

## Therapy Chat Episode 278



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[00:00:00] **Laura Reagan:** Therapy Chat Podcast, Episode 278.

[00:00:04] **Announcer:** This is the Therapy Chat podcast with Laura Reagan, LCSW-C. The information shared in this podcast is not a substitute for seeking help from a licensed mental health professional. And now here's your host, Laura Reagan LCSW-C.

[00:00:35] **Laura Reagan:** Do you feel stuck when working with clients who are numb and disconnected, who have trouble accessing emotion and exploring their inner experience? Learn a comprehensive approach to conceptualize your client's concerns. Sensorimotor Psychotherapy uniquely includes the body in therapy as both a source of information and a target for intervention. Because words are not enough. Go beyond theories [00:01:00] and gain practical ways to open a new dimension for effective therapy. Visit Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute online at [sensorimotor.org](http://sensorimotor.org) today.

[00:01:12] Hi, welcome back to Therapy Chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. And I'm very honored to be once again, talking with a guest, who's been on the podcast a couple of times before my guest today is Sarah Peyton. Sarah, thanks so much for coming back to Therapy Chat today.

[00:01:30] **Sarah Peyton:** I'm so glad to be here with you Laura.

[00:01:33] **Laura Reagan:** I am too.

[00:01:34] I always get so much from our conversations and I hear so much positive feedback from my audience who can't get enough of what you're doing and just your calm, peaceful presence is just so, so nice to hear. So I'm grateful for that. So let's, let's start off for today with you giving our listeners just a little introduction to who you are and what you do for anyone [00:02:00] who may not have heard our previous two interviews.

[00:02:03] **Sarah Peyton:** Well my name is Sarah Peyton and what I do, what I love is to look at what is the newest brain research that shows us what brains do in relationship. And if we translate that information into layperson's language, then what does it give us in terms of leverage, understanding self-compassion, and the healing of trauma.

[00:02:29] So that's, that's my kind of what I think about. And walk through and write about and teach about. Uh, and, and, um, and it's kind of where our worlds intersect in this wondering about therapy and relationships and how given that it's such a, an invisible art, the art of therapy. How does learning about our brains give us any kind of purchase [00:03:00] in this funny, invisible and somewhat slippery world?

[00:03:04] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. It's when I think probably when the average person hears the term neuroscience or brain research it seems like it could be pretty disconnected from feelings and relationships and our relationship with ourselves.

[00:03:22] But I've learned through you through what you do, how much there's a neuroscience. How our neuroscience really is influencing the way we feel about ourselves and the world and, and our relationships with other people.

[00:03:40] **Sarah Peyton:** Yeah. Yeah. With inside therapy and out of therapy, but what's, what's so interesting about humans and about the culture that we live in is that we kind of are given a constant message by our culture that we are individuals.

[00:03:56] And that we, that, that we [00:04:00] are simply ourselves and that we really don't have very much relationship to the people around us or to our environment. And we get this message just starting so early that we need to take care of ourselves, that we are responsible for our own selves, that, that we can't count on others.

[00:04:20] And, and that's of course, the very first hurdle for people when they're moving toward the idea that another human could maybe actually help them. So what I love to, to give people an understanding of is the almost visceral and cellular nature of our connections with other humans, that our nervous systems change radically, depending on how other people are doing. That our sense of self around us, that our sense of self is created from the micro- moments of connection. The moments when [00:05:00] somebody actually sees us. Someone actually understands us. The sense of communion that we have with others can be so beautiful and so profound.

[00:05:11] And we may not even notice it because it can happen quite sneakily, like if we're both paying attention to the same TV show. We start to sync up or when we're listening to a speaker speak and that speaker is completing a sentence. We actually complete that speaker sentence in our brain before they do, we are, we are very, very linked to each other.

[00:05:37] We're so linked to each other, that the research of James A. Cohen shows us that if we measure people on their own without their community, their vital signs, all their, all their signs of effectiveness, and self-regulation, and, and stress management, and resilience are immune system response- everything is lower [00:06:00] than if we measure them in their community. We are community beings. But so many of us have had difficult experience with human community, of course, that we might not even believe it, or we might feel suspicious or, or mistrustful, even that I'm saying such a radical thing, but we are changed

by and we become more truly ourselves when we get to be held in an atmosphere of warmth and affection.

[00:06:26] **Laura Reagan:** We become more truly ourselves when we are held in an atmosphere of warmth and connection. That that sounds like a point that I just feel I need to emphasize.

[00:06:39] **Sarah Peyton:** Yeah. It's the beautiful thing about therapy, is that it offers that opportunity.

[00:06:46] We can't always take our therapists up on the invitation. But it does, it does offer us the opportunity, especially, I mean, people sometimes say to me, how do I find a good therapist? And I'm like, find somebody [00:07:00] who really likes you. And that experience of being really liked is is strangely transformative for many of us.

[00:07:11] **Laura Reagan:** Uncomfortable for many of us, right?

[00:07:15] **Sarah Peyton:** Yes. It can be,

[00:07:16] **Laura Reagan:** it can feel so different.

[00:07:18] **Sarah Peyton:** Yeah. Yeah. And we're like, why does this person like me? I don't understand what there is about me even to be liked or to be likable.

[00:07:27] **Laura Reagan:** Hm, that makes me think of clients who say, well, you get paid to like me because it's like, you can't just like me. That couldn't be right.

[00:07:36] **Sarah Peyton:** Yeah, and that's such an intense moment for us as therapists. Like the experience of, of mutuality, you know, is, is a different experience than the experience of therapy. And sometimes I just want to say, yeah, but you're getting my full attention for 60 minutes. If, if we were not in this particular relationship, then you would [00:08:00] have to be giving me attention too.

[00:08:04] **Laura Reagan:** Right. That's it. That's, that's what the person is paying for is for the time that is focused only on them.

[00:08:13] **Sarah Peyton:** Yeah. Yeah. They don't have to do anything in response. They don't need to be focused on us.

[00:08:20] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. It's different from relationships that are mutually reciprocal, which is what are normal human relationships is I think that's what makes therapy so unique and hard to explain and hard to understand when you haven't experienced it, that it's about you and what you need and what you feel.

[00:08:41] And what you want. And that is what our nervous systems. I mean, you can, you're much more of an expert on neuroscience than I am, so you can correct me if I'm wrong, but I think it's like our nervous system or our attachment system within us needs to feel that it's our [00:09:00] needs that matter, you know, in a certain stage of development. And when we don't get that enough, it impacts the way we see ourselves and who, how we, how we see the world and how we are in the world. Am I right about that?

[00:09:13] **Sarah Peyton:** Your absolutely right about that. And the payment makes it does make it reciprocal and there's something interesting. I think when clients don't understand that, that the payment, it is a part of the mutuality, but I'm not sure it's something, I certainly haven't found a way to speak about it yet, but I'm open to new possibilities of how to begin to talk about it just at this point. I think what I mostly do is acknowledge the difficulty of believing that we matter.

[00:09:48] Uh, if we're paying for somebody's time that we, we don't, we, that we have a hard time, but it's like, maybe there's something like, do you long to be loved for yourself, [00:10:00] loved and experienced someone being devoted to you and having a warm curiosity and generous imagination about you. That would be, that would be a sweetness that was so great that it would fill that the old hunger that you have within you be something like that would be nice to ask.

[00:10:20] **Laura Reagan:** Those words, that's what I mean, the way you are and the way you speak is so it's like almost poetic.

[00:10:29] **Sarah Peyton:** Hmm. And, and, and sometimes I do think this is my poetry. I do think that because one of the things that research shows us is that poetry lights up the right hemisphere. And I often think about, uh, therapy in a way sometimes as being, uh, the poetry that somebody else writes about us.

[00:10:51] Uh, the words that we bring to our clients are poems that begin to describe their experience. I had a, I was working with a [00:11:00] therapist very recently, and I started talking about something that was really intriguing to me. And he, he was my therapist. And I said, and, and he said, oh, I kind of want to follow that thought, but I know that that's illusion, illusion, illusionary.

[00:11:18] He said, I would like, instead to just stay with you, I would like you to be the most sparkly thing in the room for me and I, and that felt like a poem to me. You know, the, the idea that I would be the most sparkly thing that my thoughts wouldn't be the most sparkly thing, but that I would be the most sparkly thing.

[00:11:41] And that was that. I just keep thinking about that moment. It delighted me so much.

[00:11:46] **Laura Reagan:** That's beautiful. And what you said right there that word delighted was, you know, something that I thought of when you said some finding someone who likes you.

[00:11:56] **Sarah Peyton:** Yeah.

[00:11:57] **Laura Reagan:** That's like we need as an [00:12:00] attachment need. We need someone to be delighted to see us.

[00:12:03] **Sarah Peyton:** Yes, yes. To have warmth, to be moved by our existence. I was struggling, uh, at one point with how, how I think about working, uh, as a, uh, having a client load and, and I, cause I was feeling tired and I, and I was getting a little supervision support for that. And all of a sudden, the image that came to me and may have been brought by the person I was working with even was an image of my day being a river of love that was flowing.

[00:12:39] Through the flowing through time through the boulders of the different clients like that, each, each client was stepping, was stepping into the river of love. And that was a very nourishing idea for me. That really helped with a certain kind of sense of a daily grind. It [00:13:00] transformed it a little bit for me.

[00:13:01] **Laura Reagan:** Beautiful, beautiful image. Can you say more about this statement that I emphasized before? When you said becoming more of ourselves, can you talk about what you mean by more of ourselves?

[00:13:15] **Sarah Peyton:** Yes. I love the work of Stephen Porges, who is the man who wrote the very intense book, Polyvagal Theory, which is almost unreadable, but I did read all the way through it without being illuminated very much, except for I'm very illuminated by the theories of his work.

[00:13:35] And of course, by Deb Dana and her work, almost interpreting him for, uh, clients. I love of both of them very much and had them both on my Resonance Summit really recently, and got to do an interview with Stephen Porges, which I enjoyed, but what his work shows us is that we are, that when we have a sense of not [00:14:00] being under threat from one another, when we have a sense, when our nervous system senses safety, which is a low bar for me. I always like to say that the nervous system is asking, am I safe? Do I matter? Does my voice matter? Are people curious about what I have to say? That that's an element of the nervous system. Not just feeling safe, but knowing it's welcome. Sometimes I just want to change that neuroception of safety, to neuroception of welcome.

[00:14:32] And so when we have a neuroception of welcome when our nervous system senses that, yes, we are welcome. I'm on this podcast with Laura and Laura's happy that I'm here and I'm happy to be here. And I'm glad to see Laura, like we're giving each other a sense of the neuroception of welcome. And that actually moves our nervous system out of

fight flight and alarmed aloneness [00:15:00] into the experience of, of being more truly ourselves, we have more access to everything that's important in one relationship when we have a neuroception of welcome. So our immune system shifts gears and starts producing the cells that fight cancer and that decrease inflammation our red blood cells start picking up more, more blood, more oxygen.

[00:15:33] Like our, our red blood cells begin to carry to our whole body a message of aliveness and our, our brain doesn't have to work on threats so we can access our full creativity. Our face becomes more mobile and engaged. We can hear the engagement in our voices, the muscles of the middle ear, tightened to the sound range of the human voice.

[00:15:58] All of these [00:16:00] things, take us into what Stephen Porges calls, social engagement and in social engagement, we have our highest heart rate variability and our greatest capacity to respond to ourselves and to others. So one of the things you and I have talked about in the past Laura is the inner resonance and the sense of like having a warm curiosity about our own selves, bringing that same experience that we're talking about that happens in the very most wonderful therapy sessions of being held with warmth and enjoyment of being appreciated and liked and even sometimes loved. And this experience then of bringing that to our own selves that we maybe even wake up in the morning going, oh, Sarah, welcome to the world. I'm so glad that you're here. And this sense of moving into our lives and having our full [00:17:00] capacity for nuance and imagination and creativity and relationships.

[00:17:04] So that's what I mean by being where we are more truly ourselves when we are liked.

[00:17:10] **Laura Reagan:** Wow yeah it's it opens up all the possibility within us and within us to connect with other people.

[00:17:20] **Sarah Peyton:** And the things that kind of stop us, you know, if we're thinking about that moment in the therapy session, where the client says, you only like me because I'm paying you.

[00:17:31] And if we kind of go into that moment for, in, in detail, what we often find, there is something that I call an unconscious contract, and this is the total complete, dedicated subject of my, of my book that's coming out it's published on May 25th and it's, it's called the, Your Resonant Self Workbook, but it's completely devoted to the [00:18:00] idea that our nervous systems make agreements and contracts with us that we don't actually know about.

[00:18:07] That happened below the level of conscious awareness that we make mistrust contracts, for example. So, uh, the client who says you only like me, cause I'm paying, you probably has a mistrust contract, never to believe anyone that's saying that they are, that they like them in order to, and there can be all kinds of in order toos, some of the in order toos are, are, are things like in order to make myself safe from future betrayals.

[00:18:38] With an acknowledgement that somebody misused affection for manipulation, for example, in the past, or I will not believe that I'm likable in order to save myself from heartbreak and disappointment. And often that takes us directly into the traumas of living in a home where we just hoped and [00:19:00] hoped and hoped for someone's love.

[00:19:02] And it never came because of that person's own trauma and incapacity, or we might have a contract not to like ourselves, even in transgenerational sense. Like maybe our mom had a contract with herself, not to like herself in order to explain the level of, of violence and, and humiliation that she had to live through.

[00:19:27] And we don't want to leave her. So we might have a contract. Not to like ourselves in order to stay with our mothers or just recently, I, I, I tend to be a terrible workaholic. I just love my work so much. I discovered it when I was, um, my first book was published when I was 50. And so I have this sense of like, okay, I've got another good 10 years.

[00:19:49] I mean, what am I going to do next? Like this intense desire to do what, whatever is here to do. But I also had this sense that there was a puzzle for me [00:20:00] and my workaholicism, that there was something so driven in it and I worked and worked on it. I was like, there must be an unconscious contract. And one year ago I was actually sitting in my living room, working on taxes.

[00:20:13] And I thought I am like a bee. I'm like a worker bee, a busy bee. I said, and I was just thinking worker bee worker bee. And then all of a sudden, what I realized was that my father, my father was a worker bee and he died about 10 or 12 years ago. And, and I realized that if I just was a very intense worker bee, I could keep him with me.

[00:20:38] That was my unconscious contract. If I just am the very best worker bee I can be. Then I don't have to mourn my father's death and I don't have to miss him. And I'm just with him as I'm working so hard and I'm kind of, I had tears spring out of my eyes in this moment of understanding. And, [00:21:00] um, and then of course I asked myself, Sarah, is this a good contract for you?

[00:21:04] It's like, no, I can miss my dad. I'm I'm big enough to be able to mourn his passing. I don't have to hide from it anymore. And I release you from this contract, Sarah and I revoke this vow. And instead I give you my blessing to explore rest and flow and a little freedom in relationship to this intense desire to work.

[00:21:28] So that's kind of a little micro view of, of this book that I've written.

[00:21:35] **Laura Reagan:** Wow. Yeah. I was, I had some tears come up when you, when you shared that. Thank you for sharing that. And I'm sorry for the loss of your dad. So, you know, it makes me wonder how do you identify these contracts? I know you do some family constellations in one of the ways that you work, am I [00:22:00] right?

[00:22:00] **Sarah Peyton:** Yes. And this actually this form of thinking about contracts actually comes from the early work of Bert Hellinger, who is the founder of the constellation method. And in his very early days, he started to work in his later days very non-verbally, very silently, but in his early days, he did say this, he did have people say no matter the cost to myself, and that's a key part of understanding how strong our loyalties can be, that we don't even care that I didn't even care that I was killing myself with my workaholism and. And, and, and indeed coming out of the workaholism, uh, I realized that there were multiple health issues that desperately needed my attention.

[00:22:45] And then I really literally had been killing myself with the intensity of my drive and not really stopping to rest or breathe. So, so what we want to know is what are we doing no matter the [00:23:00] cost to ourselves. And then that takes us into the world of being able to explore self-sabotage or to explore things like you know why don't I believe that my therapist is, uh, has affection for me or we know what am I keeping my safe self safe from by never being on time.

[00:23:19] You know, cause we all have these little self-sabotaging habits that we do really seem to, we really seem to do them no matter the cost to ourselves, I will not exercise no matter the cost to myself and the question, the part that's the part we know.

[00:23:37] We know that we will not exercise, but we don't know what the unconscious part is. It's like the words in order to which we've probably never put in, in, we, we think of ourselves as kind of like finished products and that we're just flawed rather than saying I will hurt myself in order to, and that in order [00:24:00] to is a grammatical tool that lets us kind of open the door to the body and feel in to the body to find out what's my, in order to, what am I looking? What am I looking to do? If this makes sense, if this thing that I just thought was a nonsensical flaw, if it makes actual sense, what kind of sense does it make?

[00:24:24] **Laura Reagan:** You know, that is very powerful. And it makes me think of when working with people who have trauma and it's the symptoms from the trauma that brings them to therapy, whether it's self destructive behaviors, constant anxiety, depression, whatever it is- they always make sense. It always makes sense in the context of the person's experiences why those are the behaviors or feelings that are driving them.

[00:24:55] And, you know, so by asking these exploratory questions of [00:25:00] oneself, so interesting, like even the being late it's like some people are constantly late. I think I can resonate with this one. It's like, some people are constantly late and don't see themselves as someone who's constantly late, but just, they are.

[00:25:15] **Sarah Peyton:** Yes.

[00:25:16] **Laura Reagan:** I mean, I've been that way. And then there was a time where I began to become more aware that I had a habit or pattern of being late. And, um, I know for me, I noticed that it's hard for me to leave the thing I was doing before, whatever it is like.

[00:25:34] Yeah. It's like, there's something about, you know, you could call it like it's difficulty with transition, but in my story. Um, it makes sense that it would be like not wanting to let go of whatever connection I had with whatever I was doing before. And, you know, that's, if I look at it that way, it totally makes sense why I would be, you know, it's not that I don't want to be where I'm going next. It's that I don't want to leave where I [00:26:00] was before.

[00:26:02] **Sarah Peyton:** It's kind of like, I will not say goodbye.

[00:26:04] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. And I can definitely, I can know how that is in my, in my story, so that there's still a lot to work with. But just even thinking about that, understanding something shifts.

[00:26:18] **Sarah Peyton:** And it brings self-compassion. I often think that the therapist is the client's hippocampus.

[00:26:26] So if we think about what the amygdala does and what the hippocampus does, the hippocampus is the brain's organ that contextualizes and puts things into perspective and into both a linear timeline perspective. And also into a meaning perspective. So, so what happens in trauma is that the amygdala creates a flow of cortisol that actually short-circuits the ability of the hippocampus to work. And when the hippocampus is short-circuited, of course it can't make any [00:27:00] meaning out of what is what has happened and it can't place things in context. So your realization now, this larger context of the experience of being late. It's like your hippocampus is starting to speak to us and we'll often hear clients do this in the therapy process.

[00:27:18] We'll hear them, we'll hear them saying, oh, and of course. They'll say, of course I did this now I understand. Or they'll begin to move out of talking about the trauma. They've been talking about the trauma for 25 minutes, but finally, the, the resonance is, is perfect enough that the amygdala relaxes and all of a sudden we hear all kinds of meaning-making the, oh yes. And my mother did this and that. When I think about this, my sister did it. And this makes sense in terms of my family's, uh, immigration from Ireland during the potato famine. And, you know, I mean, there's just so many [00:28:00] ways that, that we feel and hear the picture that the, that the client is creating of their own understanding become more and more inclusive and compassionate and, and expansive.

[00:28:15] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. The space being made for that exploration within, I guess it's within that therapeutic relationship that is an environment of that whatever comes up is okay.

[00:28:28] **Sarah Peyton:** Hmm, Hmm. Yeah. And that kind of circles tucks us back into the polyvagal theory. The idea that there's an actual neuroception of safety below the level of conscious awareness that our nervous system is going.

[00:28:42] Yes, indeed. Everything is really okay to talk about and to bring here and to feel.

[00:28:48] **Laura Reagan:** Sarah I'm thinking of something you said earlier, which I think might be a new phrase for some who are listening and I've heard you mention it before, but I'd [00:29:00] love if you could go more into it when you said our neuroception of safety and that we matter, we're welcome allows us to come out of fight or flight or alarmed aloneness. But can you talk about that? What that, I think everybody knows what fight or flight is at this point, but what's the alarmed aloneness?

[00:29:21] **Sarah Peyton:** Well, this is kind of a way to bring together the work of [inaudible] was, uh, who was looking at the circuits of emotion and motivation in the mammalian brain. And we, of course being mammals share these circuits with all of our other fellow mammals on earth. And one of these circuits is the fear circuit, and we can be in sympathetic activation and be in the fear circuit.

[00:29:44] We can also be in sympathetic, we can also be in immobilization and kind of be in frozen fear. And we can also be in social engagement and be able to say, oh yes, I can tell I'm afraid. There's there are [00:30:00] edges of it. I'm not being taken over by it. I'm still able to make decisions, but I'm holding my inner scared self with a lot of care right now.

[00:30:07] So there are three ways of being for each of the circuits. And so then flight fight flight is the fear circuit. And if we think of fight as the anger circuit, where we can have immobilized anger, where we can have anger and sympathetic activation, which is by far the most common or we can have the life serving anger, where we're, we're really integrating our anger with our love.

[00:30:37] And we realized that the reason that we're so angry is because we love so deeply. It really changes the effect on the person that is experiencing us as angry. For example, if a child gets lost and then comes back and we're angry, you stupid child. What did you think you were doing wandering off like that?

[00:30:57] Or we can have an [00:31:00] expression of the mix of anger and love that comes out explicitly. And we would say to the child, I, I, I'm so angry and I was so scared and I love you so much, and I want to be able to protect you. And I just feel helpless when you wander off, which is an entirely different experience of receiving somebodies' emotion, much less of a burden because there's an integration and it's a social engagement way of being able to express our anger.

[00:31:31] But there's also, you know, emotional circuits. There's a circuit that's devoted entirely to panic and grief. As, as Panksepp called it, it's the circuit where sadness lives and sorrow and mourning, and we're all familiar with that. And Panksepp also says it's our circuit where shame lives. But if we think about this circuit also as having three states, that there can be an immobilized [00:32:00] grief or an immobilized shame, or an immobilized loneliness.

[00:32:03] And then if we move up into sympathetic sympathetic activation, this is the place that is so unusual for our culture to name. As I travel around the world, more people say to me, the most useful thing that you have said to us as you've talked about alarmed

aloneness, because it's not something that we, we have a real solid name for. I'm the one who has coined this term alarmed aloneness to begin to invite people, to notice that they actually really miss people and that the missing of people which creates a pining response or, or, or a missing response can be quite urgent. And indeed in know, And are talking about the child who is lost many parents have the alarmed aloneness experience of like, where is my little [00:33:00] one? Where have they gone? My body cannot bear that they're missing and there's elements of fear, but there's also, and there might be elements of anger, but there might just be this really pure sense of alarmed aloneness. I remember I felt this, I didn't have the words yet.

[00:33:17] I felt this so strongly when, when my husband got a new job that he left, we had to move three and a half hours away. And I had to move away from my older son who was, you know, already 21 at the time or something. So he was out on his own, but I had to live in a different city from him. And my nervous system was in an uproar and it wasn't fear and it wasn't anger.

[00:33:41] It was the uproar of missing someone who's very, very dear to me. And so as we begin to notice, uh, our own capacity for having both sympathetic activation and a sense of aloneness at the same time, we can start to [00:34:00] put our finger on a long time, emotional experience, maybe a lifetime of a sense that, of alarmed aloneness.

[00:34:09] Something that could have happened started when we were babies, where we were missing, missing the warmth and presence of our mother. Maybe she was traumatized. Maybe she was having to work all the time. Maybe she was distracted by illness. Maybe she was taken by death. Maybe she was taken by addiction or depression, and there's, there can be just an embedded sense in our nervous systems of this alarmed aloneness.

[00:34:36] And why is it important to have names for our emotions? Well, what we've seen from the work of Matthew Lieberman at UCLA, as we've seen that the amygdala actually does not calm until the correct word is brought forward by the insula, to be able to name emotional experience. And, and so it's, it's like it completes the circuit.

[00:34:59] [00:35:00] The body gets to relax when we actually name the emotions that are true for us. And if we never have the word for it, if we never have had the words alarmed aloneness in our experience before then our bodies may be carrying this ancient and important experience that has never been named. So it just kind of stay in that state of, uh, of what we can call anxiety, that begins to calm and settle a bit once we start to have a word for the actual circuit that the experience is happening on.

[00:35:37] **Laura Reagan:** Wow. So, um, I think I'm searching on one level. I understand what you're saying and I'm searching for knowing if I'm understanding it correctly. I think I'm thinking about things like the first thing that came to mind.

[00:35:52] I don't want this to sound like I'm using this word in a, with a negative connotation, but thinking of that [00:36:00] feeling of a sense of desperation.

[00:36:02] **Sarah Peyton:** And abandonment. Yeah.

[00:36:04] **Laura Reagan:** So the way that we can become almost fixated on whether it's, for example, someone who suddenly feels that their partner is cheating on them and they just almost become convinced without any real reason to think it, it's suddenly is true to them and they're determined to find the proof that it really is happening so that because they just know it is like, is that kind of an example? I know it wouldn't be like, just that, but is that kind of an example of what that looks like?

[00:36:38] **Sarah Peyton:** It's very much an example and what's so interesting about that kind of intense jealousy that takes us totally over is that it, it, the research shows that it tends to have different manifestations, depending on our attachment style. So for somebody who's, avoidantly attached, then there will be a lot of sexual jealousy. [00:37:00] So the sexuality circuit is involved as well and rage, because a sense of like that something very dear has been taken from us. And of course there needs to be for, for that particular manifestation of jealousy, we really need access to both, uh, an understanding of how deeply we love and also a little bit of access to the amount of grief that we feel and the loss, which takes us right into the alarmed aloneness.

[00:37:31] And if we're ambivalently attached, we tend to respond to this situation if somebody, if our partner is emotionally connected with somebody else, the same kind of rage and discomfort and jealousy and pain and alarmed aloneness will happen not because of sexual connections, but rather because of emotional connections, which of course can be so enormously [00:38:00] confusing to the people who are experiencing that sense of something very precious being taken from us because no sexual violation has happened, but it's very important to acknowledge that, um, the emotional connections can be experienced as extremely threatening. And of course the intensity of the emotion takes us into disorganization and traumatic attachment. And, and it's so much, uh, our response from our very earliest days.

[00:38:31] And very much connected to the very earliest days experiences of unresolved alarmed aloneness. Absolutely.

[00:38:39] **Laura Reagan:** Wow. So as we come to the close of our time together for now, um, I'm going to take a wild guess, I believe that your new book, and I know that your first book too, but this workbook may help people with working through this, but can you talk about how, [00:39:00] how can people work through this and what's in your book that could help?

[00:39:05] **Sarah Peyton:** Yeah. Well, the very first and most helpful thing may already be happening on our call for people who are listening. They may be starting to think, huh? I wonder what my unconscious contracts are. And, um, and, and I said the other day, people, people wish that unconscious contract work was the, was the absolute end of the process, but it's not the treasure.

[00:39:32] It's the shovel to dig for the treasure. So the workbook provides a very grounded and clear introduction to the shovel of unconscious contract theory so that we get to dig in and we get to begin to find the treasure. And the treasure is actually the freedom that comes both with knowing that we have unconscious contracts and learning [00:40:00] effective ways to release them.

[00:40:02] And we can know the way that I've found most effective is this kind of funny legal language. Like I release you from this contract and I revoke this vow. Seems to be like a way to acknowledge for the body that indeed there was an agreement that was in place. Sometimes people don't like the formality of the language, and then we can experiment with things like Sarah, you don't have to do this anymore.

[00:40:29] And we can see whether that feels like as, as full a release as the re the, the legal ease release, but the workbook takes people through step-by-step connecting to all of different, all of these different circuits that Jaak, Panksepp discovered, and also like taking us into the idea that our nervous system itself can have contracts with us that are connected with Stephen Porges theories of polyvagal and polyvagal healing. [00:41:00]

[00:41:00] And so it's a, it's really a very grounded step-by-step exploration of what could there be, why would it be there? What might be the deep reasons for it and how can we release it? And what blessings do we want to give ourselves instead of these contracts.

[00:41:18] **Laura Reagan:** Well, Sarah, thank you so much for coming here today again, and, and being with me and sharing your beautiful work.

[00:41:27] And I know that your website is a great resource for so many podcasts interviews you've done and audio recordings that you've made and courses and trainings and webinars and all kinds of beautiful goodness. So what, what is that and where, where can people find you online?

[00:41:49] **Sarah Peyton:** You can find me at [www.sarahpeyton.com](http://www.sarahpeyton.com) and that has all the information, it's just a marvelous. My person who put together the website got really [00:42:00] interested in the work and created a kind of an unfolding process of free material and material from the store and how it all fits together and what you might want to explore for different issues. So that's a resource. And then for the free guided meditations for both book one and book two, those are available on the, [yourresonantself.com](http://yourresonantself.com).

[00:42:24] **Laura Reagan:** Okay. [yourresonantself.com](http://yourresonantself.com) I'll put both of those in the show notes. And I, I'm just going to give a little tiny little testimonial about your free guided meditations, that, um, one example of how helpful they are is when I have shared them with so many clients and they, you know, people who really have trouble tapping into any sense of safety through, you know, I mean, other guided meditations and other resources that exist for that purpose.

[00:42:59] [00:43:00] When sharing your guided meditations that people have told me that was the only thing that no part of me said, no, I can't, I can't relax into this. It's I can't feel safe. It's so, I mean, Uh, I mean, I'm so grateful for these resources that you create, and I really want you to know that they are doing so much good for so many people.

[00:43:24] **Sarah Peyton:** Thank you. Very grateful to know.

[00:43:26] **Laura Reagan:** So thank you again for being my guest on Therapy Chat again today.

[00:43:30] **Sarah Peyton:** Thank you for having me.

[00:43:32] **Laura Reagan:** Hey therapists, do you feel stuck working with clients who can't access their emotions or name their inner experience? Do you find it difficult to work with people who are disconnected from their own emotions and they may be disconnected within the therapeutic relationship as well?

[00:43:52] Learn a comprehensive approach to conceptualize your client's concerns. Sensorimotor Psychotherapy uniquely includes the body in therapy as both a source of [00:44:00] information and target for intervention, because words are not enough. We all know that talk therapy is limited. You've heard it discussed on this podcast multiple, multiple, multiple times.

[00:44:11] And if you've been listening to this podcast for a while, you also know that I am a huge fan of Sensorimotor Psychotherapy. I've completed levels one and two. And plan to pursue the certification level, level three. And the reason why I love it so much is because I've experienced shifts within myself through the experiential training process and huge shifts in my work with clients through the training that I've received with Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute, I highly recommend that you check out their website, [sensorimotor.org](http://sensorimotor.org) to learn about their trainings. In fact, they have trainings coming up this summer and to view their webinars, learn more about what Sensorimotor Therapy is it's a beautiful, powerful method that [00:45:00] I can't recommend highly enough so check them out at [sensorimotor.org](http://sensorimotor.org).

[00:45:05] **Announcer:** Thank you for listening to Therapy Chat with your host, Laura Reagan LCSW-C. For more information, please visit [therapychatpodcast.com](http://therapychatpodcast.com).