

Mariana Atencio

Peabody Award-winning Journalist, Bestselling Author, Entrepreneur, Inspiring Storyteller, and Host/Moderator

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

Topics

- Broadcast / Media
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Hispanic/Latino/Chicano/Xicano
- Journalism / Literary / Author
- TED-Talks
- Women's Empowerment

About Mariana Atencio

Navigating change and uncertainty in life is hard. It's even harder when you're not confident about who you are. Coming to America from Venezuela as a young girl, Mariana Atencio felt self-conscious about being different. She recounted her struggles to fit in and adapt to her new life in a TED talk that captured the hearts of tens of millions. Mariana's message: What makes you different is what makes you special – unleash your potential by embracing your authenticity.

Mariana took that lesson into her journalism career as a national news anchor and network reporter. A born storyteller, Mariana worked to build bridges and understanding – reporting with her unique perspective from all over the globe, earning accolades and a prestigious Peabody Award along the way. Mariana's bestselling book, *Perfectly You: Embracing the Power of Being Real*, inspires people to leverage their personal and professional authenticity to supercharge their relationships, careers, workplace cultures, and happiness. Mariana continues to pursue stories that capture her curiosity as head of her own media production company. She also elevates the impact of events through her powerful keynotes and skillful moderating, and hosting.

But to start at the beginning,

Originally from Caracas, Venezuela, Mariana graduated from Merici High School and received a journalism degree from Universidad Católica.

When the government of Hugo Chávez shut down independent media outlets in her home country, she participated in student protests for democracy. After being assaulted in an armed robbery, Mariana left for the United States when she received a full-merit scholarship to Columbia University's Journalism School and received her master's degree in broadcast journalism.

Mariana got her big break [anchoring and reporting at Univision](#), where she also filed stories for the Documentaries and Investigative Unit. She won a [Peabody Award](#) and an Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) Award for her work uncovering illegal weapons sold across the border in Mexico. She also won a Gracie Award for directing, writing, and reporting *PRESSionados*, a documentary about press freedom in Latin America.

She then went on to host *The Morning Show* on [Fusion](#), the Disney and Univision joint venture, and co-anchored the 2016 Democratic Presidential debate.

Mariana made the crossover from Spanish to English-speaking television as a [national correspondent](#) for [NBC News](#) where she was known for her boots-on-the-ground, engaging, and empathic field work. Her investigative work on Latin America, the Latino community, cartel violence, women's and migrants' rights earned her three Emmy nominations, a Hillman Prize, and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists Presidential Award.

In the course of her broadcast career, Mariana has reported from places like Haiti, the Syrian border, and China, underscoring the common threads in our humanity and that we are all more alike than different. She has interviewed dozens of notable figures, including Pope Francis, President Joe Biden, King Felipe VI of Spain, Nancy Pelosi, chef and humanitarian José Andrés, author Yuval Noah Harari, and director Francis Ford Coppola.

Mariana's journey is featured on the award-winning HBO series [Habla](#), and *People* magazine called her storytelling platform "[a media empire](#)." Ten years after she arrived in the United States, Mariana won Columbia's First Decade Award for her impressive career as a journalist.

Mariana is a [2021 Henry Crown Fellow at the Aspen Institute](#) and [spokesperson for the American Latino Museum](#) in D.C. In 2022 she launched the hit true crime podcast series [Lost in Panama](#), an investigation into the disappearance of Kris Kremers and Lianne Froom, shedding light on [the issue of missing women and girls](#) in the region. *Lost in Panama* made Apple Podcasts' top #10 list, and Mariana headlined *Foreign Policy* magazine's HerPower summit on tackling gender inequality in the Americas.



Mariana's [TEDx talk "What Makes YOU Special?"](#) is one of the top ten most-watched videos on YouTube. Doubling down on her message, she wrote her bestselling memoir, [Perfectly You: Embracing the Power of Being Real](#).

Select Keynotes

• THE POWER OF BEING PERFECTLY YOU

It's a fact: People are at their best – at work and in life – when they feel like they can be themselves. They're more confident in the face of change and uncertainty, more engaged and resilient, and have a greater sense of purpose and well-being. But fear can sometimes keep us from being real. In this presentation, Mariana Atencio brings her energy, humor, and skillful storytelling to inspire people to embrace their authenticity and unleash the power that comes with being themselves. Being "Perfectly You" builds trust and connection – it attracts people like a magnet because authenticity stands out in a world of algorithms and A.I. content. Mariana's unique personal story and infectious optimism energizes people with the courage to fully engage, adapt to constant change, and reach new levels of fulfillment at work and in life.

Sample takeaways:

- Unlock the secret of being our real selves, especially at work.
- How to discover and harness the traits that make you "Perfectly You."
- Navigate change confidently. Increase your personal fulfillment and sense of purpose.
- Why being vulnerable and leading with empathy inspires others, builds trust, and creates more meaningful relationships.
- 5 steps authentic leaders use to cultivate transformation and innovation and enhance resilience in the face of change.
- Help leaders create a culture of authenticity that spurs engagement, connection, collaboration, and performance.

• Moderating/Interviewing/Hosting

With experience as a national network news anchor and reporter, Mariana brings warmth and intelligence to each hosting, moderating, and interviewing assignment. Mariana's curiosity and poise help her get the most out of those on stage with her.

The breadth of Mariana's experience speaks to her versatility. She's moderated conversations on embracing a mindset for change at Microsoft, on the rights of women in Iran, on gender inequality at Foreign Policy magazine's HERPower summit, on media representation at the Paley Center for Media, on financial literacy at Nasdaq, on building a personal and professional brand at Columbia University, a panel on geopolitics and economics at Citi Private Bank's autumn dialogues with three heads of state from Latin America, a session at the United Nations General Assembly meeting on global healthcare inequity, plus the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, PepsiCo, JP Morgan, Accenture, Spotify, Google, YouTube, Clorox, AT&T, Spectrum, and more.

Select Book Titles

- **2019:** Perfectly You: Embracing the Power of Being Real

Select Articles

- [Atencio shares experiences in 'Perfectly You'](#)

The NBC/MSNBC journalist encourages readers to 'take a leap of faith' about what they can achieve, like she did. "Do it because we need your voices."

- [How this journalist found herself in the middle of a Panamanian true crime story](#)

Award-winning reporter Mariana Atencio traveled to the Central American jungle retracing the steps of two Dutch tourists who disappeared in 2014. But for her, the story took an unexpected turn.

- [Friends of The National Museum of the American Latino names Mariana Atencio as An Official Spokesperson and Media Partner](#)
- [OPRAH DAILY: What It Was Like Registering to Vote for the First Time as a Latina Immigrant](#)

"After fleeing my home country a decade ago, I know that no American should take voting for granted." Written by Mariana Atencio

Select Testimonials

"For the last two years, Mariana has been the host of AT&T's annual Hispanic Heritage Month events, celebrating employees' authenticity and contributions toward the customers and communities we proudly serve. Mariana brings employees' stories to life through her unique engagement and connection with our teams while creating a welcoming, energetic, and memorable atmosphere. Her dynamic stage presence, storytelling, and facilitation skills have positively impacted our events and attendees. We appreciate her commitment to amplifying our brand's values as well as her partnership and collaboration in delivering unique experiences that support our mission of connecting people to greater possibilities!"

— Chief Strategy and Development Officer, AT&T Inc.

"In a time when dramatic change has brought about immense uncertainty, Mariana's C.O.N.T.R.O.L. framework provides tangible guidance on how to move forward with intention to build a life that honors our unique purpose. This complete framework helps you evaluate your life with clarity, empower yourself to break through ruts, and make meaningful progress. It's a true gift to be able to share this framework with our employees."

— *Director of Practice Management & Co-Founder of Latinos @SAP Concur*

"Mariana Atencio brought such energy and honesty to our company-wide event. Mariana's authenticity allows her to connect with others almost immediately. Thank you for providing us with the tools to be resilient and proud of what makes us Perfectly Unique!"

— *Director, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Rapid7*

"Mariana provided some wonderful lessons and insights into her journey and how each of us can celebrate and share what makes us different. It was a fantastic opportunity for our employees to be inspired and to learn more."

— *Director, Global Executive & Employee Communications, Microsoft*

"Mariana was powerful on stage, engaging, thought provoking and the perfect speaker for our flagship global annual conference held in Miami. She was such a pleasure to work with that she ended up interviewing and moderating two very critical panels for the agenda. Mariana's experience and professionalism will make any company that chooses to work with her look great."

— *Director, Marketing & Communications Head, Citi Private Bank*

Mariana inspires the next generation of women to carve their own path and dare to be themselves.

— *Eva Longoria Bastón, Actress, Philanthropist & Business Woman*

Mariana is an engaging host and speaker who is able to take complex subjects and make them accessible to a general audience. There wasn't a moment during today's discussion where I or anyone around me was tuned out. Thanks, Mariana for your dedication and hard work (which you make look effortless).

— *Founder, President and CEO, Global Policy Solutions*

"Given the uncertainty of the post-pandemic world, you and your organization are in the best hands by hiring Mariana and her GoLike team. We have booked Mariana for motivational keynotes aimed at employees, voice-over work, community programs, and social media campaigns and she has over delivered every time. Her creativity and attention to detail will make your brand stand out in a unique way! She is very dynamic and great at keeping the audience engaged."

— *Senior Manager, Ford Motor Company*

"Mariana's authentic, relatable, engaging style enabled her to immediately connect with our audience. Through a series of stories, she shared uplifting, relevant, and empowering learnings that all of us can embrace as leaders."

— *VP, Google Cloud Consulting*