Not only do I have to move and make new friends, I've got to figure out how people do things here, again."

GABRIELLE: Yeah, so I came from a really loosey-goosey West Indian culture. A lot of the parents, if they weren't from there, why were they there? It's like all of our parents were, in some level, kind of lunatics. They were all -- you know it was carnival, your parents would kind of disappear for 2, 3 days. So, you had that element too. When I moved to Florida, my mother put me in a very, very conservative Christian school. So not only was I switching cultures, then I was switching an entire kind of way of living and what is -- you know I was never taught about how important it was what people thought. That wasn't the thinking where I grew up and then when you go to a very conservative Christian environment, the length of your skirt also is part of the conversation, right? So, I mean it was radically different and again, it was important. I needed sort of another part of the scale. I needed to balance it out a little bit more and I got that but the adjustment was brutal.

JORDAN: Yeah.

GABRIELLE: The principal let me in the school and I had no formal religious kind of training or part of my life. It just wasn't a part of how I grew up and then he actually ended up being a really important person -- Mr. Greener. But he let me in the school but the joke was I was the only quote unsaved person in the high school.

JORDAN: Wow.

GABRIELLE: Try that.

JORDAN: Yeah.

GABRIELLE: And I'm 6'3", I have blonde hair, I probably swear like a sailor at a Christian school, so it was really funny. But then there I met very good people and I understood that people -- you know there's all elements of religion for me but then you go and

certain people that have faith and it makes them more loving and less judgmental, they have great families and all the sort of -- the great parts of that, and I got to witness that and understand that, oh, that's out there too. So it was great and I had incredible coaches that took time and invested in me as a person. Again, it really changed. I went from there to getting scholarships and going to college and playing ball and going on from there. I think clearly if I hadn't gone there, and had those people impact me, I would have never pulled it.

JORDAN: You think you would have gone downhill just staying in that other environment?

GABRIELLE: Yeah I probably would have had a kid by 19, you know if -- you know, work in a gift shop. Because, you don't understand what a big world it is sometimes when you live on an island and what is possible and how do you express yourself in those other ways. You're not really taught that. It's important to have some of that but then conversely, I think it's dangerous to have kids be too stacked up and too scheduled and too performance oriented when they're young. So it's like, just finding that middle ground. It's like with my kids, I'm like, "Listen be grounded," that's why I love living in Hawaii, "and come from that grounded place and that place of respect -- you know, auntie and uncle culture. But you know what, you can be anything you want. It's a big world." So, I think it -- for me that that I would have definitely probably stayed in Saint Thomas and just kind of lived that life.

JORDAN: How do you pass these skills down to your kids besides just living in Hawaii? I mean are you passing down athletic skills as well, work ethic? Because you work really hard.

GABRIELLE: Yeah, I mean my husband and I both are, by nature I think, you know, we're sort of grinders. But, it's an interesting thing man, when it's your own kids. I always say they don't really listen to you, they really watch you and you can't really tell them. You can try to instill the values and tell them what's important to you. So, honesty and hard work and respecting others and

respecting yourself, but then the communication is, "Now we want to encourage you to figure out what does turn you on and what excites you and what do you think you want to do?" But you still have to hit those fundamentals. But I have no manual, ultimately my kids probably listen to me 7 percent of the time, I'm not sure. And then, you know, you surround them with other people that can have these influences. Because we're limited, right?

We only know so much but then maybe you've got these other people that they give them a little bit of this and a little bit of that and you hope that the impact helps them navigate their own life. And I tell my girls all the time, "Listen, I'm not here to control you, I'm trying to teach you to control yourself and get you to do things that are good and right for you and for your whole life." But it is the hardest thing in the world to do.

JORDAN: You mentioned in your book that becoming a mother is like flipping a switch and you become someone else. Parenting finally pushed you to grow up. What has it done to you? I mean how have you grown up as a result of having kids?

GABRIELLE: Well it's a deconstruction, first of all. I was much smarter and knew a lot more about what was going on at 21. Now at 47, I don't know anything, and it brings you to your knees in a way that nothing else does and you surrender and at times -- like for example, you want to react how you feel it's important to react to what is right and those things can be sometimes conflicted. So sometimes maybe on one of my impulse -- and I just want to tell everyone to f off and throw \*\*\*\* and like freak out, or whatever it is. But in that moment, you've got to really be disciplined and go, "What is the right thing to do right here and right now?" And sometimes, you can be honest with yourself and say, "I have no clue, so I'm going to do the best I can." But it really deconstructs you in a way that, you know, nothing else I've ever done has, not even sports. It makes you also have to really confront the fact that you're going to get it wrong a lot of the time and that is a hard pill to swallow because it's so

important and you're so passionate about doing it right, and there's no chance. It just isn't.

JORDAN: Do you still take your younger kids on the road with you for work? I know you used to do that.

GABRIELLE: Yeah, I do. You know, especially if it's a little bit longer, like more than two or three days and it makes sense, I'll take them. But Laird and I kind of have a thing where if one of has to go, the other one is usually at home. And if it's something where he and I are going together, than we really try to make sure that they come with us.

Because for me, that is my most important job, and being away from them for an extended period of time doesn't feel natural and I will say this, we have the luxury to say, "Okay we're going to take the girls." But you know, there's days where I'm like, "Oh, my God, I should have left them." You know kids don't do what you want them to do so, that's the great thing. It's more honest. It's like, "Listen you're not in control, really." I'm here in my life, I'm all scheduled up, it's all written down, it's all perfect. I'm not really in control, I like to pretend I'm in control. They remind you every single day. Like, zero control. I laugh, I said - This one time I was paddling on the river, I go, "I realize I have power. Like, I can say no to things, I can move them from one side to the next, but I have no control," and that is a really interesting thing. But yeah, we bring them because it's my family. And, you know, they're going to move out. Our 21 year old is in college and, you know, they get on with their life so this is the time.

JORDAN: Yeah, you can't pause their life while you're busy doing your thing.

GABRIELLE: That's right. This is my time.

JORDAN: Yeah, this is your time to mother them and you can't choose how that's going to happen. Well you can, I guess, but you chose to have it happen well, alongside your career. So you can either

just not be around, or you can say, "Hey look, get in the van or the plane, or whatever."

GABRIELLE: Yeah and it's -- and listen, it's -- I call it the \*\*\*\* show. You know, and ask any woman that takes her kids. It's like you're putting on this hat and you're trying to be all together and do your career and your work and then, you know, your side-jaw-clenching whispering to your kid like, you know, "Be quiet," you know or whatever it is. Like, sort of beautiful because it's so chaotic and it's so honest, and it keeps you from thinking like you're so together. That part is -- it's so human. But yeah, because I, personally, you know, Laird always jokes like -- he's like, "You should have seen Gabby's car before she had kids." Like, it was always clean and everything's organized and everything, and you know, that goes out the window.

JORDAN: Yeah, now it's full of like, wrappers --

GABRIELLE: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- for meal bars and little toys.

GABRIELLE: Yeah and I'm like, "Do we have to have the socks from tennis in the car for like a week? I mean can somebody not pick --" I mean, and it's the same conversations over and over, right? It's all that. So, you know, I call it the rack focus, right, it's in and out. You're always doing that in your life. Hopefully you're looking above yourself and watching yourself and going, "Whoa, how are you navigating that?" and then sometimes you're in it and you're just freaking out. But, it's doing that rack focus and trying to go, "Is that that important? No it's not that important. No this is really important," and also laughing at yourself because sometimes you're just running around like a -- almost like a lunatic, and you go, "Look at you, you're kind of a lunatic."

JORDAN: Yeah, it must be hard to separate yourself from that. It sounds like you've got some skills from sports business that are helping you with your family life. You mentioned externally looking at your situation.

GABRIELLE: Yeah, I think sometimes, the biggest gift is to back up, go up and look over, because then it gives you that perspective. Neil and I were just talking about this. Like, it's not about us. You know, like sometimes, like, you're going through the day and especially women, right, we hitting, we're taking everything personal, and sometimes if you just back up a little and go, "You know what? Yo, that's not about me." And even like my problems, like whatever problems I think I really have, if I just back up a little, and go, "Is that really a problem? It's fine. It's not that big of a deal." So I am very thankful for that trait. I think it is definitely probably helped my marriage a great deal -- or staying married -- that's how I keep my sense of humor and hopefully helps me save a lot of time on, you know, wasting energy and time on things that ultimately it's like, "Who cares?"

JORDAN: How often do you do things for yourself that are not wife slash mother related?

GABRIELLE: You know, my training has always been for me. Obviously it was part of my job but now I look at my training as like, the biggest gift and selfish thing I do for myself. Again, not in a corny way but it's like, "Yo this is just for me, the person, not even the woman. Like, this human, that's like getting to express this part and doing something that I know, no matter what, whether I do it for 10 minutes or 90 minutes, it's something really good for me." And so what used to be my job, has also now become the thing that, when I get that done, I'm like, "Okay, I'm good."

JORDAN: I heard that when you were giving birth, Owen Wilson called and wanted some chili and wanted to hang out with Laird and --

GABRIELLE: Oh, no, no, no, no, it's better than that. So, it was my third daughter and it was January 1st and so, you know, you think -- I'm like, "Nobody goes into labor on January 1st. It's probably not real but whatever." We were still living on Maui at the time

and his brother Luke, who's quite lovely, had been -- maybe a couple months prior, had done some activities with Laird.

So I think, in brotherly competition, he kind of bragged to Owen. So when Owen came to Maui -- he spends a lot of time there -- he calls the house, he's like, "Hey Gabby, it's Owen Wilson, is Laird there?" and I was like, "No actually he's, you know, at the beach -- at Ho'okipa, whatever," and he goes, "Well I want to get into it. What are ya'll doing later?" and I was like, "Well I think I'm actually having a baby, I'm in labor right now," but it was still mellow, you know, it hadn't kicked up yet. I said, "But you're welcome to go try and find him," -- let's say it was like 9 or 10 in the morning.

Well lo and behold, like at, you know 2 o'clock or whatever, Laird and him drive up. He follows Laird to our house in Maui, he's like, "Are you good?" and what I did is because I knew I was going into labor, I made a big giant pot of chili and gluten free cornbread and all this stuff because I had thought, "Okay at least him and Reece, my middle, will have some food and they'll be good." And Laird's like, "Well I'm going to show him -- drive him out to the point and show him Peahi," -- which is a wave known as Jaws.

They come back, and now I'm starting to ramp up, now my contractions are getting closer together, the chili is cooked, they come in and I say to Laird, "Okay, you know, I think it's happening," and Owen's like, "I'm starving," and I go, "Well I have chili here," and so then he's like asking me about sour cream, and my friend had flown in, Jenn, to take care of my daughter and Laird when I was in -- having the baby. And she's a volleyball player and a strong girl and she was getting -- she was like, "I'm going to punch him out," and I was like, "Take it easy." And, you know, I'm literally in labor like, if you've ever seen a girl in labor, it's like, "Okay one second," and then you sort of have your little mini shock, and then you're like, "Okay what was that question?" You know? And so yeah, so Owen was there.

JORDAN: Yeah.

GABRIELLE: It was pretty funny.

JORDAN: And he's like -- you're between contractions, and he's like, "Where's the sour cream? Do you have sour cream? Where's the fridge?"

GABRIELLE: If I was exaggerating, it wouldn't be as funny but actually, I'm dead serious. And that's probably why he's good at his job, you know?

JORDAN: What do you mean?

GABRIELLE: Because I'm like, these actors man, they are -- it's -- they're clueless. And I'm joking but it's like, they sort of live in their mind and in their world and I have a few friends that do that craft and they are not quite like that but part of them -- that's what's sort of magical about them. But you're like, "How is it over there?" You know, as I'm like, bent over in the kitchen. It is pretty funny. Listen, at least on the way to the hospital, I'm like, "Wow, okay."

JORDAN: Yeah, I mean you're obviously really tough, especially when it comes to that sort of thing. You're the first female athlete to have her shoe, which I tried to look at online but, when I Googled "Gabrielle Reece Nike shoe," all I found was like 8,000 pictures of you in a sports bra or playing volleyball or something like that.

GABRIELLE: Oh. I was really fortunate, you know? I always say that's like timing, you know? And the other side of that that was really cool was Tinker Hatfield was the designer of my shoe and so for anyone who's a sort of Sneakerhead, if you will, Tinker was really the responsible person for Air Jordans and that brand for a really long time and he's just a very talented guy. So, the success of that shoe was really also the fact that Tinker designed the shoe, obviously. So we did a few seasons and the shoe did very, very well and I was signed for cross training, for

training -- that was like when [00:31:48] that whole thing was going on.

JORDAN: Oh, yeah.

GABRIELLE: And so it was kind of better for me because volleyball is so small, but to cross over and really be signed for training, that gave me a little bit more room and extension inside of Nike that I wouldn't have had if I was signed only for volleyball.

JORDAN: The whole business seems like it's just loaded with ego and testosterone, even in your personal life, you've got athlete friends. How do you turn it off? Or do you? Or do you just deal with it and that's a fact of life with those people?

GABRIELLE: Well, you know what's interesting? I'll be honest with you. At this time in our lives -- and I'll use Laird as sort of a partner in this -- you know generally we don't spend a lot of time with people that -- they are alphas but it's like they've got weird balance or at least they balance it when they're around us. Because you know my husband is pretty alpha-ish and we always say, "Everybody leaves it at the door," because at the end of the day, what we're trying to do is, get together, enjoy each other, maybe learn from each other, push each other.

Those other types, they kind of don't survive in our environment, because both of us -- we have different gears, you know, if you will. But, because you start to realize, like hey, the essence of life is, you don't actually want to be the best or the smartest or the strongest in the room, you want to be around those kind of people because then they're going to make you better. But if you want to compete, okay, well we can do that too. But that's not as productive. But you know it's -- sometimes it's almost a sign of youth. When you see a lot of that you go, "Oh, they haven't dialed it in yet, and they're still a little afraid and they're unsure of their place," and so you kind of understand it also, a little bit.

JORDAN: I think that makes sense. Yeah, it seems like, you've got to know when to bring in the competition, when it's making you better, and when it's actually not.

GABRIELLE: That's right because the competition -- when you're competing against somebody who could actually help you, you're losing an opportunity to learn from them and connect and tap into their power. So I think it's also it's a yielding that has to occur, where each person can acknowledge and go, "Hey you know what? I dig what you do," or "I respect you," and then you can really get some stuff done, versus, "I'm so great, I'm a badass," and, you want to compete. Because then, all of a sudden, now you're going to rub against them, versus learn from them and hook in with them.

JORDAN: I think it's interesting that you take that stuff into your marriage as well. I know you're big on spending time with happily married, good communicators, and you credit that with -- in part, with the success of your marriage as well. It sounds a lot like, that Jim Rohn quote like, "You only go as high as your five closest friends," or, "the people you spend time around are who you become," and things like that. How does that apply in your relationships? How did you set that up and how does it help you?

GABRIELLE: You know, like I'll just use Laird and I as an example. People go, "Gosh you guys seem to really like each other so much," and I said, "You know, the thing I know about each of us individually is, why bother? I'm not going to do it, and be in this relationship, and be with him, if one, I'm not coming at with the attitude of 'How can I make his life better? How can I help him out,' and also, I want to enjoy it, I want to respect him, and -- otherwise I'd rather be alone. I'd rather not be married." So I think it's really, first comes -- and I know he's even more intense about it than I am -- is sort of saying, if we're going to do this, whatever this is -- so everybody has many 'this' in their life.

Right, it's work, it's relationships, it's self-care, whatever -- why not make it great, if you can? If you can't, sometimes you can't --

if Laird and I got to a point where it was like, "This just probably isn't working," and we've tried a lot of stuff, okay, there's -- that's a different thing but like wow, if I can participate in this and try to make this great, why would I not do that? If I walk up to a counter -- at the ticket counter or something and I'm going to interact with the person, why would I not come at it with like, "Hey, good afternoon, how are you today? Okay I need some help."

So I think, for me, it's like you're always trying to operate in that place because then, all of a sudden your world, you're living on that frequency versus, everywhere you go you've got conflict, you can't stand your partner, you can't stand yourself, your life, it sucks. It's like, "Okay, I get it." So what can you do to sort of say, "How can I try to make it great?" And it's an amazing thing when people are personally accountable and say, "Well I'll do my part and then see what happens."

JORDAN: Your career is, I think, a lot larger than his, if you're going to compare the two. And I don't -- I'm doing that only because, I know that you mention in your book that you kept making your personality a little bit smaller --

GABRIELLE: Yeah.

JORDAN: -- in order to kind of manage your relationship. What was that like and what did that do for your relationship or to your relationship?

GABRIELLE: You know I was young, I was 25 when I met Laird. But because of the nature of my job, I've got to kind of jump on things a little bit. I think it's really typical of females -- and I will say this, and I've talked about this a little bit, I was not groomed for success, the way I grew up. But as things start to open up for you, and things start to happen, it feels uncomfortable and you feel weird and guilty and you feel all this stuff that you've got to figure out how to manage success, right?

So then I get partnered with somebody who I knew intuitively, Laird is better at what he does than at what I do. I do a variety of things pretty well, maybe more than him. What he does, he's so much better -- like at surfing, than I ever was at volleyball, right? So, I was dealing with that and I was the female.

So there was this kind of natural thing where it was like, "Well I don't want to make him feel bad and so I'll be less than." And really what it came down to was once Laird sort of had his own footing, and a couple pats on the back, if you will. And also maturity, you know he grew up to and I think once men become a little more developed, there's room, like, "Oh, yeah, honey go ahead, kick some ass. Awesome, bravo." But when you're younger, maybe it makes you feel threatened.

So we were dealing with all these dynamics when we first got together. Then we worked through it. You know, we almost got divorced, and then it was like, you know, "We really love each other, let's try to work this out," and then I think it's like we both kind of grew up a little bit. And it took time, I mean, part of me -- you know I know this sounds silly, I kick myself in the ass because I spent a lot of time apologizing in my twenties to everybody, teammates and, you know, everything, because I felt bad for getting a lot of opportunities and getting singled out. And I wish I hadn't done that, like I wish I had just been like, you know, "I'm going to put my foot on the gas, and I'm going to be as badass as I can be and everyone can suck it if they don't like it." A lot of us are not doing that, especially women in their twenties. Some are.

JORDAN:

It's true and I think a lot of people feel like they can't do that as well. And I know that even more recently, you've talked about how women being submissive in relationships is actually a sign of strength and not weakness, depending on how it's done. And one interesting quote that I pulled was, "We don't worry about men having it all so I don't know where we got this idea to have it all."

GABRIELLE:

Mm-hmm.

JORDAN: And, you talk a lot about how women need to take care of themselves and their man. Have you taken flack for that from the sort of, ultra-feminist camp? I would imagine.

GABRIELLE: Oh, my gosh, yeah. I mean I got like, "Oh, you set back the feminist movement for 20 years." So there's a couple layers into that. First of all, I call it the post-feminist conversation because let's say, if I was born just a little earlier -- remember I was born right at title nine. So I am the first generation, exactly 17 or 18 years after it's passed, to get a full ride scholarship to go to college. So there's things I didn't have to navigate that the women before me did. So, I understand from their point of view, like "What a sucky comment that is," and plus the fact that the word submissive makes a lot of people nervous. But the way I used it was in service. And I genuinely believe, and I was only speaking from my personal experience, that the idea of serving your partner, and serving your children and your family, is a lot of work and it is a sign of great strength.

However, I am not an idiot or saying like, "Throw yourself in front of the bus and do it because Archie Bunker is your husband." It's like, "Yo, pick a good partner, who's on the same page as you." But for me to try to communicate what Laird should do is stupid. Laird has got to do what he should do, not me tell Laird, you know, "Well if you do this, then I'll do that. How about this." I'm going to choose to be the best partner I can be, I'm going to work my ass off, I'm going to be -- try to be great for you, and hopefully you'll do the same thing. And by the way, if he didn't, we probably wouldn't be together for almost 22 years.

So I think it's -- we're also in a time where people are very combative, and it's all like, "Well no, you're not going to get up on me," and, "If you want this," or, "I'll give you this if you do that," that doesn't work. And by the way, if you're with an alpha male, that will blow up in your face in about seven minutes. You don't tell an alpha male, "Do this," what you do is you hold your line, you live the way you want to live, and when -- I have seen

is, you can inspire someone, they can look at you and go, "Wow, she's really like on her game. I'm going to get on my game," not, "You better," that doesn't work. And so, people -- I think they misunderstood and oversimplified what I was saying, and I'm okay with that. You know, Katie Couric was like, "You know, in my house everything was equal," and I was like, "Really? There's no such thing as equal in a house. You add some kids and it's definitely not equal."

And even if it means that the woman is the alpha, there's no two male energies in a straight or gay couple, there's one masculine and one feminine, and I was saying, in my house I took the role of feminine because Laird definitely takes the role of masculine. And just having that conversation afloat because then I walk out the door and then I'm back to alpha, so how does that work? And also, once or twice a year, Laird knows, "That's it. Like, here's the line, you want to cross the line, let's go. I'm down." So, it's not about being a doormat, but it's also talking about -- there's I think, great strength in yielding.

I always use the analogy of the grocery store. You're coming down the aisle, I'm coming down the aisle the other way. If I see you, guess what? Even if you're younger or whatever, I'll move to the side to let you go, it'll take me three seconds and it's a nice gesture. Could I go through you, over you? I could but why? Laird read this book and it talks about -- it's called Natural Born Heroes, and it says, "Hey listen, to be a true warrior, you have to be compassionate." So we're in a culture right now where everyone's forgetting about service and kindness and all these things that really are powerful.

JORDAN: Yeah I think there's something to that. And it seems like, coming from a place of power is more effective in the end than coming at it from a place of the opposite or some sort of mishmash of the two. And especially when you're dealing with somebody like Laird -- I know you mentioned in the book you call him the weatherman because he's super moody and you can't take responsibility for someone else's happiness like that. And I know earlier in your marriage, one of the things that was

causing the problems was you had this mindset that, "Well if he really loved me, he'd be happy with me most of the time. I'm responsible for making him happy." You just can't do that to yourself.

GABRIELLE: We can't do that. It's a kind of ridiculous notion to think that you can make someone else happy and that someone else can make you happy. You can improve someone else's life, you can inspire people, you can have that back at you, but we all sort of have to work out our own stuff, if you will. And what's been interesting is, to watch Laird over the years, like, his moods are -- and I don't know if it's the tenderizing of our children but, you know he's really leveled out and it's -- I think it's an interesting thing to watch men grow up because then all of a sudden it's like, young guys come, they train, he's like, "Yeah, go ahead, you go." You know, it's like an interesting -- you learn to back up. And I believe this as an adult. It's like my kids tell me stuff that of course I know, and I'm like, "Oh, that's interesting." For them to know I'm right or that I knew that already, it's like, I don't care.

There comes a point where you sort of surrender to everyone needing to know how smart and on it you are. It's like, I don't really give a \*\*\*\*. It's like, you know I'm busy. I've got stuff to do and whether you get it or not or -- and a big thing as a woman was not taking it personal and understanding that that intensity in Laird was also attached to about 50 other things that I loved about him and so, cool, okay.

JORDAN: Yeah, well great. I'm glad that it's worked out so well so far. I'm glad that we met recently and became friends because I think you're an awesome person. I'm glad you took your time here to be on the show with us. I really appreciate it.

GABRIELLE: Well, I really appreciate the work that you do and, you know, for coming and hanging out with Neil and I in The Barrel was really a treat. And it was cool too to see Neil learn things that he didn't know about you.

JORDAN: Yeah.

GABRIELLE: You know I like to see Neil surprised and I'm just -- I'm happy for you and for the message that you're putting out with the show, so thank you so much for having me.

JORDAN: Is there anything else that I haven't asked you that you want to make sure that you get out there and convey?

GABRIELLE: I think it's been on my mind a lot that -- obviously there's a lot of stuff going on the world at the moment. I always say to Laird, "You know we really have to fortify ourselves more," and what I mean by that is, you know, just to encourage people to try to keep taking care of themselves and I know it's so corny like, "Oh, be positive," but I think the world needs sort of, some kind like, love, positivity -- and also remind them that like it's short. So if you've got something you want to do and you haven't taken that risk, if you can do it in a calculated and smart way without ruining your life, you've got to go for it.

JORDAN: Great message. Thank you very much.

GABRIELLE: Aloha.

JORDAN: Great big thank you to Gabrielle Reece. Her podcast by the way, is called The Truth Barrel. She does that with Neil Strauss. I was on there a few weeks ago. They do a great job. It's interesting because they do it in the sauna and it's hot as hell, which I thought was a dumb gimmick at first, but really does take away a lot of the resistance. You think you're going to be on your a-game and perform for everybody, and you're just sweating and getting burned by a microphone cord. All the front just goes by the wayside. We'll have that linked up in the show notes as well and -- this was really good, Jason, I was -- I mean, I've known her for a bit, and I like her stuff, but I -- even I was still just really impressed with how forthright she was and how open she is. I just love that stuff.

JASON: No she's just purely genuine.

JORDAN:

And in a way that's very kind and positive and designed to help others. You don't see that combination a lot, especially in people who had success early on in their field and then got famous as a result. It's just -- she's just the opposite of so many people who are in that field and in that area and living in L.A. for that matter, especially in Malibu and stuff like that. So, she's just fantastic. I'm glad. I hope everybody else enjoyed this one. If you did, don't forget to thank Gabrielle on Twitter, we'll have that linked in the show notes as well. And tweet at me your number one takeaway from Gabrielle Reece. I'm @theartofcharm on Twitter. And remember you can tap our album art in most podcast players to see the show notes for this episode, and we link to the show notes directly on your phone.

Our live programs, our boot camps here in L.A., details on that are at [theartofcharm.com/bootcamp](http://theartofcharm.com/bootcamp). The idea behind this is slip. We are each art projects, we can curate our input, and curate those around us, and shape our future selves. It is extremely powerful to realize that and The Art of Charm is the study of how this is done and how to do it for ourselves. And that's what you're going to learn at boot camp. Join thousands of other guys who've come through from all over the world and see what we're doing here and become a part of it, hopefully. And remember, we're sold out a few months in advance, so if you're thinking about it a little bit, get in touch ASAP. Get some info from us so you can plan ahead. Boot camp details, again, at [theartofcharm.com/bootcamp](http://theartofcharm.com/bootcamp).

Also we have the AoC challenge. If you want to dip your toes in the water, that's [theartofcharm.com/challenge](http://theartofcharm.com/challenge) or you can text the word 'charmed,' C-H-A-R-M-E-D to 33444. The challenge is about improving your networking skills and your connection skills and inspiring those around you to develop a personal and professional relationship with you.

We'll also email you our fundamentals Toolbox, that I mentioned earlier on the show, which includes some practical stuff, ready to apply, right out of the box, on reading body

language, having charismatic nonverbal communication, the science of attraction, negotiation techniques, networking and influence strategies, persuasion tactics, and everything else that we teach here at The Art of Charm. It will make you a better networker, it will make you a better connector, and it will definitely make you a better thinker. That's at [theartofcharm.com/challenge](http://theartofcharm.com/challenge) or text 'charmed,' C-H-A-R-M-E-D to 33444.

For full show notes and all previous episodes, head on over to [theartofcharm.com/podcast](http://theartofcharm.com/podcast). This episode of AoC was produced by Jason DeFillippo, Jason Sanderson is our audio engineer and editor and the show notes on the website are by Robert Fogarty. Theme music by Little People, Transcriptions by [TransriptionOutsourcing.net](http://TransriptionOutsourcing.net). I'm your host Jordan Harbinger. Go ahead, tell your friends, because the greatest compliment you can give us is a referral to someone else, either in person or shared on the Web. Word of mouth is everything so share the show with friends and enemies. Stay charming and leave everything and everyone better than you found them.



