

Therapy Chat Episode 279



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[00:00:00] **Laura Reagan:** Therapy Chat Podcast, episode 279.

[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.

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[00:01:12] Hi, welcome back to Therapy Chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan, and today I'm very excited to be speaking with someone who you've heard on the podcast before as part of a trio of guests, last year. My guest today, actually it was not last year. It was in 2019. But my guest today is Lisa Marchiano. Lisa is an LCSW, and Jungian analyst the author of the new book *Motherhood: Facing and Finding Yourself* which title just totally intrigues me from the start. But Lisa, thank you so much for being my guest on Therapy Chat today.

[00:01:50] **Lisa Marchiano:** Thank you, Laura. It's so great to be back.

[00:01:52] **Laura Reagan:** Yes. And you are one of the hosts of This Jungian Life podcast and Deb and Joseph [00:02:00] your two co-hosts were, were with us back in 2019, and that was a fascinating conversation. But today I'm really excited to talk about this new book that you have.

[00:02:11] And before we even really get into the book, can you just start off by telling our audience a little more about who you are and what you do.

[00:02:20] **Lisa Marchiano:** Sure. Well, as you mentioned, I'm a therapist and a Jungian analyst and I live in practice just outside of Philadelphia. And, uh, we've had the podcast now since 2018 and this is my first book.

[00:02:35] So it's about motherhood and I am also a mother and the book kind of grew up alongside my kids. So it's getting launched into the world around the same time that they're getting launched,

[00:02:46] Ah that's beautiful.

[00:02:47] **Laura Reagan:** And I am really intrigued with your book. Um, you know, I know I, I already pre-ordered my copy and just the title got me thinking: facing and [00:03:00] finding yourself. So can you tell us what's this book it's about motherhood, but what's it really about?

[00:03:08] **Lisa Marchiano:** Right. Well, I definitely wanted to not write a book about how to parent or how to be a mother. I wanted to explore the psychological experience of being a mother. And this came upon me when my kids were very little, because it struck me that it was, you know, like parenting is so hard, it's really, really difficult, and you can't really easily get away from it.

[00:03:33] There's the kind of always-ness nervous factor on that, especially when kids are little, but it really just immerses you in this kind of crucible in which your own issues come up all the time. You get to really see your own, get a really clear view of a lot of your own faults. You just meet aspects of yourself that maybe you've been able to ignore before, and that can be painful and difficult, [00:04:00] but it can also provide a real opportunity for psychological growth.

[00:04:04] So that's what I wanted to focus on in this book.

[00:04:07] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah I can really relate to that, that statement you made about how challenging motherhood is and parenting. And I know when I was, when I first became a parent, you know, and our kids are kind of similar ages. My youngest is 22 and my oldest is 24. So a little older than yours, but.

[00:04:28] The, the shifts that happen just from that process, um, pregnancy, but then after my first child was born, I just remember some things where I had thoughts that I had never had before. I can remember specifically one thing was that one of my sibling's children, I had a good relationship with and this child was then a toddler.

[00:04:50] And as you know, my young self before becoming a parent myself, you know, when the child would throw a tantrum, I would be like [00:05:00] thinking what a brat, you know, really need to get that kid under control. And, um, which I'm laughing because I never think things like that now because it's like, I have a different perspective having been a parent, but I remember I was laying in the, in my bed and my baby was resting next to me

sleeping. And I literally envisioned, I visualized that the nephew that I'm thinking of and, you know, just saw his little face and it was literally like it, I was like imagining a halo over his head. I'm like, oh, this sweet little angel, how could I ever thought he was anything but perfect. And I was like, what? Like, these are not the kinds of thoughts that I used to have. And, you know, I know hormones played some role there, but it, you know, just the, it was such a stark contrast from literally thinking one way about something and then having a completely different perspectives.

[00:05:54] **Lisa Marchiano:** So, so in the moment, you experienced the divine, [00:06:00] in your nephew.

[00:06:01] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. That feels true.

[00:06:03] **Lisa Marchiano:** Yeah. And i, I think there is a way that motherhood can open us up to that. You know, there's, um, there are all these beautiful, very, very old stories about the child Krishna. And I tell one of them in the book, but I think I'll, I think I mentioned another one now there's this story.

[00:06:20] I hope I get it right. Where, he just, he's a toddler and his mother leaves him, alone for a minute. I think he's, I think she's been churning butter and he gets, he opens up the butter turn and just starts eating the butter and it makes a big mess and everything, and she she's so angry at him, but then she sees him.

[00:06:40] And she can't be angry at him, you know, he's, he's the Lord Krishna. Um, and she, she has that moment, like you had with your nephew where she just sees his divinity and all she can do is just scoop him up and just love him.

[00:06:53] **Laura Reagan:** Hm. You know what I'll tell you. I'll add a little piece to it that, you know, I didn't say because it's a [00:07:00] little more personal, but yeah.

[00:07:02] I had this thought of, like, I had a thought about motherhood too. It was like, how could anyone ever not love someone like that? And it was, it was really thinking about a feeling of my end within myself, uh, feeling unloved in some moments. And, you know, it was like, I was seeing the divine in my nephew and myself as a baby, like all in that moment.

[00:07:24] And it was so real. And I remember that I could still vividly picture that, but. You know, not what you think of when you think of becoming a parent and all the sleepless nights, which were certainly part of it. Maybe I was hallucinating that.

[00:07:40] **Lisa Marchiano:** You know, I mean, sleep deprivation is a tool that some cultures use to induce kind of ecstatic states, so perhaps there's something to that, but I do want to say, you know, what you're describing is kind of, um, it's a little bit of a, I want to say like a transcendent experience. And I think that that's [00:08:00] exactly the kind of thing that I'm interested in exploring in the book is the way that the experience of being a mother can help us touch hype and breadth and depth and not all of it's beautiful. Right? This is sort of a

beautiful story that we're talking about. Some of it's really, really ugly, but, um, but both are there and, and this is exactly what I mean about getting to know yourself in a new way.

[00:08:26] It's like, you didn't know you were capable of that. You hadn't seen the world that way. You hadn't seen yourself that way before, but now you've seen yourself that way. And there's, there's a way you don't forget that.

[00:08:37] **Laura Reagan:** Right. Cause we're literally talking about something that happened like 24 years ago and it's as clear as day.

[00:08:43] Yeah. Hmm. I love, I love the way you use stories, even in just what we've spoken about so far. It's, it's so beautiful and evocative of another part of, you know, what's inside.
[00:09:00]

[00:09:00] **Lisa Marchiano:** Well, I mean, fairytales are, uh, uh, really, uh, loved by Jungians obviously, because they're seen as our psychic bones that elucidate these basic fundamental patterns, these universal patterns of feelings and thoughts and psychic experiences, um, and you know, what else? They're just so beautiful. And our, our psyche really responds to narrative and to story. So some of the books that I really enjoyed when I was getting introduced to Jungian ideas were written by Jungian analysts and they used fairytales and it's it's a wonderful, I love books like that. I love reading books like that because they invite you into this beautiful, strange, mysterious, uh, interior place. And I think I was inspired by books by people like Linda Leonard and [00:10:00] Clarissa Pinkola Estes, and that's sort of what I was going for with this book.

[00:10:05] **Laura Reagan:** Um, yeah, another book that's sitting on my bookshelf right now that I haven't read. In addition to the one I was telling you before, um, before we started recording is *Women Who Run With The Wolves* by Clarissa Pinkola Estes. And I want to read that.

[00:10:19] **Lisa Marchiano:** Yeah, it's a great, it's a great book. You know, it's still to this day, sometimes I get phone calls from people who say, well, you know, I want to come in and I want to see a Jungian analyst.

[00:10:29] And, you know, as part of my little phone intake consultation, we'll say, well, you know what what's got you interested in working with a Jungian and, and it all happened. You know, usually it's a woman, she'll say, well, I read this book, you know, *Women Who Run With The Wolves* and it really, really moved me. So that book's now.

[00:10:48] What, like 30 years old or something still really, really speaks to people. And it was very influential for me as well. And in fact, one of my catch lines for the book was this focus [00:11:00] for women who used to run with the wolves and now chase after toddlers.

[00:11:05] **Laura Reagan:** I love it. Oh, my gosh. That's so good. Yeah. So what is, what is some of the process of transformation that can happen as women become mothers?

[00:11:19] **Lisa Marchiano:** Well, I, uh, first of all, I want to say that I see the transformation process as not something that happens in a sort of staged process necessarily where you go through this, when your kid's in infant and this, when your kid's a toddler, I use the metaphor of descent and return throughout the book, because this is a motif that occurs in a lot of fairytales about the feminine or

[00:11:44] myths about the feminine. It's a very basic, fundamental archetypal pattern. And my thesis is that we will, this will happen to us again and again and again in different ways as we mother. So [00:12:00] we might go through one version of this when our kids are toddlers and another version when they're teenagers and another version when they're young adults and throughout the book, I speak about all these different ages and experiences.

[00:12:14] You know, one of the, kind of neat things about this book, because as I mentioned it, I started thinking about it when my kids were really newborns. My daughter was a toddler, my son wasn't even born and it's, you know, and I just finished it recently. So it, it's informed by the full scope of active mothering.

[00:12:35] You know, I've worked with plenty of moms who are adults and negotiating relationships with adult children, and those stories made it into the book as well. So it really kind of covers the whole span of motherhood. But in terms of what you were asking, kind of what is the process so this idea about descent, you know, which is again, a common theme, particularly in myths and fairytales having to do with the feminine.

[00:12:59] And it's this [00:13:00] idea that we have to lose something that there's some kind of a submission that happens to some force that's greater than us. Um, I'm thinking kind of the spiritual sense, the story that I use in the book to create a kind of narrative arc is the skin Navy and fairytale called The Two Caskets where the heroine falls down the well.

[00:13:24] And so the first part of the book is what happens is what happens as we're falling down the well where there's, there can be a sense of losing control. There can be a sense of losing ourselves. Um, and, uh, I used different stories to talk about that, you know, we can feel like we've lost ourselves when we have a new baby, we can feel like we're losing control when our kid becomes a teenager or we can feel like we're losing ourselves at different times if we face depression along the way. And then there's what happens when we're at the bottom of the well, and in this story, the girl in the story has to [00:14:00] serve this strange old woman and do all kinds of tasks and pay attention to these very strange things and make sure she makes the right decision. So being at the bottom of the, well I equate with facing our shadow.

[00:14:14] So shadow is this Jungian term that means any parts of our personality, we'd really rather not know about. And, uh, this for me is a big part of motherhood because we tend to project our shadow on our children. So in other words, there might be things we really don't like about ourselves that we, we, we would sort of disown and say, well, that's really not me. That's my kid. You know? Um, plus we're likely to see ourselves at our very worst. I mean, we'll, we'll probably see ourselves at our very best as we mother but I don't, I

don't know if it's just me, but I don't think so. I, I, you know, I think, I think the worst I've probably ever behaved in my adult life was toward my own [00:15:00] kids.

[00:15:00] Um, you know, motherhood is enraging, you know, and, uh, I, I think a lot of moms, again, a lot of moms don't really talk about it very openly, but I wanted to try to talk about it really openly motherhood and rage, kind of, kind of like, I think I call it seeing, you know, seeing your own shadow, basically, you know, there's a, there's a quote I use in the book, about the novelist Faye Welden, She said the nicest, the best thing about not having children is that you can go on believing that you're a good person.

[00:15:29] **Laura Reagan:** Ah, wow.

[00:15:31] **Lisa Marchiano:** Yeah. So it's like, yep, absolutely. So that it's a chance to meet these parts of ourselves and, and that can be very humbling, but it also gives us breadth and depth and gravitas, to know our own shadow is a very important thing. And it prepares us in a significant way for the third part of the book, which is what happens when we come back. In the fairytale, the girl comes back with a casket that's filled with [00:16:00] gold and other treasures.

[00:16:01] So what are the treasures that we get if we do this psychological work while we're mothering? Well, one of the things is a mature sense of spirituality. Another thing would be renewed relationship with our creativity. And the third thing is, um, a sense of connection with our own inner authority. And so, you know, th this is roughly the process that I lay out in the book and, you know, this is very much related to Jung's idea of Individuation.

[00:16:29] **Laura Reagan:** Um, okay. So I just wanna, I wanna stay with those three big themes. I definitely want you to explain to us about individuation as Jung. Oops. Jung my mind says Jung but I know it's supposed to be Jung. As Jung describes individuation. I definitely want to talk about that, but you said making sense of, then I wrote spirituality.

[00:16:54] I don't think that's right. I think, or I'm sorry. Mature sense of spirituality.

[00:16:59] **Lisa Marchiano:** That that would be one [00:17:00] of the things that we gain as a result of this. And, and you want me to expand on that a little bit?

[00:17:05] **Laura Reagan:** I would love that.

[00:17:06] **Lisa Marchiano:** Well, I think it's really related to the story that you told me. I mean, you had a moment of transcendence there.

[00:17:14] You had contact with your own inner divine, as you were able to experience through the divinity of your child and, and your nephew. And, um, there is a way that, you know, I'm, I'm not talking obviously about, uh, kind of, um, uh, organized religion per se, unless that's how this speaks to you, but the sense of spiritual sense, you know, and again,

you know, you're trying to define these terms, but I think it has to do with a feeling of connection with something larger than self. You know, Jung said the telling question of a man's life is, is he related to something infinite or not?

[00:17:55] And listen, becoming a parent is not the only way to [00:18:00] feel connected to something infinite, but that is certainly something that can happen when, when we're parents. I think it happens for many people when their parents.

[00:18:10] So, and what comes with that also is a shift in values, usually. I mean, usually the things that matter to you before you have kids are very different than the things that matter to, you know, once you have a kid or 10 years after you've had, you know, your kids are 10 years old or 20 years old, like your values change.

[00:18:29] And one of the ways your values change, as you may feel very differently about how you spend your time. You may notice how time moves differently. I mean, for me my experience of time really differently once I had kids. I mean, I think I still do in some sense that you just, in a way, it really connects you with your mortality because you almost feel yourself aging more quickly.

[00:18:52] I think, as you see your kids grow up so quickly, whereas, you know, if you're sort of single and childless, I mean, I don't know, maybe I'm maybe I'm wrong about [00:19:00] this, but you know, you can go whole decades and not much changes. Hm. You know, I mean, I had this moment the other day, which, you know, I mean, it's, it's not that profound, but it hit me really hard.

[00:19:11] I mean, my son just got his driver's license and we, we drove to the Whole Foods that's, you know, a little bit further away one day and he drove, and parked the car and we got out and I was like, I was just really, really struck because that was the Whole Foods that I used to go to and he was like a toddler and we would get, I would park in that same place and then I'd get him out of the car and my heart would be in my throat, like trying to get him into the store without us getting hit by a car. And he's like running all around the parking lot. I'm trying to keep up with him and, you know, and then it was, and then here he is driving me to the store. You know, it's just like, in some ways, such an ordinary moment, but it's like what's that, you know, I don't know, 13 years, 13, 14, 12 years, something like that. And, and like, that's, that's not that [00:20:00] long, but look at the look at the vast difference. And so you, you, do you have a different relationship with time, which I think again, sort of shifts your relationship with how you understand mortality with how you understand this relationship with the infinite.

[00:20:14] So I think all of these things can invite us into a deeper relationship with spirituality.

[00:20:20] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. I mean, I know for myself with, I didn't necessarily connect to a sense of spirituality in the early time of being a mother, but even though, you know, I had that experience, I didn't look at it that way at the time, but I noticed for myself, and part of it may have to do with my age when I became parent, I was in my mid twenties.

[00:20:43] There was a clear shift from not a thought, but just a sense of not only being invincible, but like not even thinking about mortality, just it wasn't on my radar at all. To suddenly a feeling of like I have to [00:21:00] live because these little babies literally depend on me for life.

[00:21:05] And, but not, it wasn't really a thought it was like a purpose.

[00:21:09] **Lisa Marchiano:** Yeah. I, so I so hear that and no one told me that that would happen, but it was, you know, like, like my, my relationship with thoughts about my own death, you know, which is where it's like, oh, well, you know, if I died, I died or whatever, you know, but when, when my kids were little, it was like, you know, I get in the car to go somewhere and I'd be like, I can't die.

[00:21:32] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. If this plane those down, my children are going to be motherless.

[00:21:38] **Lisa Marchiano:** Yes. Yes.

[00:21:39] **Laura Reagan:** Whereas before it was just like, I hope my planes on time, you know, I don't, I hope I don't have to sit, you know, too squeezed in like,

[00:21:49] **Lisa Marchiano:** Yeah. Yeah, definitely. It, it, yeah, it really it's shifts things around.

[00:21:55] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. And I know know too that for some people that, that shift can feel [00:22:00] overwhelming to like, you know, oh my gosh, so much responsibility they're depending on me,

[00:22:06] **Lisa Marchiano:** which can make you feel trapped and, you know, That's something I spend some time on in the book as well.

[00:22:13] **Laura Reagan:** Good. Cause yeah. That's, I mean, certainly it's not all, like you said, it's not all sunshine and rainbows.

[00:22:20] **Lisa Marchiano:** No, no, no. There's the way that it can really make you feel trapped. Um, and that can be, you know, an opportunity for growth and you know, sometimes that's not what happens and we just feel trapped.

[00:22:34] But I think what I tried to spell out in the book is that theres an opportunity there for that to be a growth experience.

[00:22:42] Yeah. So the first thing you said was the mature sense of spirituality. And then what did you say after that? Because I started to write them down and then I just was like lost in listening.

[00:22:53] Okay. Right. And so the other two were, uh, an authentic connection with our inner authority. [00:23:00] And then the third one was a renewed sense of creativity, which I think is a really kind of love that chapter in a way, because. I mean, first of all, it's really hard to do anything creative when you have small kids.

[00:23:13] And I spend some time talking about that, but there can be a way that having kids sort of sharpens your intentionality around your creativity. And, uh, I talked to the fairytale I used for that portion of the book is Rumpelstiltskin, which is just, I love that fairytale. It's just so deep and so beautiful.

[00:23:37] It's so fun. But then it's just, so it just has all of these different, great layers to it. Um, but if you remember the story, the Miller has this beautiful, but lazy daughter and he, um, shows off to the king, the Kings running through town, and the king says, the Miller says, Hey king, my daughter can spin straw into gold.

[00:23:58] And the King's like really break her down the [00:24:00] palace. So he does. And he says, he puts her in a room, filled with straw and he says, you know, spin this for me into gold by morning, or, um, you know, you'll be put to death. So she doesn't know what to do. And she starts to cry. She's all alone. She starts to cry and this little funny man comes up and he asks her why she's crying.

[00:24:23] And she explains it. He said, well, you know, if you give me that ring, I'll do it for you. You know, part of the irony is which is, which I think is part of the depth of the fairytale is if he can spend straw into gold, what does he want with her ring? You know, anyway, he does. And then as you may remember, she has to spend more than the next night and she gives away her necklace.

[00:24:42] And then the third night, there's an even larger room of straw and she's beside herself. She has nothing left to give. So he says, well give me your first born child. So she says deal. Because she thinks, you know, who knows, maybe I won't even have kids. So, you know the [00:25:00] room full of straws fun. And she winds up marrying the king and, you know, she gets first to a beautiful baby boy.

[00:25:05] And a year later Rumpelstiltskin shows up and he says, you've got to give me what I asked for. And you know, she's a loving mother. She doesn't want to give her son away. So she begs him please. And he says, well, if you, if you can guess my name, I'll let you out of it. So, you know, and of course there's this whole thing, but then her servant is wandering in the forest and overhears him singing a little ditty in which he mentioned his name. And so she guesses his name and in some versions of the story he tears himself in two and is never seen it again. And, and for me, this story, well, one of the ways to understand it is that the Miller's daughter has this exceptionally creative gift.

[00:25:47] She can spin straw into gold. She doesn't, she doesn't have a conscious relationship with that creativity because she, in, in my, in my understanding of the fairy tale, she has a father wound. I mean, what is [00:26:00] the Miller doing? But using her as a narcissistic extension. And if we have a creative gift as a child and our parents always like,

Hey, You know, the, the, you know, our dinner guests are here, come play the piano for them.

[00:26:13] And you, you, you know, children can feel like their own connection with their creative ability has kind of been co-opted by the narcissistic parent, which I, I suspect is what's happened to our Miller's daughter so that she doesn't have a, any kind of, um, positive relationship with her creativity it more functions in a sort of demonic way or demonic way, if you will.

[00:26:38] And you know, what is Rumpelstiltskin, but a kind of little demon. And, but it's when her, so she, you know, and we all know creative people who are sort of possessed by their creativity and they're often made miserable by it and it can be very destructive in their life actually. And it often isn't a source [00:27:00] of pleasure, even if they're very, very good at it, but it doesn't, you know, she doesn't sort of figure it out until her child is at stake.

[00:27:08] And then she's like, I gotta figure this out. I can't keep on letting this ruin my life or come let it take my kid away from me. So she, she figures out his name and in, in my estimation, that's the moment at which she reclaims her, her connection with her own creative capacity and the story that I use actually to amplify this is this is the story of JK Rowling. I mean, there, there's not a ton of biographical information about JK Rowling out there, but. There's this interview she did um, I believe it was in the New Yorker. And, um, she talks about, she had a very difficult relationship with her dad and I believe she hasn't been in touch with him per years.

[00:27:52] And, um, in fact, there's, uh, one of her, one of the books, you know, one of the Harry Potter books she had, um, [00:28:00] drawn a picture in the front and, you know, said to dad from your first born or something and given it to him, giving it to him for father's day or something like that. And he auctioned it off. Can you imagine?

[00:28:14] Yeah, so you know, so, okay. So maybe we've got the Miller's daughter with her incredible gift for spinning lovely golden stories out of, you know, nothing but her imagination and this wounding father, who's willing to kind of trade on his daughter's gifts. And, you know, I think the story about JK Rowling is really well known that she, um, got married in Portugal when she was young and, uh, gave birth to her daughter there.

[00:28:43] And her first husband was physically abusive. And there was a lot of Rouse and she kind of obsconded relatively quickly from Portugal with, you know, after a bad fight with her daughter and something like the first [00:29:00] three chapters of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's stone. And, um, then she spent a couple of years in, um, Edinburgh, um, kind of penny-less and, but, but through that time, she, you know, she said she knew she had to finish that book.

[00:29:17] Not because she thought it was going to save her, but because she thought if I, you know, if I don't do it now, I'll never do it. And I've, and I've got to do it. So something about having her daughter and I have a great quote by her to this effect really kind of sharpened her focus for writing and the rest is such lovely history.

[00:29:36] So, um, so yeah, that's, that's, that's kind of part of how I'm using the tails in the book.

[00:29:42] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. So delightful to, to bring these fairytales into it and how, you know, it's just so interesting in so many ways. Like how we, I don't know, maybe, I don't know if everyone does this, but I think culturally everyone shares stories, [00:30:00] whether it's like oral, you know, oral history type stories or things that help like, it's almost like the way that we teach children about life from such an early age. You know, there's always these like themes and more, you know, moral messages and things like that.

[00:30:17] **Lisa Marchiano:** And then there, they're not just moral messages. They are descriptions of fundamental patterns of psychological life. And it, you know, yes they're wonderful for children, but they also, you know, I think the language of the unconscious is image and narrative image and story. And of course, dreams are a combination of images and stories. And so stories really are just kind of the natural way we think almost that's, that's just a kind of natural mode of thought, is to think in narrative. And it certainly comes easily to me, but I think it comes easily to most people. And that's why it's easier to listen to, [00:31:00] for example, if you're going to listen to a lecturer, if the lecture peppers his lecture with story, you find yourself paying attention better and understanding it better and integrating it better.

[00:31:11] And if you're reading uh, a non-fiction book and it has stories in it. You can usually digest the material better because story is just the natural way that we think.

[00:31:24] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. But there's, you know, and then the, with the fairytales, there's this magical aspect that I guess that brings in the, you know, the creativity really, uh, to the story.

[00:31:34] **Lisa Marchiano:** Yeah they're beautiful.

[00:31:36] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. All right. So we talked about the, the mature sense of spirituality and the renewed sense of our own creativity. But what about the authentic connection with our inner authority? How does that come in, come into play in your book?

[00:31:51] **Lisa Marchiano:** Well, I mean, I think there's lots of opportunities for us to connect with our authority with when we're a parent, that that [00:32:00] affords us lots of opportunities. You know, first of all, some women make it come to adulthood with a very good sense of grounding in their own authority. And maybe that's more and more true, um, in subsequent generations, but certainly, you know, I didn't, and yeah, I've had a lot of women in my practice who are struggling with that even later in life.

[00:32:23] That sense of kind of knowing what, you know, letting yourself know it and then being able to really claim it. Boy, that is that's a lot of work. One of the stories, well, I'll say, let me say a couple of things about motherhood. So first of all, in this very basic way, when you've got a kid, you've got to learn how to hold authority.

[00:32:42] And for some, you know, I mean, for me that was like, oh, I get it. I'm the mom. And I get to say like, no, you can't watch TV right now. Like it was like, okay. But then I think in other ways too I mean, sometimes we have to stand up for our kid when, you know, something's gone off the rails at school or, you [00:33:00] know, with another kid and we need to speak to the parents.

[00:33:02] So we maybe have to kind of find our mama bear stance there, but, but just in general, we, we have to connect with our instincts and not be talked out of our, our fears, our intuitions, and really be able to kind of advocate for our child. And one of the stories I tell in this chapter is, is a story of what it's like when you don't, when you're not able to do that.

[00:33:28] There's, uh, there's this, um, fairy tale called the Hobbyist and just really quickly, um, There's a little man, a little, a woman, and a child living in this house with this little dog Turbie and every night the Hottie ass come and they say, hobbyists, hobbyists, hobbyists, tear down the headstocks eat the old man and woman carry off the little girl.

[00:33:52] And this is a refrain throughout the story, but the dog barks and warns them that the hobbyist are coming and it scares them off. [00:34:00] But the old man is annoyed that the dog is waking him up. So the first night, the old man cuts off the dog's tail. Then he cuts off one of the dog's legs and so on. And so on until finally the last night he cuts off the dogs head, the dog never ceases to bark until he cuts off his head.

[00:34:17] So it's this real image of how we name our own instincts. And many of us have been taught to do that. We've been taught not to listen to ourselves. And I think this fairytale is such a gruesome and poignant image of that. So of course, once the dog is dead, what do the hobbyists do? They come down, they come, they tear down the hemp stocks.

[00:34:35] They eat the old men and woman and they carry off a little girl. Now it winds up having a happy ending, but it feels a little bit like the happy ending gets tacked on. And I relate the fairytale to something that, you know, really tragically happened to me, which was, um, when my son was very very little. He was about six months old when we moved.

[00:34:56] And, you know, um, I just had a feeling about this new [00:35:00] house that we were living in. It was completely irrational that it was poisoned. And I was really worried in particular about lead. I just had this fear about led, I mean, You know, I live in Philadelphia, the housing stock is really old. All the houses have lead paint in them.

[00:35:15] I talked to everyone. They're like, yeah, just, you know, make sure that you don't, you don't just do renovations or, you know, don't, don't sand, you know, there are things you can do just mop the floor or whatever, but, but you know, not, not that it was uh, a dire emergency, right? Yes. There's lead in your house for sure, but it's manageable, but I couldn't get it out of my head.

[00:35:36] It would, it just haunted me all the time and I worried about it and I, I tried to bring it up, you know, and say, listen, can we, can we get our house tested for lead? And, but you know, my husband was really worried about money. I mean, we, you know, we were a young, young family and we just moved and there just wasn't a lot of money.

[00:35:57] And he said, you know, let's wait. And I, I listened, you know, I [00:36:00] let myself be talked out of what I knew. Laura, no talked out of it. So in Philadelphia, they test the pediatrician's test for lead at nine months. And my son had like a normal reading, which was, which was like a relief. But at the same time, I was like, I almost wish that were a little elevated.

[00:36:19] Cause then I could have been like, okay, now we have to do something. But three months later when we went back for his annual and I was like, can I get another lead test? And they were like, okay, it was 34.

[00:36:31] **Laura Reagan:** Tell us what the normal range is.

[00:36:33] **Lisa Marchiano:** So like there's no amount of lead blood level that's good. 10 is considered the threshold of concern.

[00:36:40] But, um, but like any, any amount is not good. And at like, I think at like 95, I might have this wrong. I think at 45, they hospitalized you at night, you know, it's just like 90, you can die. It was really, really elevated and that's a really, really [00:37:00] high level. So I was devastated of course now, what was the cause?

[00:37:06] The prior owner had been a stained glass hobbyist, and she had, which I had known and even asked the pediatrician about that. The pediatrician was like, well, as long as his blood level is fine, but there were actually little pellets of led between the floorboards in one of the rooms in the house, which I found later.

[00:37:28] So now I think, you know, he probably like put one of those in his mouth. He probably actually ate a pellet, but, but I knew like some part of me knew and, and yet I didn't, you know, it was like, I was like, I was like the man cutting off Turbie's head, you know, it's like, well, I'm not going to listen to this. So now, I mean, the good news is that my son is absolutely fabulous and he's brilliant and wonderful and all that.

[00:37:52] And I, you know, I don't have any reason to believe that anything that there was any negative effect to me and we addressed it early, but that, [00:38:00] that was a big catalyst for me. I think being interested in this topic is what, what did I have an opportunity to come in contact with there in terms of my own inner knowing?

[00:38:12] I didn't let myself know what I knew and I didn't, I didn't stand up for myself. And I will say, you know, I've learned my lesson because I've never done that again. But that was a real lesson. And I have got to find my own authority.

[00:38:26] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. You know, the, the shadow stuff there. It's like, what is it that makes one of us, someone submit given to what someone else is saying instead of standing up for what we know.

[00:38:40] **Lisa Marchiano:** Well, I think part of it is you think, but do I really know? And I think that's why I conceptualize this as being about authority, because I think at the time I was like, well, I don't have any evidence. It's just this big feeling that I have, you know, maybe, maybe, maybe I, maybe I'm being ridiculous. And you know, I will say that, [00:39:00] you know, since then, you know, sometimes now I get a big feeling about something, and I'm like, uh, is this one of those feelings? And I'm like yeah it's one of those feelings, and then I will go all the way to the mat. Cause I'm not doing that again. Especially when something, you know, when, when one of my kids is, you know, when it's something where, you know, that puts my kids in potential harms way.

[00:39:20] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. I mean, so many points like that as a parent, too, you know, when your child is bullied at school and you either, you know, help them with it, advocate for them, talk to the other parent, talk to the school, whatever, or you dismiss the concern. You don't talk about it. You know, you tell the child just to ignore it.

[00:39:40] Like it's not that, you know, someone is bad if they do that if they just tell the child to ignore it and move on. But these moments where if we're truly responding from our most authentic self, it would be like, that's not okay. I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna let that happen to my child.

[00:39:59] **Lisa Marchiano:** And you don't [00:40:00] worry so much about if you know, someone's going to get their feathers ruffled, or you're going to look bad or, you know, you're just like, I I'm going to do what I need to do.

[00:40:10] And that translates over, or it has for me and to other areas of my life. I mean, now I, this was a big piece of psychological work for me, but I feel like I'm really significantly on the other side of that now. And I don't, I feel pretty comfortable holding authority in all kinds of areas now, which is a really wonderful thing to be able to say, because that was not true for me for a long time.

[00:40:32] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. So as we're coming to the end of our time, I was wondering if you could share what we were talking before and you brought up this topic of individuation. If you have time, can we talk about how that is discussed in the book?

[00:40:49] **Lisa Marchiano:** Sure. So individuation of course, there's the sense that many of us are used to, especially for therapists kind of Margaret Mahler talks about the infant development and [00:41:00] the child developing sense of being an individual, but Jung also used that term and he meant it in a somewhat different way.

[00:41:07] He was really talking about this lifelong process of psychological maturation. My conceptualization about the book was that motherhood is an opportunity for individuation,

for continued growth and development. You know, I, I try really hard in the book not to use a lot of Jungian jargon. So I limited myself to basically three terms and this was one of them.

[00:41:31] And then I wanted to find a really clear relatable way to explain it because you know, Jung taught, you know, if you've ever read Jung he's, he defines individuation and I don't know, maybe six different ways throughout the collected works and they're all a slightly different. And so I was trying to think, well, what am I really saying here?

[00:41:51] So here's, here's how I talk about it in the book. I say one of Jung's most important ideas is that we continue to grow and develop throughout the course of our lives.

[00:42:00] According to Jung, we never stopped growing and changing. In fact, as we age, we have more opportunity to become ourselves, to tend to the unfolding of our unique blueprints to grow into the Oak trees we came into the world with the potential to be.

[00:42:16] Jung called this lifelong maturation, individuation. Individuation is the slow process of tuning into your authentic self. It takes a lifetime. It requires you to stay open to life so that with each blow or disappointment or mistake, you befriend some new part of yourself that had been unknown or despised by you before.

[00:42:37] If you go through life tending to your authentic voice and making it your job to learn and accept as much about yourself as you can, you generally wind up being one of those older people who are happy and wise rather than an older person who is bitter and small minded.

[00:42:54] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. I think that that's, you know, that's our life's journey, right? That's the [00:43:00] hope is to grow and,

[00:43:02] **Lisa Marchiano:** and learn as much about ourselves as possible.

[00:43:06] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. I think your book sounds beautiful. I cannot wait to read it when my copy comes and I think it's going to be a rich resource for so many people. I'm sure many who are listening are like, oh yeah.

[00:43:21] **Lisa Marchiano:** I hope so.

[00:43:22] **Laura Reagan:** So Lisa, where can people find all the good stuff you are doing? Your book, your podcast.

[00:43:29] **Lisa Marchiano:** My author website is lisamarchiano.com and there are links to pre-order the book there now, and they'll be links to buy the book when it's out. You can sign up for my free email three week email course there, which is a little bit different than the material in the book, but there's some overlap.

[00:43:48] Um, you can, uh, sign up for my mailing list. You can download an excerpt of the book and, um, the podcast is thisjungianlife.com. And you can go there [00:44:00] to find

out more about the podcast. You can submit a dream for possible interpretation on the podcast. Uh, you can learn about dream school, which is our online, uh, 12 month online program that teaches people how to work with their dreams.

[00:44:17] So yeah, lisamarchiano.com and thisjungianlife.com.

[00:44:21] Thank you.

[00:44:21] **Laura Reagan:** I'll put links to those in the show notes, and I'll be sure to also include, uh, our, our previous, um, interview where it was you, Devin, Joseph, so that, you know, people who want to understand more about your podcast can find that there too. People who listened to this podcast who are interested in hearing about that conversation.

[00:44:40] But also, I know people are gonna wanna check out your podcast too. So all the links will be there. Lisa, thank you so much for coming on to Therapy Chat today. I'm really excited for you about your new book and, um, I'm grateful that you took the time to share about it here.

[00:44:54] **Lisa Marchiano:** Well Laura I always just love talking to you. And so this was great.

[00:44:58] **Laura Reagan:** Hey [00:45:00] 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? Learn a comprehensive approach to conceptualize your client's concerns.

[00:45:21] Sensorimotor Psychotherapy uniquely includes the body in therapy as both a source of 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. And if you've been listening to this podcast for a while, you also know that I am a huge fan of Sensorimotor Psychotherapy.

[00:45:45] 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 [00:46:00] process and huge shifts in my work with clients, through the training that I've received with Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute.

[00:46:06] I highly recommend that you check out their website, sensorimotor.org to learn about their training. In fact, they have trainings coming up this summer. To view their webinars, learn more about what Sensorimotor Psychotherapy is. It's a beautiful, powerful method that I can't recommend highly enough. So check them out at sensorimotor.org.

[00:46:31] **Announcer:** Thank you for listening to Therapy Chat with your host, Laura Reagan LCSW-C. For more information, please visit therapychatpodcast.com