

TDS S6 E3

[00:00:00] **Samantha Baines:** I am joined by Sue Atkins , parenting, author, and broadcaster. Welcome to the Divorce Social.

[00:00:12] **Sue Atkins:** Thank you very much. Thanks for inviting me.

[00:00:14] **Samantha Baines:** Lovely to have you here. Now you are divorced. How does it make you feel when I say that?

[00:00:21] **Sue Atkins:** Yes, I'm through that bad patch, the eye of the storm, it was the most horrific experience I think of my life.

[00:00:30] **Sue Atkins:** Uh, I used to go to bed and wake up at three in the morning and think, oh yes, that wasn't a nightmare. That's my real. And I found it incredibly stressful, really, uh, full of anxiety, all sorts of huge emotions. And I wrote loads about it. I've written a book for kids on it, and I've also wrote a lot of blogs and articles around it because I found that cathartic to help me and I found other people's writing a great few blogs.

[00:00:56] **Sue Atkins:** I used to read because I didn't want to join the pity party. I wanted to [00:01:00] empower myself as well, but I realized I needed to go through this kind of process. So that you don't just go from, you know, distraught to, you know, rising again, like a Phoenix. It takes as long as it takes and any major life change, whether that's bereavement, redundancy, or divorce actually takes between 18 months and two years to process.

[00:01:19] **Sue Atkins:** So I knew that from my psychology studies and stuff, and so I kind of. Went through it, but there's a big difference in knowing it and experiencing it. It's not easy and it's not terribly pleasant, even though it wasn't really hammer and tongs, it was sort of amicable. If you can have an amicable,

[00:01:39] **Samantha Baines:** it's funny, you said that you used to wake up at three in the morning and think that's not a nightmare.

[00:01:43] **Samantha Baines:** That's my life. I think I used to have those moments where I'd wake up feeling like everything was fine. And then sort of remember all over again and then it hits you. So I can definitely relate to that, but I like your metaphor of rising, like a Phoenix, [00:02:00] because people can't see this, but you do also have red hair.

[00:02:03] **Samantha Baines:** So you are quite Phoenix like now.

[00:02:06] **Sue Atkins:** Yes. And I actually bought a ring that was, and I spent ages online looking for. Phoenix on it that didn't look too, like I rode a bike, I wasn't a biker or anything, but I found one and I used to wear a ring that sort of reminded me that you do turn the corner. And I didn't want to say my natural disposition is not a bitter and twisted and angry person, although I was incandescent the angry at times, but I didn't want to stay stuck there because you know, that's like Nelson man.

[00:02:35] **Sue Atkins:** It's like drinking poison and expect the other person to die, you know? So you don't want to stay stuck in that angry place. Use it as rocket fuel to take yourself somewhere more positive. And I

[00:02:46] **Samantha Baines:** love that you can quote Nelson Mandela in your angry phase. I think I was just like punching things like cry egg on the floor and throw.

[00:02:56] **Samantha Baines:** Post across the room. And I also had an amicable break. [00:03:00]

[00:03:01] **Sue Atkins:** Oh yes. Yes. And I worked with lots of women in particular and families now going through divorce and yes, you know, they go through these very strong phases and it's not always, I'm a coupon and it's not always very edifying and it's not very nice.

[00:03:17] **Sue Atkins:** And certainly if you can keep it out of court is my message because that then just, otherwise you're just feeding the, sort of the loyal. You know, fees, which strikes me as mad, hang on to as much money as you can to provide for yourself and your kids. Cause you've got to take that longer-term view, you know, you have the short term, the medium term, and then you must take the, long-term remember a friend of mine and she went through a divorce 15 years before me.

[00:03:40] **Sue Atkins:** So a long time before me. And, you know, she gave away the house practically. So she, they made this arrangement informally that when the, the, the youngest, it was 18, that they would then, you know, decide what to do with the house then. And of course, she'd had to take out another mortgage at 56 and he bought a couple of buy-to-let.

[00:03:59] **Sue Atkins:** [00:04:00] So I'm not bitter and twisted about that. But my advice to her was correct. Do check out the pension. Don't leave yourself

short long-term because you just want to be shot of that person. Do actually get some proper financial advice and treat it as a business transaction. Very difficult to do, but very important to try.

[00:04:19] **Samantha Baines:** Yeah. It's very difficult to do. There's so much emotion wrapped up in all that money in that house and all those financials. But yeah, I agree that I think it's important to get financial advice and know where you stand. And actually a lot of people listened to the podcast who are maybe considering getting divorced and haven't taken that step yet.

[00:04:40] **Samantha Baines:** Um, and so I always say get some financial advice before you do it, if you can, just so, you know, Practically

[00:04:48] **Sue Atkins:** where you stand, where you stand. Yeah. I wanted to talk to

[00:04:51] **Samantha Baines:** you about your Phoenix ring that you mentioned, do you, because we've talked to the podcast before about like divorce rings. Cause you get an engagement.[00:05:00]

[00:05:00] **Samantha Baines:** Yeah. Yeah. Did you see as a sort of divorce ring, was it a celebration of you being with you? Cause I have one of them. I bought a ring for myself on my first Valentine's day alone and I thought, oh. I'm going to take this, you know, it wasn't super expensive, but it was a bit of funny animal. So I'm going to celebrate this and, you know, and I wear it on my wedding finger, but on my

[00:05:26] **Sue Atkins:** other, yeah, mine was more of a fuck you ring.

[00:05:32] **Samantha Baines:** Uh, just as

[00:05:33] **Sue Atkins:** good. Yeah. Yeah. And it was symbolic for me for a while. And then I noticed I stopped wearing it and I didn't wear it for awhile. I didn't need it.

[00:05:42] **Samantha Baines:** So where is it now? This

[00:05:44] **Sue Atkins:** Phoenix it's upstairs. Actually funny. You should say in the bathroom, in the, in one of the nice, pretty little, you know, things where you keep your trinkets, I don't know where it is.

[00:05:53] **Sue Atkins:** And

[00:05:53] **Samantha Baines:** I used to ask people what they've done with their wedding bands and engagement rings. Do you know where those. [00:06:00]

[00:06:00] **Sue Atkins:** Oh, yes. They're both upstairs in my jewelry box. Yeah. And unfortunately as life gets in the way they don't, they don't fit me anymore. Cause I've put on some weight. I want to wear them again and not in the

[00:06:14] **Samantha Baines:** same box as the Phoenix.

[00:06:15] **Samantha Baines:** Fuck you rang. No, they're in different places. We have fights

[00:06:18] **Sue Atkins:** all the time. At night they'd come out and be

[00:06:22] **Samantha Baines:** 55. You won't be able to sleep with all that

[00:06:25] **Sue Atkins:** clinking, man. That's just like toy story. I'm muddling it.

[00:06:30] **Samantha Baines:** So I want to take you back to that break up moment. If I can of, oh gosh, the catalyst of you deciding that you wanted to get divorced and we don't have to go into why, but do you remember that?

[00:06:46] **Samantha Baines:** Difficult feelings of waking up. And how did you get through that? Very initial, emotional.

[00:06:54] **Sue Atkins:** Oh, I remember exactly when I discovered that and you just go cold, don't you? Well, that's how I [00:07:00] went. I just went, this is, this is not happening to me. I cannot believe this. Isn't linked to me. Um, and then you go right.

[00:07:07] **Sue Atkins:** Deep breath. Oh, crikey. What do I do now? So I remember going up to the house cause I was in my office that we had some staples and I used to work down there with my clients and stuff. And I went back up and grabbed my coat and went to see my best friend and said, can you put the CapitalOne? Cause I didn't want a glass of wine because of course you got drive home.

[00:07:29] **Sue Atkins:** Yes. Oh, yes. I don't think you ever forget those very traumatic moments in your life. Do you, you can work through them. Cause obviously I'm an NLP master practitioner and I do this for a living, helping

other people go through these very important emotions and working through them, understanding them, but coming out the other side of them.

[00:07:48] **Sue Atkins:** But I, I knew where I was. I was right in the eye of the storm with some of that. And you just have to live it. You can't just sort of intellectualize and go, oh yes, I know what I should do or what I would recommend to another client. You have to [00:08:00] live it and you live it for a long time and it is painful and difficult and challenging.

[00:08:04] **Samantha Baines:** I love that you is so practical on that realization that you like got in the car and drove to see your best friend, another cup of tea. Like I felt like a lot of people would just shut down. I, uh, I think I just cry. I cried. Yeah. And stayed at home for a full week and my sister had to come and see me. Do you remember what was that need that you had?

[00:08:26] **Samantha Baines:** What was that impulse to see your friend?

[00:08:30] **Sue Atkins:** I had to get away. I had to escape. I had to run off. I had to leave the scene of the crime. That's what that emotion was actually about. And who else do you go to? I've got two lovely, great friends. One's too far away. She'd be an hour away. And the other one was just, you know, 20 minutes up the road.

[00:08:46] **Sue Atkins:** Uh it's there because you also want to go to someone who knows you, understands you and loves you, I suppose, in your moment of crisis. And what was it

[00:08:55] **Samantha Baines:** like breaking the news then to your best friend? So [00:09:00] immediately as well.

[00:09:01] **Sue Atkins:** Yes. Well, she's just very Placid and calm. That's why I like her as well. We don't do drama if you like, I don't tend to do drama and dramatic in many ways, but when I'm talking about something very important, I don't, you know, make a meal out of things.

[00:09:17] **Sue Atkins:** So I suppose she was a great, safe pair of hands to go to. You know, and talk it through and don't forget, I am in a heightened state of emotions. I'm not sitting there just drinking a cup of tea and saying, oh dear, my life's imploded. You know,

[00:09:34] **Sue Atkins:** it wasn't like that it's a heightened sense of emotions, but in a safe place. So that seemed right. The right thing to do. And also you got

process your own emotions. What are you going to say to the kids? What you're going to say, you know, to the other person? Um, yeah. And say it's not easy. And, and, you know, I haven't thought about these emotions for a very long time.

[00:09:55] **Samantha Baines:** And you've mentioned obviously that your, an NLP practitioner [00:10:00] master practitioner, and you work with people now to help them through these times, what was it like knowing all, you know, but feeling. How your clients

[00:10:11] **Sue Atkins:** fail? I think it was empowering. If you wanted to, you don't have to walk the journey that everyone has to go through.

[00:10:19] **Sue Atkins:** If you're going to coach someone or work with them. But I do think it gives you a depth of understanding, a real empathy, compassion, and more kind of patience with people.

[00:10:32] **Samantha Baines:** Do you think you were patient

[00:10:34] **Sue Atkins:** with yourself? Yes, I think so. I, I think I looked after my mental health. My wellbeing. Um, I knew sort of things that make me feel better.

[00:10:45] **Sue Atkins:** That nurture mean, you know, people do all sorts of things. They buy lots of shoes, they drink lots of wine. Sometimes they get very, um, you know, promiscuous. They do all sorts of stuff. That's what I did had lots of statistics. Okay. [00:11:00] Yeah. Well, it isn't, it isn't it's everybody's journey. There is no right and no wrong, and there is just your way of dealing with it.

[00:11:07] **Sue Atkins:** But if you find you've got stuck and you're not happy in what you're doing, then it's time to what I call pause to ponder. You know, you take that kind of imaginary, uh, remote control on the TV and you press pause button. You take a physical step back and you just go, Hmm. What is this really about? Why am I doing this?

[00:11:27] **Sue Atkins:** Why am I unhappy doing this? What is it I need to change? Or what is it I need to do to take better care of myself and take me into a different place.

[00:11:37] **Samantha Baines:** I think you had to any of those moments yourself during your breaks. That you had to take a step back.

[00:11:43] **Sue Atkins:** Yeah. So I suppose I stepped back and pause to ponder a few times, but again, not obsessively, you know, and, um, you know, I'm human.

[00:11:52] **Sue Atkins:** Like everybody else, I broke a big old photo with the photo of us together. You know, let's break that up and Chuck it on the floor and jump on it and [00:12:00] stuff. You know, how many, how many normal.

[00:12:04] **Samantha Baines:** I spoke to McKayla shop and this series about a similar thing of, she broke a glass, but then immediately afterwards, she was like, well, I have to clean up now.

[00:12:14] **Samantha Baines:** Cause I'm the only one here, which I love. Um, and I just imagine you jumping up and down on this photo frame and then being like, right that clear that

[00:12:25] **Sue Atkins:** up. But in my, my feet, don't cut your feet wet.

[00:12:29] **Samantha Baines:** So we mentioned earlier about breaking it to your best friend. Um, but then obviously breaking your divorce to other people and children can be particularly tricky.

[00:12:41] **Samantha Baines:** And I know you help a lot of people and, um, you obviously have a book about children dealing with divorce. What do you think is the best way if someone's listening and they're like, oh my God, I have to tell my children. What do they need to do?

[00:12:56] **Sue Atkins:** It's about sitting down with a cup of coffee and getting a piece [00:13:00] of paper and jotting down.

[00:13:01] **Sue Atkins:** Just a few things you want to say, because in the moment you get very emotional and if you do it with your partner or your soon to be ex partner, you, it can bring up an awful lot of. For both of you and you want to try and get this right for the kids. And the other thing is to think about when you're going to do it, don't do it on a Sunday night, just, you know, sitting on the end of their bed before they go to sleep ready for the next week.

[00:13:25] **Sue Atkins:** It think about what you want to say, how you want to say it when you're going to say it. And another tip I have is put a circle, draw a circle on a piece of paper, put some spokes into it and write down assurances that stay the same because you can't promise. You don't know what's going to

happen a lot at the time, but there are certain things you do know, like you will still see Emily, your best friend at ballet on Fridays at four o'clock.

[00:13:48] **Sue Atkins:** You will, you see grandma we'll make sure if you do you say that to them, you'll still stay at the same school. You know, I don't know if you don't know about whether you're going to stay in the same home. Say anything, because you need to build [00:14:00] trust there. They're going to look to you to try and guide them.

[00:14:03] **Sue Atkins:** And, um, don't tell them fibs and lies cause you just want to make it all right, because then, you know, in the next week or so that all just falls apart because then they'll feel uncertain and they'll feel more anxious than if you hadn't actually said anything at all. So planning. Is the important thing and don't plan it when you're really heightened sense of anger, you know, go for a good old run or a walk or whatever you do to kind of get yourself grounded.

[00:14:30] **Sue Atkins:** That's when you get the piece of paper and put a few bullet points down and say what you need to say, and hopefully your partner might, you know, back you up on some of that. But one key message. There's two key messages. One is. They are not to blame children always blame themselves. Even if they're four, they go, well, is it because I jumped in and out of your bed at night and daddy's got crossed.

[00:14:49] **Sue Atkins:** Cause you know, you couldn't sleep. Or a teenager has said, is it? Cause I didn't get the grades I was supposed to get, you know, children will blame themselves. So one key message. It's to make sure that they, um, [00:15:00] they know that that's not their fault. People fall out relationships change, you know, you can relate it depending on the ages and stages of your kids.

[00:15:08] **Sue Atkins:** And the other thing to sort of say to them is you will always love them. The home may change. You might have two houses, but the love will always stay the same. And if you can manage to come parent, somewhat amicably, putting the children at the center of that process, then your children will not be damaged by it.

[00:15:27] **Sue Atkins:** They recover, they resilient, but they don't recover from continued arguing and slagging off. And that really isn't very, I definitely try and rise above that side of it.

[00:15:38] **Samantha Baines:** Yeah. I watched a couple of your YouTube videos actually, and, and they're really useful for anyone going through this. And also I love what you say about tell them the things that are staying the same, because I think that's so important.

[00:15:52] **Samantha Baines:** I remember, I mean, I was quite old when my parents split up, they never actually got. But I remember the, the [00:16:00] idea that everything was going to change still at that age, I was like, what's like, what's going to happen. What's the plan, you know, are you selling the family home? Where are you all going to live like that, those are the things I sort of wanted to know.

[00:16:15] **Samantha Baines:** So I think that's really good advice. And I think I've spoken to a lot of parents on the podcast and people also in our, we have like a little chat room on my Patreon where people kind of share experiences and that, and a lot of people wonder if they should do the thing of you're going to have two Christmases.

[00:16:34] **Samantha Baines:** Is that actually going to be great? What would you say to people wondering if. Go down that route.

[00:16:40] **Sue Atkins:** Take your time on stuff like that over time. It might be lovely that actually you can have a real Christmas tree. If you always just had a plastic one in the past create new traditions. And that is quite nice, but not when you're in the eye of the storm.

[00:16:56] **Sue Atkins:** And you've just discovered it. You got, it's going to be so great at Christmas. It's going to be lovely. [00:17:00] Uh, you know, have two birthday parties. That's not quite what kids are ready to hear. The interesting thing is also. You know, choose your moments in how you do it. I remember working with a client.

[00:17:10] **Sue Atkins:** Normally I don't go and visit people's houses, but I went to, um, they want, really wanted me to, and they told the four kids with me there, which I found, oh goodness, you know how not to do. It got up and went off into the car and left and the children were, they thought he'd gone forever. So of course, you've got to try and work out what reactions the children might have.

[00:17:33] **Sue Atkins:** Sometimes they go, oh, okay, fair enough. Um, who's going to look after the Guinea pig and they're pretty matter of fact, other times, if they're teenagers, perhaps they might burst into tears. You just never know

how they're going to react. So be mindful about after what you've told me. What are you going to do then don't just sort of leave, try and make it sort of practical that perhaps you then go to the park or you do something, or, you know, you chat to them about the questions and stuff like [00:18:00] that.

[00:18:00] **Sue Atkins:** So, yeah, don't jump into making it happy. Clappy if it's genuinely not quite there yet, let it percolate. And then the children and the new things that come in might well be lovely and different.

[00:18:12] **Samantha Baines:** You know, you said earlier about picking the time you do it. Don't do it on a Sunday. Before they go to sleep on the end of their bed.

[00:18:19] **Samantha Baines:** What is the perfect time to tell your children that you're getting divorced?

[00:18:24] **Sue Atkins:** Well, that's why you need to think about it and you need to think, well, am I going to be interrupted by my phone going off? Is it tea time? Is there a favorite program on the telly that you know is going to distract us? So pick time, choose your time carefully.

[00:18:38] **Sue Atkins:** When will we have some uninterrupted time where we choose to sit down and we talk to them about what's going to happen in a sort of, you know, as best we can. And of course there's no ideal time and an ideal place. But don't just do it, you know, with a throwaway line. Cause you're angry about something, do it with care and [00:19:00] consideration because it's a very important moment.

[00:19:02] **Sue Atkins:** I, I had a client, uh, remember talking to her about divorce and she was going through one herself, but she remembered her own. 50 years earlier. And she said I was wearing my green dress with my red shoes, and I had my favorite cardigan on, she went straight back to that moment when they told her. So that's how powerful it is.

[00:19:22] **Sue Atkins:** So do try and get it right when none of us are perfect, but give it a bit of thought. I think

[00:19:27] **Samantha Baines:** it's interesting. The whole kind of day around when my parents told me that they were splitting up and it, you know exactly what happened. And I remember all those feelings even now, and that happened when I was an adult.

[00:19:42] **Samantha Baines:** But, um, so you'd think I deal with it better, but it's an interesting one, isn't it? But it, it, sometimes I think it feels like you can't really win. Like you're always going to do something wrong or you're always going to mess up. I don't have children, so I'm just going to mess up my pets. But [00:20:00] I think the worry is you're always going to mess them up in some way.

[00:20:04] **Sue Atkins:** There's a poster that goes around. It's something I created and it says there's no such thing as a perfect parent. So just be a real one because you can't get it right. All of the time. Unless my dad said to me once, so I've never done this before, when he was talking about his parenting and I thought he knew everything and I'm like, oh, really?

[00:20:25] **Sue Atkins:** I don't always get things right. But you try and make the fail forward and you try and sort of try and get it right. And that will make a difference. And, and, you know, kids are very forgiving about life and you, and they love you.

[00:20:39] **Samantha Baines:** It's the ad break. So it's a perfect time to remind you to hit subscribe, to be notified about more episodes.

[00:20:47] **Samantha Baines:** You can also leave us a lovely review because honestly it makes a difference to the chart positions. And one time I was in the charts next to Michelle Obama and I was really thrilled about it. So it'd be [00:21:00] nice to do that again. You could also join in the conversation. Social media. We're on Twitter and Instagram at divorce pod.

[00:21:07] **Samantha Baines:** We have a website, the divorce, social.com. And you can also join us for our like nineties style divorced chat room experience over on Patreon. So just go to patreon.com/samanthabaines, B a I N E S. And it starts at two pounds a month and we all have lovely and awful and amazing chats. See you then. So you got divorced, you broke it to everyone, you, uh, being Phoenix, like, and trying not to be angry and better.

[00:21:41] **Samantha Baines:** Were there any things that you did at that time or even that friends or close ones that you did. . You found particularly useful in a kind of recovery.

[00:21:53] **Sue Atkins:** Now my dear friend would be listening to this I'm. Sure. Or she is, I'm sorry, I won't mention her name, but she never actually got divorced, but [00:22:00] she separated 20 years ago and she never quite, I don't understand why you don't break that and move on.

[00:22:06] **Sue Atkins:** Personally, but every time, if you turn up at the cricket, when her sons are playing cricket and my son is joining in and playing cricket and we're all out there having a picnic, she won't talk to him and turns away and the atmosphere is just dire. And I thought he don't want to do it like that. I mean, it's so cringey for everybody that's concerned, you know, Why can't you get over it or why can't you just get a proper divorce then, then, you know, you're still dragging the old stories up and there are triggers, you know, sometimes if we go racing or something, not that I go racing very often, but you know, she'll suddenly go, oh, I remember that time.

[00:22:41] **Sue Atkins:** And my God, that's 20 years ago that story, get over it. So you don't want to be like that. And I remember thinking. I don't want to do it like you've done it and she's lovely. And she's my great friend, but how not to do it, I think really get a clean break so you can move on and say your family and your kids, and [00:23:00] everyone can move on and then do try and, and sort of see the good in the other person too.

[00:23:06] **Sue Atkins:** When they've moved on. You can't do that immediately. I know. Too soon, but eventually just take yourself out to 15 years or 10 years and say, how do you want the kids to describe this experience to their kids?

[00:23:19] **Samantha Baines:** Um, I'm interested in the experience of your friend because. You know, there must have been some real trauma there for her to still feel like that 20 years later.

[00:23:31] **Samantha Baines:** And we never know what's happened in people's lives. And I think there's quite, um, there's always quite a strong focus on the woman. If it's a heterosexual relationship to kind of forgive and be very friendly. And sometimes no one thinks about what the man's reaction to everything is. Have you ever spoken to her about that?

[00:23:53] **Sue Atkins:** Oh my God. Yes, of course, because I don't hold back. Do I? You can tell I'm sort of like all guns [00:24:00] blazing and I'm going you and I've lost track of, so anyway, that was just an emotion and. Uh, an observation that I thought, Hm that's not how I wanted it.

[00:24:12] **Samantha Baines:** I think it is important obviously to learn from other people's experiences.

[00:24:15] **Samantha Baines:** But do you find because of what you do you feel like you have to counsel everyone through

[00:24:21] **Samantha Baines:** stuff?

[00:24:22] **Sue Atkins:** Oh, I used to go through a bit of a phase and that's a pain in the ass. Isn't it being like that? Um, I do know that. Sometimes with some colleagues, I used to be a deputy head and class teacher for 22 years.

[00:24:33] **Sue Atkins:** So I still meet up with my pals sometimes, you know, my teacher pals and they sort of see me. I don't know. I don't know, as this wise woman is that cause I've turned 60. I don't know, probably. And you know, Into kind of when you're out and about certainly if someone's house or when we're in someone's garden nowadays chatting, and then they'll ask my advice and I kind of go into work mode.

[00:24:55] **Sue Atkins:** Cause I, I really rather like asking people better questions to help take [00:25:00] them into a better place. But then I have another friend ed who says you're not doing that coaching thing on me. So I learned very quickly to let him get on with his own mess. That's fine.

[00:25:13] **Samantha Baines:** So, so going back to you and your experience, your you're divorced, you've got your children.

[00:25:21] **Samantha Baines:** When do you start dating again? How did you delve into the dating world?

[00:25:26] **Sue Atkins:** Oh God, the murky world of online dating. Well, I was catfished, I think three times, uh, you know, cause I'm very, maybe twice, cause I'm very trusting, honest, open, authentic, and I thought everybody else in the world it's like me. Oh dear.

[00:25:44] **Sue Atkins:** That's a bit silly. But the other thing that was embarrassing is on one of these websites. I had taught this child in my class years ago, and I knew that they were still together, but he was on one of these apps and you think, oh my God, you know, people's lives.

[00:25:59] **Samantha Baines:** [00:26:00] So with the cat fishing, was it that they were using someone else's photo or what was it?

[00:26:07] **Sue Atkins:** Yeah, no, it was, it was the photo. And of course what you're drawn to, that's what you put up. Isn't it. You put up this picture. So I remember going on for ages on this thing, chat, chat, chat. It was all very good on, on the app. You know, you've got stay safe and I'm very mindful, not foolish

like that. Judge eventually after I think three or four days or more, do you want to go on to WhatsApp?

[00:26:27] **Sue Atkins:** Oh, okay. That's yeah. This gorgeous photo, even a different one there. Oh my God. And you're American and oh my goodness. That's marvelous. And then, you know, then it was all sort of messing around and then you say, well, should we talk even? And then they came a little reticent there and I thought, oh, that's an alarm bell.

[00:26:45] **Sue Atkins:** What's that about? Because then other people say at some point you just. Bite the bullet and meet for coffee in a public place. Um, so then it, whatever it was. And I remember it was at late on a Saturday evening and I called the person's bluff and he rang. And then I said, cause otherwise [00:27:00] you think it might be a catfish and his voice just changed.

[00:27:03] **Sue Atkins:** And I thought, oh my God, what a fool have I been? But luckily, nothing bad had happened. A lesson learned for me, I just went, oh, I don't trust people. Or that my fingers get burned. I'd rather meet people in real time. And see where life takes me. That's just me. Everybody else has a different experience of it, but you gotta be mindful of it.

[00:27:22] **Sue Atkins:** You gotta be careful of it and don't do it when you're feeling vulnerable. This was years later when I was, you know, out and about doing my own thing. And, um, I was in a good place, but I think it could be a dodgy place if you're a bit vulnerable. And hadn't really done the work on your, um, you know, yourself.

[00:27:39] **Samantha Baines:** I had a dating experience recently. I've been talking to the guy for quite a while on the apps. And then yeah, we went to WhatsApp and then he suggested we had a phone call and I was sort of very tired and I'd had a stressful day, but I was like, oh, okay. That's a good idea. Before we meet, see if we hit it off.

[00:27:57] **Samantha Baines:** And then we had a phone call and then [00:28:00] after the phone call, he was like, I don't want to meet you now. Such extreme rejection. Cause I was like, you like my picture that's normally the thing I worry about is what if they don't fancy me, but you didn't like my personality. Oh my God. So that felt like quite a strong rejection.

[00:28:19] **Samantha Baines:** I sort of felt it quite hard. How did the catfish moment for you?

[00:28:25] **Sue Atkins:** Oh, I felt annoyed and I felt old. Yeah. I don't know that kind of thing. That's just people they're not truthful. They're not authentic. They're not genuine. And also you do it on a picture. And then I know my other friend, she did it and she put up a photo of herself 10 years earlier and I thought, you know, 10 stone lighter, not really I'm joking, but you know, I'm thinking that's not truthful.

[00:28:46] **Sue Atkins:** Only that you're as bad as that.

[00:28:49] **Samantha Baines:** Yeah, that is very common using earlier photos. So did that experience completely put you off apps

[00:28:57] **Sue Atkins:** well, yes. After a while and investing, [00:29:00] oh, these are the cheap ones, right? So I'll invest a bit more or something. Cause you know, that might be better to do the Telegraph one or the guardian one or whatever it was called.

[00:29:09] **Sue Atkins:** Uh, you know, you hear it when you listen to radio, now they go, oh heart, you know, we have you joined with so and so. Oh my God. So yeah, there's all sorts of math and it is for some people and fair play. I'm not judging. It didn't work out for me. That's all.

[00:29:23] **Samantha Baines:** So did you find love again?

[00:29:26] **Sue Atkins:** Yes. Yes. That's true.

[00:29:28] **Samantha Baines:** As I hear some nuptials are coming up.

[00:29:33] **Sue Atkins:** So I just decided I just get on with my life and not as busy and having fun and meeting friends and doing great work and getting out on a button, traveling.

[00:29:40] **Sue Atkins:** This is all before pandemic. And, uh, then my daughter, uh, you know, she graduated from university and I bought the rescue remedy with me in case cause I have to meet my ex for a weekend and it turned out that we all got on so well, and my son came. Such a laugh. We had such good fun in Manchester because it's a brilliant place.

[00:29:59] **Sue Atkins:** Went out to [00:30:00] dinner. We went here, we went there and, um, we kind of struck up a friendship again and, uh, kind of, uh, you know, Intriguing. And I thought, gosh, this is really not what I expected. So we

got off the train and then he just said, I don't know if you fancy a dog walk sometime because we've got these dogs.

[00:30:17] **Sue Atkins:** And I just said, okay, why not? So we met for a dog walk and we kept meetings for about two years. And then, um, yeah, we moved into a different dementia. He moved in and two years later again, and, uh, we get married on October the 22nd this year.

[00:30:34] **Samantha Baines:** So this is your ex husband. That you divorced so you are real life Elizabeth Taylor.

[00:30:40] **Sue Atkins:** Oh, no. Don't say that she was married five times.

[00:30:44] **Samantha Baines:** No, but I mean, she married the same person twice.

[00:30:47] **Sue Atkins:** I think it's quite nice. I see myself as J-Lo and, uh, Ben Affleck. That's their story or, you know, awards or something. I saw them, I thought, oh, yes, that's a nice, it's like the

[00:30:59] **Sue Atkins:** [00:31:00] parent trap film, what the children are like dreaming of happening.

[00:31:05] **Samantha Baines:** How did your children take it where they pleased or were they a bit weirded out?

[00:31:11] **Sue Atkins:** Because I didn't quite know what it was. I didn't tell my daughter and I put up something on Facebook and it must've put up where I. So we had quite an interesting conversation. I said, this is not about me being secretive.

[00:31:25] **Sue Atkins:** This was me being private. I didn't quite know what was happening. And I didn't, you know, like I don't rush in like a China bull. So even though she's, uh, she was in her twenties, didn't want to, you know, say something that I didn't know what was quite happening, but anyway, they asked for. That she's buying the cake with my son and we've got a quiet, small little function and they're thrilled, and it is a joy and a privilege to me to bring back that sort of family atmosphere.

[00:31:52] **Sue Atkins:** But what I've learned from it is massive appreciation. You can lose track. We'd been married, I dunno, 20 or [00:32:00] years, nearly 25 years or something. And you take each other for granted. You've had a few

ups and downs financially, whereas this time. It's very different. In that sense, we have a lot in common. We always did have, but as I go into my older age, now, it is really nice to have someone to share things with.

[00:32:18] **Sue Atkins:** And we have a great deal in common. We laugh a lot. We like the same sort of stuff on Netflix and we garden the hell out of the garden. So, you know, small stuff, very grateful. And it's the biggest surprise really of my life at that point.

[00:32:32] **Samantha Baines:** That's amazing.

[00:32:33] **Samantha Baines:** Is there anything going into another wedding? Is there anything you're going to do differently from your first wedding?

[00:32:40] **Samantha Baines:** I mean, putting aside that it's the same guy. Just wedding wise?

[00:32:44] **Sue Atkins:** No, not really. I think there's a huge attitude of gratitude, a huge, um, feeling of connection and belonging. And that is a gift that I hope I give as well as I receive. [00:33:00] And as we grow older, You know, one of the simplest things we really enjoy as the kids coming back, you know, as they've left the nest, they come back, we have barbecues with granddad who's 93 just turned, uh, this week.

[00:33:13] **Sue Atkins:** And I would very much like to do some more traveling again, if we can ever do them. I love that idea and doing it with someone that you enjoy being with is really wonderful. I'm very blessed.

[00:33:24] **Samantha Baines:** Now, obviously we've talked a lot about your job. What would you say the best thing? Your job and what you do is,

[00:33:32] **Sue Atkins:** oh, it's a huge honor, privilege to help people through change, to help people feel better in their parenting to see families heal, to find some harmony and some happiness back in their families, not just through divorce, because as I say, most of my book is completely broad across, you know, whether they're teenagers or tweens or babies or whatever.

[00:33:56] **Sue Atkins:** So raising a happy, confident kid. It's actually what I'm [00:34:00] all about. And I can help parents do that with my techniques, strategies, and the coaching that I do, then I really feel I've made it, uh, I've left a legacy and I've made a difference in the world that im in.

[00:34:12] **Samantha Baines:** What do you think the most important thing you learned from your own divorces?

[00:34:17] **Sue Atkins:** Don't take things for granted. And I suppose you can never, you always think the grass is greener on the other side, don't you, I suppose, in life. Uh, and you can't put in, I couldn't go through this experience now, this new one, if I hadn't had the old experience, so mistakes and things that you get wrong.

[00:34:37] **Sue Atkins:** If you learn from them can actually lead you to a better place.

[00:34:41] **Samantha Baines:** I totally agree. Well, thank you very much. It's been so nice to chat. Where can people find your book and find your YouTube and all of that?

[00:34:51] **Sue Atkins:** Well, it's the Sue Atkins dot com. Because there was a lady called sue atkins, sitting on a yacht. So I'm the one and only the sue atkins.com.

[00:34:59] **Sue Atkins:** It's [00:35:00] got everything on there. You can find my YouTube Sue Atkins, the parenting expert. I'm on Twitter. Uh, Sue Atkins, Instagram, Sue Atkins18, LinkedIn, you know, you name it. If you put in Sue Atkins, I'm like a bad penny, I turn up everywhere. And if you're interested in getting my divorce journal for kids, That is honestly, I put all my heart and soul into that to help children express, understand, and kind of work their way through, you know, their parents divorce properly and it'll start conversations and they can do it on their own, or they can do it with grandma or do it with you.

[00:35:33] **Sue Atkins:** Just to help them because you don't want to just leave them with those very strong emotions and they don't know what to do with them.

[00:35:39] **Samantha Baines:** Yeah. So we should say that this is a book that you give your children and there's like activities or things that they fill out.

[00:35:45] **Sue Atkins:** That's it. And they draw and all of that.

[00:35:48] **Samantha Baines:** Amazing. Well, thank you so much.

[00:35:50] **Sue Atkins:** My pleasure. Thanks for that. I feel as if it's been a therapy session,

[00:35:55] **Samantha Baines:** Okay, thank you so much for sharing. It's
[00:36:00] great. It's great to hear your advice and then also some of your experience as well. So I think people are going to find that really useful.