

Therapy Chat Episode 309



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[00:00:00] **Laura Reagan:** Therapy chat podcast, episode three oh nine. This is the therapy chat podcast with Laura Reagan LCSW-C. The

[00:00:11] **Laura Reagan:** information shared in this podcast is not a substitute for seeking help from a licensed mental health professional. And now here's your host,

[00:00:20] **Laura Reagan:** Laura Reagan

[00:00:22] **Laura Reagan:** LCSW.

[00:00:34] **Laura Reagan:** thank you to sunset lake CBD for sponsoring this week's ep. Use promo code chat for 20% off your entire order@sunsetlakecbd.com. Sunset lake CBD is a farmer owned, small business that shifts crafts CBD products directly from their farm outside of Burlington, Vermont to your door. Sunset lake CBD has something for everyone.

[00:00:54] **Laura Reagan:** They offer tinctures edibles solves and coffee designed to help with sleep stress and Salma. Sunset lake CBD, customer support, regenerative agriculture that preserves the health of the land and creates meaningful employment in the community. Farm workers are paid a living wage and employees own the majority of the company.

[00:01:13] **Laura Reagan:** Remember use promo code chat to get 20% off your entire order@sunsetlakecbd.com.

[00:01:23] **Laura Reagan:** Hey everyone. It's me. Laura Reagan just wanted to make sure that you know about what I've got going on this summer. I don't think I've really talked about it much here, which is silly, but in case you didn't hear, I did start a second podcast called trauma chat, which is really for anyone who wants to understand what trauma is and how it shows up in our.

[00:01:49] **Laura Reagan:** As you've heard me say, if you've listened to this show, I've mentioned a million times that people tend to think that trauma is something that happens to someone else, something horrific and unthinkable unspeakable. And that is true trauma is that, but it's also experiences that are very commonly shared among many - most of us on trauma chat. I break down what trauma is in hopefully understandable language. That's not stigmatizing. I know I couldn't have possibly captured every thought. There is about trauma and every aspect of trauma and how it shows up, but I hope that trauma chat will be helpful to people who really don't understand what trauma is and may be wondering, do I have trauma, you know, or wanting to better understand what someone they care about is going through. And most importantly, how to get help if you have experienced trauma, what to look for, how to describe your experiences or how. Find the words that, that name, what you've been through so that you can then connect with whatever type of resource support, whether it's therapy or a podcast that you'd like to listen to, to learn more about it, or an article or another website.

[00:03:10] **Laura Reagan:** This is my hope in creating trauma chat. And the second part of that is the new trauma therapists network community that I'm

creating. It's. Unbelievable to say this because I've been laboring behind the scenes to bring this to you for a long time. Starting in around 2018 is when I first had the idea.

[00:03:32] **Laura Reagan:** And then the process of getting from there to here has been slow and with many twists and turns, but I'm creating a community for. People who have experienced trauma to find help for trauma therapists, to find other trauma therapists to network with and refer to, and gather and collaborate and share ideas and hopefully come together in person in, in gatherings that I don't know if there'll be able to happen in 2021, but maybe by 2022, we can have in-person gathering.

[00:04:08] **Laura Reagan:** Of trauma therapists to provide support to one another and combat the isolation of trauma work. Even if you work in a large agency or group practice, trauma work is so isolating. It's just part of the nature of it and connecting with other people who. It's so valuable. The participants in my trauma therapists, consult groups share how useful they find them to be because we're in our offices doing our work, and then we go home and it can be really hard to receive the same kind of support that you give to your clients.

[00:04:43] **Laura Reagan:** So I hope that trauma therapists network will be a useful resource for you, whether you are. Trying to find more information about trauma, or if you are a trauma therapist, yourself to learn more, please go to trauma therapist, network.com. The website is not live yet as of June 28th when I'm recording this, but it will be live by August 1st, if all goes well.

[00:05:09] **Laura Reagan:** And hopefully there may be even a soft launch before. A beta version. So please go to trauma therapists, network.com, where you can find a free download and sign up to be notified. As soon as it officially goes live, whether you are a therapist or just someone who wants to learn more about trauma, there's a download there for you, different ones for each group.

[00:05:33] **Laura Reagan:** And I hope that this resource that I've really created from the heart will bring healing to more people. I really. People who have experienced trauma to be able to find the right kind of support. And that's why I created the trauma therapists network. I hope you will join me there. Like I said, you can get more information by going to www dot trauma therapist, network.com, where you can sign up to be notified.

[00:06:02] **Laura Reagan:** As soon as the official website goes live. Which will be in August of 2021. If you're hearing this after August, 2021, go there and hopefully you will find the site and you'll see everything that it has to offer. I

cannot wait. This is such a labor of love, something that I've really poured my heart into.

[00:06:21] **Laura Reagan:** And I'm just so excited for you to see it. Thank you so much for your support.

[00:06:30] **Laura Reagan:** Hi, welcome back to therapy chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. And as I mentioned last time, because we are in the winter holidays. The holidays are on everybody's minds and it's a stressful and busy time we can put. Pressure on ourselves to think that things need to be a certain way. They need to look a certain way.

[00:06:50] **Laura Reagan:** We need to look a certain way. We need to create a certain experience and expectations can really get out of control. So this week I'm bringing back an interview with Sharon Martin, where she talks about perfectionism and how it really, we don't usually notice or think of ourselves as being perfect, but that dynamic of demanding the best of ourselves and everyone around us can really ramp up during the holidays.

[00:07:21] **Laura Reagan:** So in this episode, Sharon talks about perfectionism. And you can think about that in terms of your life in general, but hopefully it'll come in handy when you're dealing with the holiday. Just want to make a quick mention that trauma therapists network is going to be making an announcement. While I, as the founder of trauma therapists at work, we'll be making an announcement about the new offerings that are going to be added in to the value that.

[00:07:51] **Laura Reagan:** Therapists who subscribed to the directory listing will receive for their monthly membership fee. So right now, all of the founding members of trauma therapists network are paying \$33 a month for a directory listing. And we have a quarterly community call, but starting I'll be announcing. The changes soon, but the price will be going up for membership beginning February 1st, 2021, and starting in March, 2021, the value for what you're paying will increase dramatically.

[00:08:28] **Laura Reagan:** So anybody who wants to get in as a founding member before that price increase, which happens on February. This is your chance. Certainly many people are out there searching for trauma therapy right now, and they need to know what you offer that makes you stand out. When you list in a directory, that's just general clients who are looking for special.

[00:08:53] **Laura Reagan:** The services like trauma informed care, specific to childhood abuse, loss of a parent during childhood combat all of the different ways that people can experience trauma. When they look on those general directories, people get overwhelmed. I even get overwhelmed when I try to find trauma therapist on one of those directories.

[00:09:14] **Laura Reagan:** Which is why I knew that we needed trauma therapists network to have a directory where people can search specifically for a trauma therapist and also get information about trauma identified. Do I even have trauma? So here's your chance to get in on the founding member pricing, which will be locked in when the price is increased, starting in February, 2021.

[00:09:38] **Laura Reagan:** All of the founding members will be locked in forever at their original price. So go to a trauma therapist, network.com to sign up and hope to see you there.

[00:09:51] **Laura Reagan:** Hi, welcome back to therapy chat today. I'm really happy to be speaking again with one of my favorite people. My guest today is Sharon Martin LCSW. Sharon. Thanks for coming back to therapy chat today.

[00:10:04] **Sharon Martin:** Oh, it's my pleasure. Oh, love being on the show.

[00:10:07] **Laura Reagan:** thanks. I love having you too. And I always hear so much positive feedback about the previous episodes that you've been on. So I'm really grateful. Today we have a new topic to talk about, which is a book that you put out little over a year ago, which is called the CBT workbook for perfectionism. But before we even dive into talking about. Can you just start off by telling our audience in case any of them.

[00:10:35] **Laura Reagan:** Haven't heard you on therapy chat before a little bit about who you are and what you do.

[00:10:41] **Sharon Martin:** Well, I am a psychotherapist, a licensed clinical social worker, and I am in San Jose, California. And so for the last number of years, I've been in private practice. So I see clients in my office and then I also do a fair amount of writing.

[00:10:55] **Sharon Martin:** I, I write a blog for psych central.com called happily imperfect. And most recently I ever in the CBT workbook for perfectionism and happy to get into talking to you about that and sort of how that came about. And, you know, the blog, I guess really was sort of the

beginning stages of it because I do write a lot about perfectionism and self acceptance on my blog as well.

[00:11:18] **Sharon Martin:** Um, and so there's, there's new content there every week as well. So, yeah, that's kind of it in a nutshell

[00:11:26] **Laura Reagan:** before we really talk more specifically about perfectionism, who do you work with in your practice? What kind of client population do you focus on? If any?

[00:11:37] **Sharon Martin:** Um, so I work with adults only at this point in the past, I've done a fair amount of work with teenagers, um, as well, but just.

[00:11:45] **Sharon Martin:** Quite honestly, as my kids have become teenagers, I've decided to professionally take a break from seeing teenagers at work. Uh, yes, it's just a little bit too much of it. Um, so I absolutely love working with, um, men and women around issues of perfectionism and codependency. Self-accepting. The anxiety, those are kind of the big issues and they all tend to interweave with each other.

[00:12:12] **Sharon Martin:** So I tend to see clients who have struggled with probably a fair amount of childhood trauma, which they, you know, may or may not have recognized as such that has, has led to a number of, um, what I would say are coping strategies that are no longer working so well for them. So, you know, things like perfectionism and people pleasing, caring a lot about what other people think of them wanting to do a really good job with things needing to feel like they're in control of things.

[00:12:45] **Sharon Martin:** Sometimes it's procrastination or just feeling a feeling that they're being held back from doing things that they wish they could do or want to do, but feel afraid to do so. That's who I see generally. And like I said, you know, it, it tends to be folks who are struggling with, with some combination of those things and they don't necessarily always see how they all connect together.

[00:13:11] **Sharon Martin:** But, you know, over the years of doing my clinical work, I've definitely found that there's a, there's a lot of people who struggle with. Same set of, of issues. Um, and the perfectionism sort of just being one piece of it. Yeah,

[00:13:26] **Laura Reagan:** yeah. So much. I mean, I, one of the reasons that I became interested in your work is because we do work with similar populations

and we have, I know in my practice, I have a lot of people who are very high, achieving, intelligent, and educated people, and they have outward success.

[00:13:46] **Laura Reagan:** Anyone can see, you know, they have. Strong long-term relationships. And they have steady jobs where they've achieved a lot of success and moved up in the ranks. And, you know, they have, they seem to have, you know, large groups of friends and a lot of material success, but internally they get stuck with certain things in.

[00:14:08] **Laura Reagan:** I don't know how to change those things. And, you know, the, the examples that you just gave really capture what my clients struggle with so much and also, uh, me and a lot of other therapists I know, deal with those kinds of issues as well. We don't always think of it as perfectionism. Yeah.

[00:14:30] **Sharon Martin:** That's what I find too is it's almost as if there's sort of two groups of people, those who know they're a perfectionist and they readily identify with that label and others who are kind of surprised that they actually have a lot of perfectionist traits.

[00:14:50] **Sharon Martin:** It's almost as if the word perfection is a turnoff, like they can't see themselves as a perfectionist because they feel so imperfect that there they're not necessarily consciously aware that what they're striving for is perfection. And so if we were to describe it, as you have set impossibly high standards for yourself, there are so high that there's no reasonable way that you could actually achieve this.

[00:15:17] **Sharon Martin:** And as a result, you were very self-critical, you know, so a lot of people would identify with that definition of perfectionism because we've sort of taken the word perfection out of it actually, but that's essentially what it is. I don't, I don't necessarily even think for myself that a lot of the times I'm consciously thinking, oh, I'm trying to be perfect.

[00:15:39] **Sharon Martin:** Absolutely not. It's just, I feel like it's never enough, whatever I've gotten done, it's not good enough. It could have been better. And then I feel crappy because I haven't met that expectations or I feel like it's not just my own self judgment. It's also the fear of other people's judgment. And I know for myself that I have always been a person who has been extremely sensitive to criticism.

[00:16:06] **Sharon Martin:** And again, I think that's often the case with perfectionist is because we're sensitive to it. It feels super painful. So, of course

we want to avoid it by trying to meet everybody's expectations and please them, and, you know, do the right thing if you will, so that people won't be upset with us or they won't criticize us or even worse, they won't reject us or leave us.

[00:16:29] **Laura Reagan:** You're naming it right there.

[00:16:31] **Laura Reagan:** I mean, That I don't think most people would hear what you just said and think that's perfectionism, you know, and, and it is. And so, gosh, it's so relatable what you were saying. Cause I've, for me, it's I don't tell myself to do things perfectly and no way do I. It has to be perfect. It's more like I give myself way more to do than I can do.

[00:16:56] **Laura Reagan:** And then I beat myself up for not getting it all done and don't give myself any credit for what I did get done. And then God forbid if I made a mistake in any of it too, I mean, I've gotten a lot better, but. Still, you know, and I find that it's something that kind of ebbs and flows. Like the more stressed I am or the more something's going on in my personal life, that's really troubling.

[00:17:21] **Laura Reagan:** You know, I'll get back to that kind of overworking and over setting, unrealistic expectations for myself, with how much I can get done and just can't seem to figure out how to change it.

[00:17:34] **Sharon Martin:** Absolutely. I think, I think that speaks to a lot of people as well. I think there's. Sort of think of it like being on that hamster wheel.

[00:17:41] **Sharon Martin:** Like you can't get off because once you've decided that your self worth is based on both what you can achieve and what other people think of what you've achieved or done is that we just have to keep going. Right. It's very hard to let yourself relax. Take a break, be able to say to yourself, well that.

[00:18:05] **Sharon Martin:** Good enough. That's enough. You know, you can just leave it like that. We're always chasing something to make us feel, not even good necessarily, but I think just adequate, like I'm measuring up to some bare minimum standard bright,

[00:18:23] **Laura Reagan:** so it's like not, not feel good, but feel less bad.

[00:18:27] **Sharon Martin:** Yes, exactly. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:18:30] **Sharon Martin:** When you said that, I mean, it makes me think of an addict, you know, it's, after a while, you know, it's not about getting high, it's just about feeling less bad,

[00:18:44] **Laura Reagan:** like shaking my head at myself, but you know, the good thing is that, first of all, even though I may not sound like it, I know how to help people with perfectionism, even though I don't always know how to help myself. Your work book. I think it's beautiful how it helps the reader really examine these patterns, habits and change them because the change can seem so impossible, you know, especially when you're just really in it.

[00:19:13] **Laura Reagan:** And you can't see your way out at

[00:19:16] **Laura Reagan:** all.

[00:19:17] **Sharon Martin:** Well, and I agree with you. I hope I sound like I know something about helping people with perfect.

[00:19:25] **Laura Reagan:** I had to say that because I was doubting myself,

[00:19:29] **Sharon Martin:** but I think it's just that we're thinking the same thing, which is, you know, we can see where we still struggle with it ourselves.

[00:19:37] **Sharon Martin:** And again, this is. Part of the problem with the perfectionism is it becomes its own barrier to the solution to it, which is we want to do it perfectly. We want to be a hundred percent sort of recovered from it and no longer have to struggle with it or deal with it at all. But the truth is for both of us, I think we've gotten a lot better with our perfectionism and our self-criticism and being able to accept ourselves.

[00:20:03] **Sharon Martin:** But there's always a little, you know, a little more space there. There's always new things that. Uh, you know, that remind us that, oh yeah, that's still lingers a little bit. Um, I got to, you know, continue to pay attention to that. Um, so that I don't fall back into some of those old behaviors or old ways of thinking about myself.

[00:20:23] **Sharon Martin:** And, and so it's something that we need to just. Being mindful of, I think as we, as we go through life, but, but going back to the workbook, um, one of the things about a workbook that I really like is that it's very tangible for people. You know, I, I think I'm a very practical person and you know, if I'm going to try to solve a problem, it's like, I want to know, well, how do I do it?

[00:20:47] **Sharon Martin:** Like tell me specifically what the steps are so that I can do them. And when you have a workbook, well, if that's what you, what you get, you get specific exercises and questions for you to think about and write down your answers and practice and try it. So I really liked that aspect of it so that you can actually see particular things that you can do.

[00:21:08] **Sharon Martin:** Um, one of the things. I think we want to keep in mind. I think really when we're trying to change anything about ourselves, any kind of self-improvement is that we don't need to do all of it perfectly. This is not, you know, as I was saying, I think sort of getting over perfectionism really isn't this all or nothing like.

[00:21:28] **Sharon Martin:** We have to completely change all of this about ourselves and no longer care at all about what other people think or no longer be concerned at all about details or organization or hard work or quality work. Because sometimes that becomes the barrier. Like I said, that. There are, there are some aspects of perfectionism that in moderation can be really helpful and help us do a good job with, with work and other tasks in life.

[00:21:59] **Sharon Martin:** But it's almost as if like we've over done it. And if we can just dial it back to a reasonable amount, sometimes. That's where we, you know, where we want to end up with it. It's not like we just have to throw away everything about ourselves or about our perfectionism, because that can be a hard thing for people to accept.

[00:22:22] **Sharon Martin:** Like, you don't want me to, you know, work hard at all or you don't want me to achieve or, um, you know,

[00:22:30] **Laura Reagan:** well, I achieved all this success. If I don't keep striving, uh, lose it.

[00:22:35] **Sharon Martin:** Yeah, or again, the, well, what are people gonna think if I were w I don't do that anymore, but sometimes, like I said, it's really more of a question of, can I just do a little bit less of something and what could I do in place of that that would be more fulfilling or healthier.

[00:22:52] **Sharon Martin:** Add to my enjoyment of the quality of my life in a different way. Instead of just, you know, the hamster wheel, the hustle I need to do more part of what we're talking about is the slowing down is the, what are you missing out on? Because you're doing so much of the other stuff. And sometimes the stuff that we're spending a lot of time on turns out to not be that important, whether it's your actual job sometimes.

[00:23:20] **Sharon Martin:** In the grand scheme of things. It's, it's not that important to me. Or sometimes we end up just filling a lot of time on tasks, like cleaning or rewriting our emails so that there's no mistakes in, um, which I think we can all agree when we step back and say, none of that's really that important. And there's probably, you know, more fulfilling things that we could be spending our time on.

[00:23:43] **Sharon Martin:** Yeah. So, so I think part of it. It's kind of that slowing down and asking yourself some of those questions. Why does this matter so much? Why am I spending so much time and energy on this? What would happen if I did a little bit less of it?

[00:23:58] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. And when you were, when you were listing the, um, Feelings and behaviors that people, people you work with tend to have, and things that I think are addressed in your book.

[00:24:10] **Laura Reagan:** There was something I noticed about it. And you, you alluded to this when you were talking about the all or nothing thinking, but you know, there's a lot of that kind of black and white aspect to that type of. Those thoughts, like, well, you know, if I don't do everything, someone will be mad at me. You know, it's like, or there's a thousand other possibilities of what could happen as well.

[00:24:32] **Sharon Martin:** Yeah. And, and probably a lot of you who are listening are familiar with. Some of those cognitive distortions, which is a term that we often use in cognitive behavioral therapy, CBT, but just for a ways that our thinking gets off track, right. We've kind of distorted things in our, in our head. And then those thoughts impacts the way that we feel and the way that we act and the all or nothing thinking is a really common one that we all fall into.

[00:25:04] **Sharon Martin:** But it's, it's, it's definitely a core issue. Prefer for perfectionist is that we tend to see things in black and white. It's like, it's good or it's bad. I'm successful or I'm a failure. You like me, or you hate me. I'm a good mother. I'm a terrible mother. There's very, you know, it's very hard to see the middle ground because in that middle ground, there's the ambiguity.

[00:25:28] **Sharon Martin:** There's the uncertainty. There's the worry. And the anxiety. There's the fear of not being good enough. And we're always trying to get to this extreme place because that feels like it's sure it feels like, oh, that'll, you know, that'll be successful and acceptable. And I'll finally, you know, sort of be recognized and, and get the positive feedback.

[00:25:54] **Sharon Martin:** And I think the love and the acceptance, and, you know, some of those things that we really are craving again, maybe not consciously. Um, but we're, you know, we're looking for. Thing or some one to give us that validation.

[00:26:12] **Laura Reagan:** Hey everybody. I wanted to take a quick minute to tell you about my experience with sunset lake CBD. I first tried CBD when my integrative doctor recommended it for chronic neck pain intention. That tends to wake me up at night. I really liked sunset lake CBDs product. The full spectrum, CBD tincture is mild tasting compared to others.

[00:26:31] **Laura Reagan:** I've tried and I find it works quickly. It doesn't feel sedating, but it does have a pleasant calming effect. And I also like the CBD gummies, they taste good and they work well. So if you're looking for a craft CBD product that comes directly from a farm outside of Burlington, Vermont, that's a producer for Ben and Jerry's ice cream.

[00:26:49] **Laura Reagan:** You're going to win, check out sunset lake CBD and remember. Therapy chat listeners get 20% off using the promo code chat. So go to sunset lake cbd.com and use the promo code chat.

[00:27:05] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. So interesting as you're talking about that, because, you know, it's so clear how it's related to trauma and attachment that, you know, whenever there's like a really black and white way of thinking that comes up from. Realized that is a, that's a clue that this is like a younger part that thinks this or feels this, you know?

[00:27:29] **Laura Reagan:** So it's kinda like, you know, when you think back to childhood, if you had to do him, you felt responsible to do things in your family. Children. Normally shouldn't have to worry about because they're busy playing or going to school or whatever you, you know, these ideas of like, if I don't do it all, everything will fall apart.

[00:27:50] **Laura Reagan:** That's not rap reality, but that's a child's perspective on, you know, being overwhelmed with the responsibilities that they either have taken on or that the parents have put on them because of whatever's going on in the family environment.

[00:28:04] **Sharon Martin:** And I think you can easily see. That's the fear that's underneath that, that everything's going to fall apart.

[00:28:12] **Sharon Martin:** That's the fear it's, you know, this terrible thing is going to happen, which like you said is probably not true, but because bad things have happened in the past, it feels true. And it feels like if I could just do certain things and do them perfectly, maybe I could avoid this catastrophe from happening.

[00:28:32] **Sharon Martin:** Which again, of course is not true because we don't, none of us really have that much power to control other people and circumstances, and, you know, especially as children, but even as adults, there's a lot that's out of our control. But again, that perfectionism is very much trying to feel in control because then I feel safe.

[00:28:52] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. That's it, there's so much of that. And I think when people, I have noticed that it, that feeling of. Needing to control your environment because you feel so internally out of control is something that seems really difficult for people or feels very difficult to take on changing that. Have you found that?

[00:29:15] **Sharon Martin:** Say a little bit more about it.

[00:29:16] **Sharon Martin:** Yeah, I want to hear a little more.

[00:29:18] **Laura Reagan:** Well, I just kinda think that when, when someone is kind of behaving in a controlling manner and it's causing problems in their relationships or their kids, you know, their kids are feeling really anxious because the parent is controlling and the parents being controlling.

[00:29:34] **Laura Reagan:** Thinking that if they don't keep everything under control all the time, something terrible is going to happen. And when, when someone recognizes that type of behavior, I often I've often seen that people seem kind of overwhelmed with that. It would be too difficult to change that. I guess it's just the fear that if they try to change that they won't be able to, which is.

[00:29:58] **Sharon Martin:** I think, like so many things, though, when, when we're asked to change something, then we have to, we have to be able to tolerate the discomfort of, of the not doing the controlling behavior. Right? Like I tend to think of controlling behavior as a way of sort of quieting anxiety. Right. That, that fear. Right. So I can temporarily feel less anxious by.

[00:30:24] **Sharon Martin:** It's something controlling telling people what to do or something like that. And then if I'm going to say, okay, well, I really should

stop telling my husband what to do because it's causing problems between the two of us. That means when I stopped telling him what to do, I'm going to feel anxious. And that's very difficult right now.

[00:30:44] **Sharon Martin:** I'm sort of stuck with these uncomfortable feelings. I'm worried about what's going to happen. I'm thinking he's going to screw it up and do it wrong. And again, sort of catastrophizing in the all or nothing. Thinking go crazy here. And it's so much easier to just tell them what to do. Cause then I'll immediately feel better.

[00:31:05] **Sharon Martin:** So we, we need to have something else to do. Like you might think about like, well, what could I replace this controlling behavior with like, maybe I need to do some self soothing or something to reduce some of my anxiety. So I find it's helpful. Like once we sort of noticed the DATs, the purpose that the controlling behavior is serving, because now I can look for the solution to the real problem, which is I feel anxious and out of control and scared about what's going to happen.

[00:31:36] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Well, I, I love, I think that, um, although I think the title of your book is wonderful. I think that it, people would be surprised to realize how much the self-soothing type of exercises and activities are in this book. Things that can help you with that, you know? And self-compassion

[00:31:58] **Sharon Martin:** Yeah. This is what I have said all along is that the title is a little bit of a misnomer, I would say, because while there is a fair amount of CBT in here where we really do look at the perfectionist thought patterns, And how those get in our way.

[00:32:14] **Sharon Martin:** There's also a lot of self compassion and a lot of mindfulness in this book, which this is the approach that I use with my clients. So I guess I shouldn't be surprised that that's, you know, working through in the book that I wrote, because these are the same types of exercises and the kinds of approaches that I use with my clients.

[00:32:30] **Sharon Martin:** And I use with myself, you know, so for me it feels really like a good combination of different strategies that, you know, we need different things at different times and for, you know, sort of different pieces of the perfectionism, because we certainly do need to change some of our thoughts, but we absolutely, again, anytime we're trying to make a change, I think we need a lot of self-compassion because it's ripe for the self criticism and

the judgment and feeling like we're doing it wrong or that we're not doing enough.

[00:33:03] **Sharon Martin:** And that's exactly when we need to stop and say, you know what? The self-criticism is not helpful. It is not moving me in the direction that I want. What will actually help me get there is if I could be kind to myself, if I could be understanding, if I could see. That I am making an effort, even if I don't necessarily see all of their results behaviorally, sometimes that comes later.

[00:33:29] **Sharon Martin:** But again, if you can slow down and really look for some of the, the little changes and sometimes those are just, you know, in our thinking little shifts in, you know, uh, beliefs that we have about ourselves or. Some of those things left unsaid instead of, um, being set out loud to other people. It's not always easy to spot those things.

[00:33:50] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. I can, we can get sort of lost in seeking out the big, complete transformation versus the, you know, the smaller changes that really the more incremental progress.

[00:34:04] **Sharon Martin:** I mean, that's how I really, I see people change incrementally. Sometimes people have a big sort of an epiphany and a big shift all at once. But even that is almost always because there were little things moving them in that direction and it just all came together at some point, but it's completely understandable that when somebody is ready to make a change, when they have realized that something is causing a big problem for them and they.

[00:34:34] **Sharon Martin:** You know, want to move past it and find the solutions that they want to do it quick and they want to do it fully and we just want to be done with it. Right. And sort of like what I was saying earlier is I think even, even with this, we need to have those realistic expectations. It is a process of changing ourselves.

[00:34:55] **Laura Reagan:** I love that passionate perspective. Really. It's kind of soothing, just even hearing you talking about it.

[00:35:01] **Laura Reagan:** Well, what

[00:35:02] **Sharon Martin:** I find is that often you don't need to change something completely or get over, or even heal something 100%. I mean, I'm,

sometimes I'm not even sure what that means, but you know, if my, instead of having a goal.

[00:35:18] **Sharon Martin:** Never having a perfectionist thought or never doing particular perfectionist behaviors. My quality of life quite honestly can get a lot better. It may be even if I just made a 50% improvement, which often feels a lot more doable, the people and that's motivating.

[00:35:35] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. If you actually think. Well, can I, can I make this small change?

[00:35:40] **Laura Reagan:** And then you can feel the satisfaction I'm achieving that.

[00:35:43] **Sharon Martin:** Yeah, it's very, it's very similar to what we often hear when we want to make changes to our physical health, like our diet or exercises. You know, if you can't, you know, get to the gym and do hour long workout every day, that doesn't mean we shouldn't do anything.

[00:36:01] **Sharon Martin:** It doesn't mean the extra flight of stairs and the parking farther away, you know, from the stores doesn't add up and have any benefits. I actually have an example, pretty similar to this in the book where I talk about, you know, this basic idea that it's, you know, partly, we just want to say, well, if I can't do it perfectly, if I can't do the whole workout, just forget it.

[00:36:25] **Sharon Martin:** What's the point, which really doesn't make any sense.

[00:36:31] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. You know what I've had that thought so much and it's like, oh, well, I won't be able to get to the gym this week just cause I don't go one. Yeah, right, right.

[00:36:40] **Sharon Martin:** But I could, you know, maybe I don't have time to go to the gym today. But maybe I have time for 15 minutes walk around the block and that does have benefit.

[00:36:50] **Sharon Martin:** Right. There's, you know, there is a benefit in doing some of something or doing something in perfectly,

[00:36:58] **Laura Reagan:** you know, it's so clear when you say it like that, but it's those thoughts are like, You don't even notice how it doesn't make sense when you

[00:37:06] **Sharon Martin:** Well right. And that's exactly why we as mental health professionals talking about them as distorted thoughts is because they aren't realistic.

[00:37:14] **Sharon Martin:** Right. They don't make sense. Really. They're not based on facts anymore. You know, this is ourselves that have twisted up our thinking into, you know, there's only one right way of doing it and why bother doing? And if I can't do it, this particular one.

[00:37:30] **Laura Reagan:** Well, I think, you know, it's really refreshing to talk about this, honestly.

[00:37:34] **Laura Reagan:** And I'm wondering if you would be willing to tell us a little bit about what made you decide to write this?

[00:37:42] **Sharon Martin:** Well, I think it's probably obvious

[00:37:47] **Sharon Martin:** Laura, and I know this is not true just for me, is that, you know, Oftentimes therapists and authors, you know, the things that we won't want to work on or work with or things that are deeply personal for us. Um, so absolutely this is, you know, Ben my own process of. Self-acceptance and trying to be less self-critical and I'm more compassionate with myself and letting go of some of these kinds of perfectionist thoughts.

[00:38:19] **Sharon Martin:** And so, I mean, initially it was, I think. You know, my own process of sort of, you know, getting to a pretty good place with it. Like I said, probably not a hundred percent and that's fine. And, and then being interested in helping other people do the same thing. And really, like I was saying earlier, seeing the connection between these various pieces of perfectionism and other, other issues.

[00:38:45] **Sharon Martin:** And seeing how that all worked together and, and, you know, being able to help other people with it, you know, after doing it for quite a number of years, you know, I realized I have, it's not just that I had a lot of information in my head, but there were a lot of strategies that I would use over and over again with people.

[00:39:02] **Sharon Martin:** And so one of the, one of the really great things about writing a book. Is that it allows you to share whatever that information is that you have gathered over the years with so many more people. I mean, I can obviously only see a pretty small number of people in my therapy practice, but it's super rewarding to be able to share the information in a book form, both

with other therapists who then can share it with their clients or just with other people who are struggling with these same issues.

[00:39:34] **Sharon Martin:** So yeah, it really was. You know, kind of this natural outpouring, I would say of really just feeling like, okay, I figured out, you know, a pretty good amount of this, you know, there are some things here that could be useful to other people and they're not, you know, they're not, they're only so helpful if I leave them in my head.

[00:39:55] **Sharon Martin:** Right. Which I think is the same, you know, for you, it's the podcast, right? I mean, you can get it out there. And so many more people can, can learn from what you've learned over the years.

[00:40:05] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. That's well, I mean, you I've said this before and I will say it again. You have an amazing gift of being able to distill what you know, and understand into digestible ways of reading and learning about it on your blogs, your, your social media posts. I mean, I find them thought provoking, even when you're talking about a topic that I've read 50 things that you've written about it, you know, it always, it isn't, it isn't like canned like recycled. It's you, you have a way of, you know, putting it into different words and making me think, and it's so thought provoking and I was really, really impressed and really admire the work that you've been doing.

[00:40:56] **Laura Reagan:** But this workbook, I mean, it's a really great,

[00:41:00] **Sharon Martin:** Well, thank you. You know, of course that's, that's the hope and the intention when you set out to create. Thing is that it will be meaningful for people. And I, you know, I've definitely gotten a lot of positive feedback and I think it's definitely a really helpful place for many people to begin.

[00:41:19] **Sharon Martin:** And I say it in the book as well, that, you know, for some people they can pick up the book and work through it on their own. And you know, I, there are so many people who may want to work through, along with their therapist. You know, and bring it in and, you know, review some of the exercises and talk more in depth about some of the topics.

[00:41:39] **Sharon Martin:** So, you know, if you're already in therapy that, you know, can be helpful, or if you're not, I mean, you may find that, you know, the book brings up some things. In unexpected ways that would be helpful to go deeper with, because I think, you know, while it's, it's very strategy oriented,

um, we do, we do touch upon, you know, where does this perfectionism come from?

[00:42:02] **Sharon Martin:** And, you know, as we were. You know, briefly sort of touching upon earlier for a lot of people, it comes out of some form of trauma. Essentially. I think for most people is a way of trying to cope with things that have been really difficult in our lives.

[00:42:19] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. I think that it's, it's a wonderful resource too, because if someone starts working through and, and then they gain an awareness about how they may be impacted by say their family of origin, Then they, you know, even if they've done the workbook alone, it's an opportunity to get yourself into therapy and, and start doing some more work on healing.

[00:42:43] **Laura Reagan:** The ways that, you know, that pain has, has led to coping strategies, that really just don't work for you anymore.

[00:42:50] **Sharon Martin:** Yeah, absolutely.

[00:42:53] **Laura Reagan:** Well, Sharon, it's been so wonderful talking with you today. Where can people find what everything you're doing and in your book? Sure.

[00:43:02] **Sharon Martin:** My website is live well with Sharon martin.com.

[00:43:06] **Sharon Martin:** It's a little bit of a mouthful, but from there you can find everything that that I've got going on. And then my blog on psych central is@blogsdotpsychcentral.com. Slash imperfect again, it's a bit of a mouthful,

[00:43:22] **Sharon Martin:** um, can also happily imperfect.

[00:43:26] **Sharon Martin:** That is probably a good thing to do. And the book is available at most major book retailers, so on Amazon and often at Barnes and noble bookstores or, um, small booksellers, but you can find it at the big places.

[00:43:45] **Laura Reagan:** Okay. And so that's the CBT Workbook for perfectionism and Sharon, thank you again for being my guest on therapy chat today.

[00:43:53] **Sharon Martin:** Thanks for having me, Laura.

[00:43:58] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you to sunset lake CBD for sponsoring this week's episode, use promo code chat for 20% off your entire order@sunsetlakecbd.com. Sunset lake CBD is a farmer owned, small business that shifts crops CBD products directly from their farm outside of Burlington, Vermont to your door. Sunset lake CBD has something for everyone.

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[00:44:48] **Laura Reagan:** And for more information and resources on trauma and healing from trauma, go to [www dot trauma therapists, network.com](http://www.traumatherapistsnetwork.com). Trauma therapists network is a community for therapists and a place for anyone to go to learn more about trauma and find resources and connect. [Www dot trauma therapist, network.com](http://www.traumatherapistnetwork.com).

[00:45:11] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you for listening to therapy. Chat with your host, Laura Reagan LCSW-C. For more information, please visit

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