

Accelerant Virtual Insights Conference | March 30, 2023

Leveraging Empathy

Driving insights +
innovation by fostering
trust with research
participants

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Matthew Morrocco, *Mirror Portraits*, 2019

My name is
Sophie Riese.

- I'm a social scientist and VoC leader for product and brand.
- I've founded and grown research + insights organizations at two mid-stage startups.

A large teal arrow pointing from the left side of the slide towards the right, containing the main title text.

Laying the groundwork for successful and impactful moderated research on difficult topics.

1. Practicing Empathy
2. The importance of preparation
3. Setting the stage for success
4. Giving your full attention
5. Unintended insights

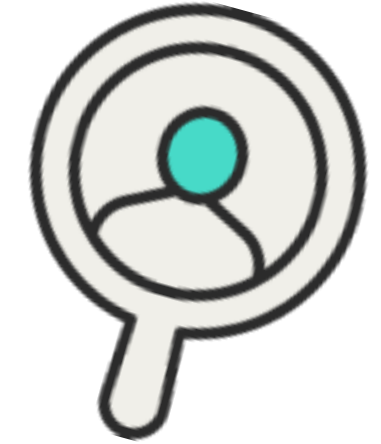
Empathy is the practice
of sharing another
person's feelings.

Empathy is a vital part of qualitative research. And the business cycle.

But it doesn't always come naturally. Challenges to empathy can include:

- Feeling limited by your own experiences
- Inability to connect without similarities to, or relationships in common, with the person
- It needing 100% of your attention

Developing empathy takes practice.



- Listen more than you speak
- Don't make assumptions
- Look for emotional queues
- Put yourself in their shoes
- Find moments of connection, if you can

The right preparation
makes it easier to
engage with users.

Set expectations

- Set expectations with every touchpoint
- Be clear about what you will be discussing, and how the session will work
- Communicate how and when you say you will

theSkimm

Jan 27, 2022

Hi there,

Here at theSkimm we're focused on helping you live your smartest life. We are working on some new things, and would like to hear from you. We're looking for Skimm moms to participate in 45-minute research interview via video call next Monday, January 30 or Tuesday, January 31.

If you're interested, please take a few minutes to fill out our questionnaire to see if you qualify. You'll be directed to sign up for a call time, if you're in. Slots are available on a "first come, first served" basis until all sessions are filled.

[Take our questionnaire](#)

Thank you in advance. We really appreciate hearing from

Sophie Riese, Consumer Insights @ theSkimm

Parenthood Insights Call

🕒 45 min

📺 Web conferencing details provided upon confirmation.

Thank you for your interest in participating in an insights session with theSkimm's user research team. Please select a time that works for you.

During these calls, we will be asking questions to get to know you and your family, your journey to parenthood, and what it's like for you as a parent today. We know these conversations can be hard, but learning more about you helps us create products and content that are helpful to you. Note that these calls will include a screen share, so please only sign up for a time when you will be able to participate fully.

Once you have selected a time, you will receive

Select

March 2

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Time zo

🌐 Eas

Get off on the right foot

- Script the whole thing, even the obvious parts
- Set enough time for the pleasantries
- Practice, practice, practice
- Prepare to give your full attention
- Give participants an out

Interview Script

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is xx and I'm on the xx team here at theSkimm. Just a few things before we get started:

I have two colleagues on the line - they'll be taking notes, and will let me know if they have any follow up questions at the end of the call. Do you mind if I also record the session? Even though xx is taking notes, the recordings make it easier for us to come back to confirm our notes, and also to share with other team members. These sessions are used only for internal purposes, and no part of them will ever be shared without your permission.

Today I'll just be trying to get to know you and your family a little bit, and what it's like for you as a parent. Then we'll be talking about parenting information and content - what's out there, what you like, what you don't like, and what theSkimm can do for you.

If there's time at the end, I'll share a preview into something we're working on to get your feedback on, and we'll do a screenshare.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Keep the camera on.



2:59 / 29:06



The best
insights require
us to dive below
the surface.

It won't always be
smooth sailing

Which is why practice is so important.



Going off script.

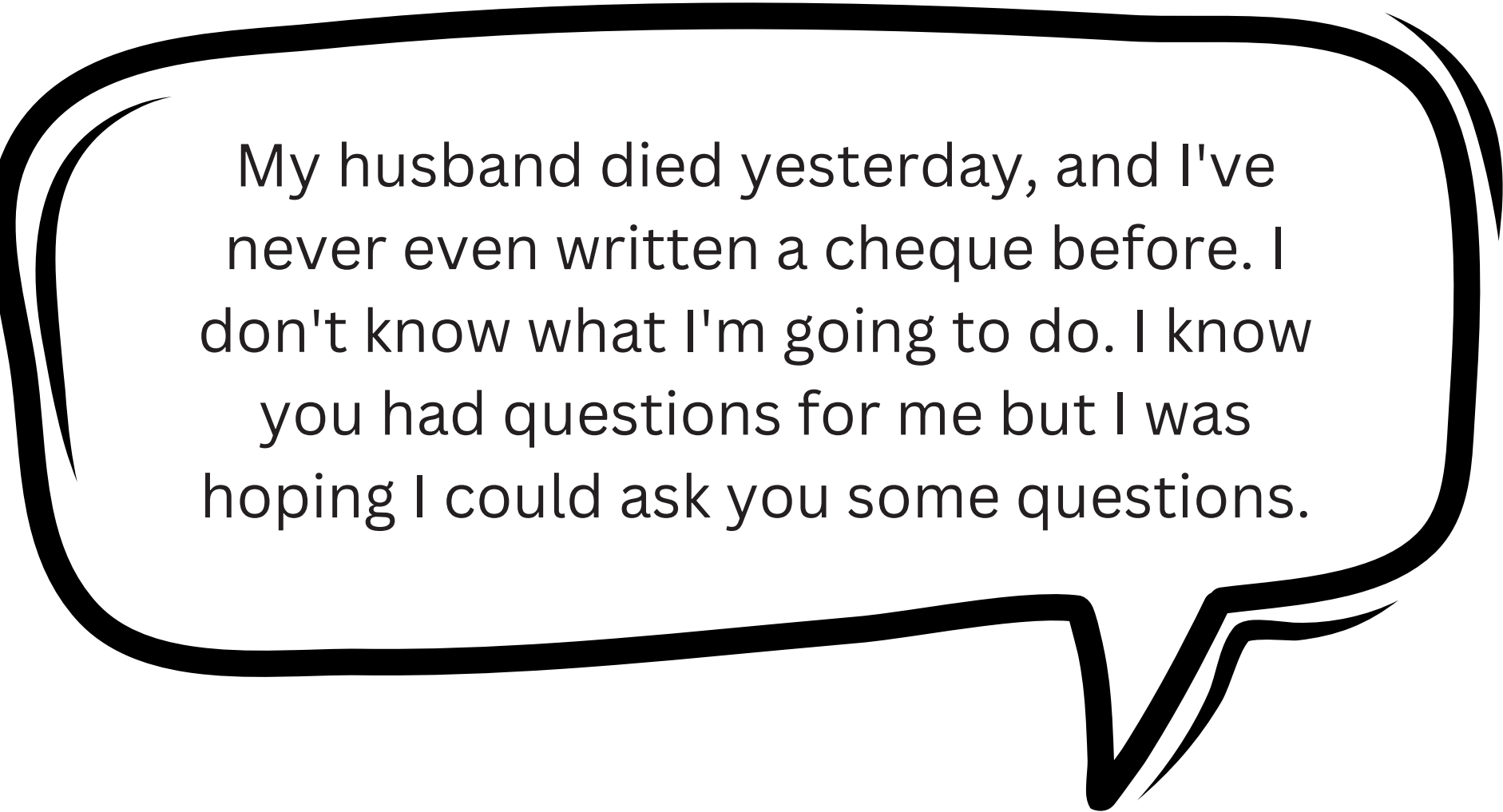
Sticking to your script is important, but it's not the only way to derive insights.

Acting impartially is important, but empathy builds trust and rapport.

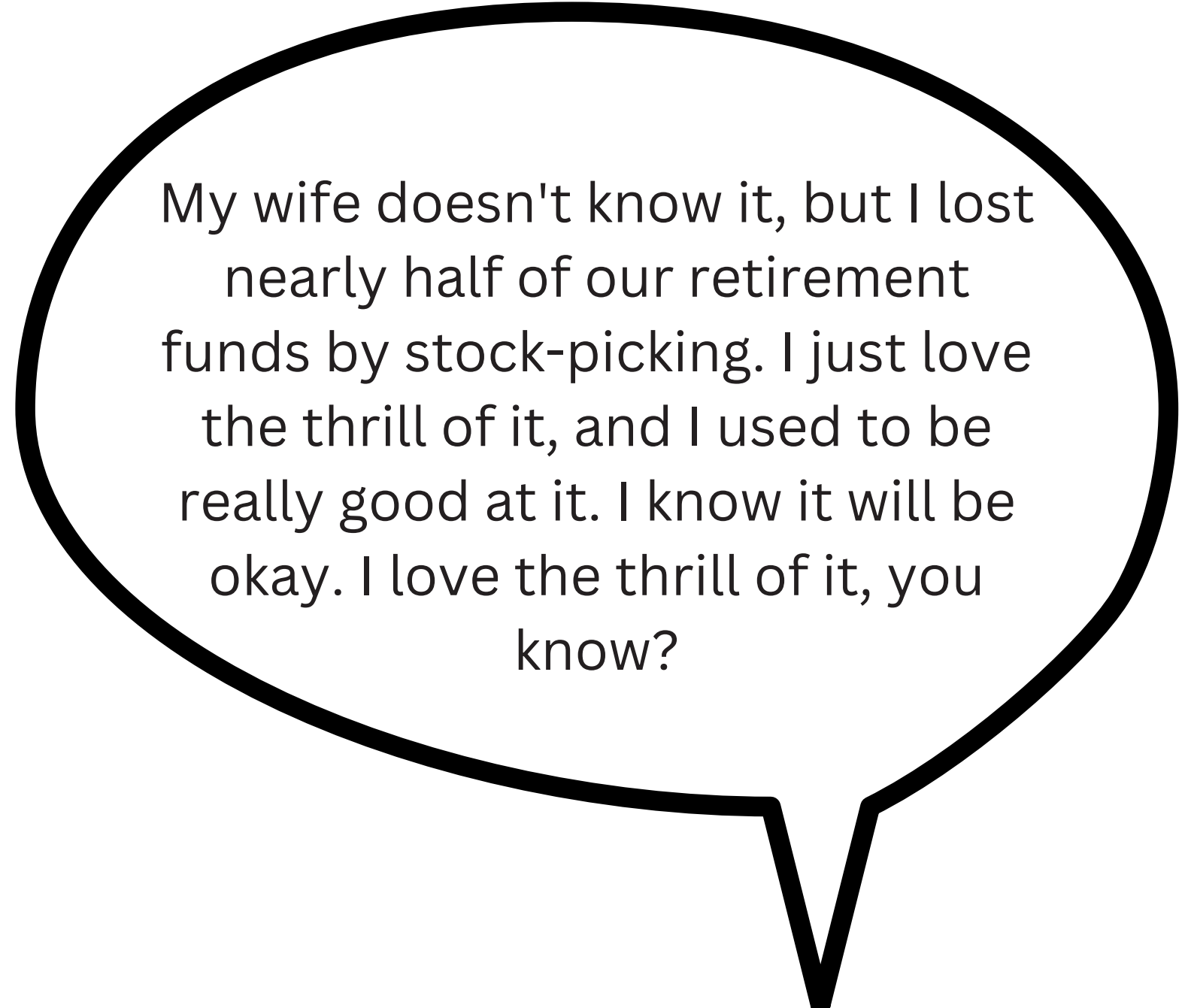
Lean
into
the
silence.



What can we learn from what they're offering?

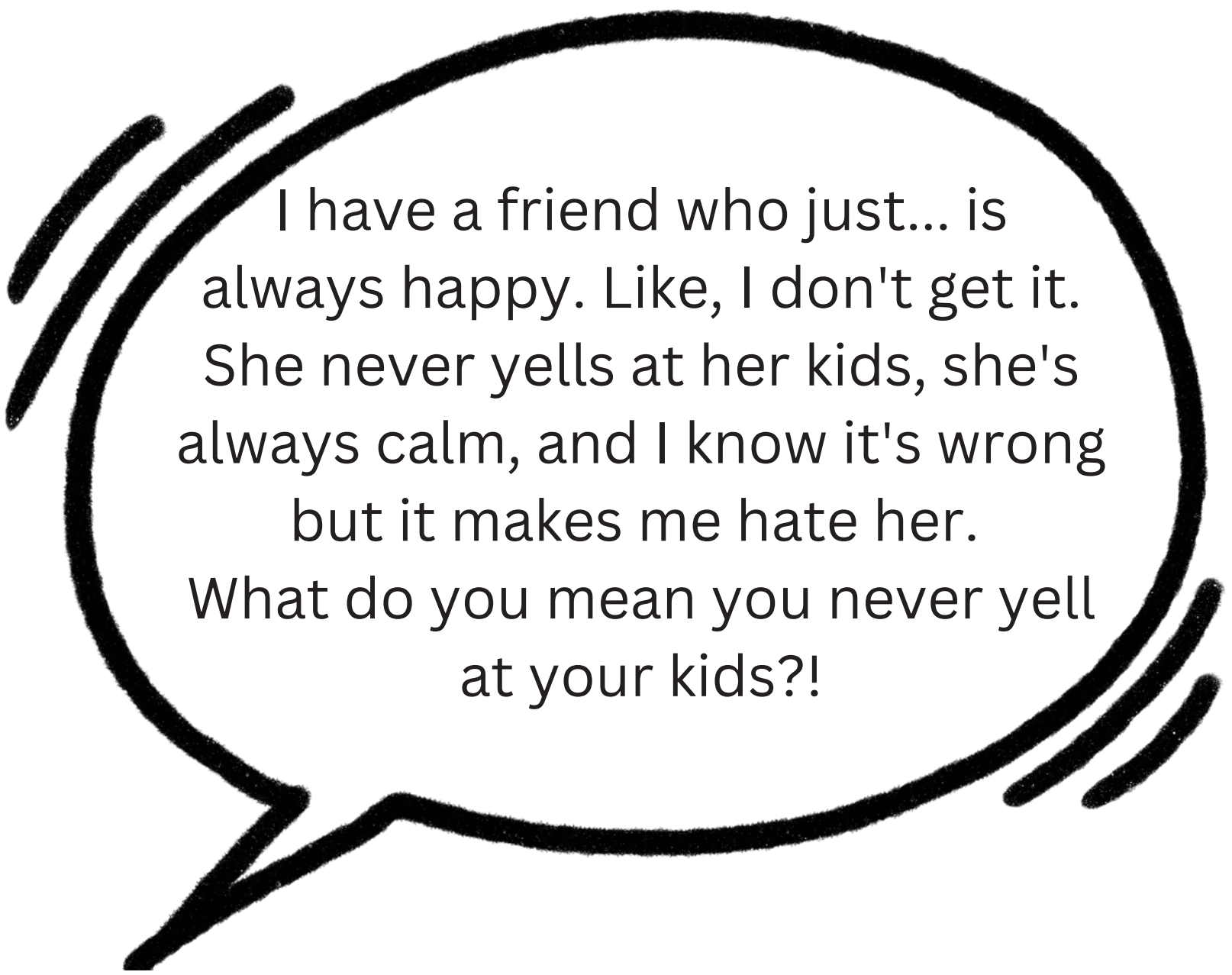


My husband died yesterday, and I've never even written a cheque before. I don't know what I'm going to do. I know you had questions for me but I was hoping I could ask you some questions.

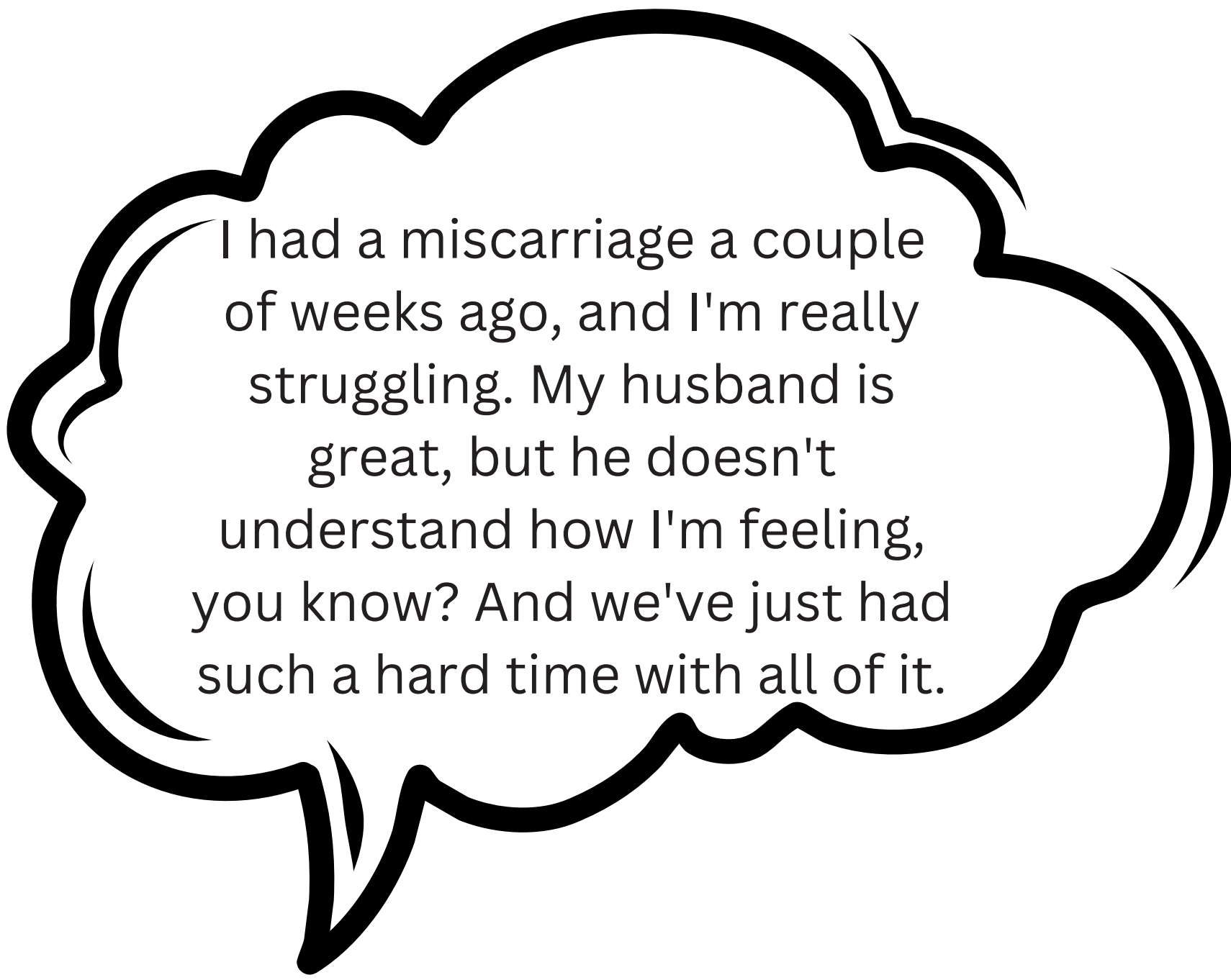


My wife doesn't know it, but I lost nearly half of our retirement funds by stock-picking. I just love the thrill of it, and I used to be really good at it. I know it will be okay. I love the thrill of it, you know?

Sometimes, you're an ear or a shoulder



I have a friend who just... is always happy. Like, I don't get it. She never yells at her kids, she's always calm, and I know it's wrong but it makes me hate her. What do you mean you never yell at your kids?!



I had a miscarriage a couple of weeks ago, and I'm really struggling. My husband is great, but he doesn't understand how I'm feeling, you know? And we've just had such a hard time with all of it.

Key Takeaways:

- Empathy above all
- Practice, practice, practice
- Leave your preconceptions behind
- Accept the discomfort
- Discover the heart

Q&A

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Thank You

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