

## Therapy Chat Episode 312



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[00:00:00] **Laura Reagan:** Therapy chat podcast, episode 312.

[00:00:04] **Announcer:** This is the therapy chat podcast with Laura Reagan LCSW-C .

[00:00:09] **Announcer:** The information shared in this podcast is not a substitute for seeking help from a licensed mental health professional.

[00:00:16] **Announcer:** And now here's your host, Laura Reagan LCSW-C.

[00:00:32] **Laura Reagan:** therapists interested in making it easier for your clients to use their out of network benefits for therapy? Visit the [super bill.com](https://thesuperbill.com) to learn more about superbill, a service that can help your clients get reimbursed without having to jump through hoops, getting started is simple clients, go to [thesuperbill.com](https://thesuperbill.com) to complete a quick HIPAA compliance signup process, and you send their super bills directly to us.

[00:00:53] **Laura Reagan:** So we can file claims with their insurance companies. No more spending hours on the phone, wrangling with insurance companies for reimbursement, super bill eliminates that hassle. And clients paid only a low monthly fee for the service. Stay tuned for details on superbills therapist, referral program, and a special discount for your clients to get a free month of service@thesuperbill.com.

[00:01:17] **Laura Reagan:** Today's episode is sponsored by [traumatherapistnetwork.com](https://traumatherapistnetwork.com). Trauma is real. Healing is possible. Help is available. Find information, resources, and locate a therapist in your area at [traumatherapistnetwork.com](https://traumatherapistnetwork.com).

[00:01:34] **Laura Reagan:** Hi, welcome back to therapy chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. And in this first episode of 2022, I want to start off by saying Happy New Year! I'm welcoming a guest who has never been on therapy chat before, but she is someone who's very well known. Dr. Lindsay Gibson. Lindsey C Gibson Psy D holds both a master's and doctoral degree in clinical psychology.

[00:01:56] **Laura Reagan:** She's been a psychotherapist for over 30 years, working in diverse settings, such as the juvenile court system, community mental health, psychiatric hospitals, group practice, and solo practice during her career in psychological testing doing literally thousands of evaluations of children and adults, Dr.. Gibson was uniquely in demand for her ability to understand people from a developmental perspective. And that's what you're going to hear a lot about in our conversation today. Dr. Gibson is also a gifted teacher and public speaker and has offered training on multiple topics to other mental health professionals throughout her career.

[00:02:30] **Laura Reagan:** She has served as an adjunct assistant professor for the Virginia consortium program for clinical psychology, leading doctoral student workshops and independent study classes. Dr. Gibson is the author of 4 books: *Who You Were Meant To Be*; *Adult Children Of Emotionally Immature Parents*; *Recovering From Emotionally Immature Parents*; and *Self Care For Adult Children Of Emotionally Immature Parents*. Since its publication in 2015,

her second book has been a repeated Amazon number one bestseller in several categories and has been translated into 17 languages. She also writes a monthly column on wellbeing for Tidewater family magazine, Dr. Gibson lives and works in Virginia Beach. My home town actually I'm from Norfolk, but they're right next to each other.

[00:03:13] **Laura Reagan:** So in today's conversation, we had a fascinating conversation. This was sparked by Alison Deneen, who writes notes from your therapist. When we were talking a few months ago, she encouraged me to reach out and try to get Dr. Lindsay Gibson as a guest. And I'm very happy that Lindsay said yes. So you're going to hear us talking about how emotionally immature parents, those whose emotional attachment needs weren't met by their own parents and they don't have self-awareness about it can affect their children's development.

[00:03:45] **Laura Reagan:** Lindsey explains identity formation and fascinating detail, which is where that developmental perspective really comes into play. So we had a compassionate and eye opening conversation about the pain of growing up with emotionally immature parents. How having emotionally immature parents can interfere with connecting to your authentic self and how to move forward if this is your story.

[00:04:05] **Laura Reagan:** So I know a lot of us can probably relate to this and I thought this was a really powerful conversation. I hope you will enjoy it. Let's dive right in.

[00:04:14] **Laura Reagan:** Hi, welcome back to therapy chat. I'm your host, Laura Reagan. And today I'm so excited to be talking with Dr. Lindsay Gibson, who is the author of several books, including her newest book, Self care for adult children of emotionally immature parents. And I am so excited to dive into this. Lindsay, thank you for being my guests on therapy chat today.

[00:04:40] **Lindsay Gibson:** Oh, it's my pleasure. It's an honor to be here.

[00:04:42] **Laura Reagan:** Thank you. I'll tell our audience that Alison Deneen who was on, uh, a few weeks or couple months back now, by the time this airs was begging me to have you as my guest. So I'm so excited that it worked out. So I really want to get into this fascinating topic, but before we start, will you just tell our audience a little bit about who you are and what you do?

[00:05:05] **Lindsay Gibson:** Sure.

[00:05:06] **Lindsay Gibson:** I'm a clinical psychologist. I've been in practice for over 35 years now. And I started out as a psychological tester. Um, I did a lot of psychological evaluations and when I was in that capacity, I did a lot of looking at what developmental level people were showing in their psychological evaluation, because.

[00:05:30] **Lindsay Gibson:** Usually when therapists are referring someone for testing, they're doing it because they, they want to understand what they're dealing with in therapy. And so I, you know, might address symptoms. I might address diagnosis, but what was really useful to them was to say, you know, intellectually, this person is functioning above average, but emotionally this person is functioning like a five-year-old or a 12 year old, or, you know, 15 year old, because that really gave them a fix on what they were dealing with in their interactions with them.

[00:06:05] **Lindsay Gibson:** So I started out in my training with that mindset, and then I went back to school and got my doctorate and then became more of a psychotherapist at that point. So I got interested in this area because when people were talking to me about their families or, I mean, it could be your partner, it could be your boss.

[00:06:29] **Lindsay Gibson:** It could be your friend. They would be describing their behaviors. And I'm thinking, whoa, why is this person in my office? And not the people that they're describing that they're involved with.

[00:06:43] **Laura Reagan:** So true.

[00:06:45] **Lindsay Gibson:** And I thought what a rotten deal that this, this, you know, introspective, sensitive, kind, person is in my office, trying to learn how to get along with these impulsive, reactive, people who are pretty much running wild. And not thinking about how they're affecting other people. And it just seemed like, you know, kind of upside down to me. What I began to do was I began to share with them what I was saying about their struggle. And about their maturity and about how they approach life. And then I would compare it to the emotionally immature approach of these other people in their life and what that mix felt like to them and the problems that it caused them.

[00:07:35] **Lindsay Gibson:** And they found it really helpful. So a lot of it I started at with was, you know, basic psychoeducation that, you know, people can develop. In these different, different lines of development, different strands of development, like someone could be very bright, intellectually. Okay. Even, like I said before, above the norm, they could be extremely socially skilled.

[00:07:59] **Lindsay Gibson:** I mean, put them in a cocktail party or a board meeting and, you know, they run with it. They are superb at. Have them run a business, have them get to be PTA president. I mean, these are very, very functional lines of development, but in their emotional development, you could see the immaturity because they would have trouble with empathy.

[00:08:24] **Lindsay Gibson:** They would have trouble with emotional intimacy with people in their lives. And they would be very emotionally reactive. So when you, when you saw those kinds of characteristics, you realize that this person had kind of stopped back there usually at a pretty young age, like around, you know, around that two to five-year-old period, which is where a lot of personality development happens.

[00:08:53] **Lindsay Gibson:** And so, you know, by helping people understand what they were looking at and what they were dealing with and then comparably, uh, really how able they were to be more mature. It was, it was very comforting to them and it also empowered them to look at these other people in a way that they could really deal with them effectively, as opposed to, you know, be confused all the time about the contradictory behavior, you know, the, the way that they heard other people, the lack of self reflection, they were able to, you know, begin to split that in a context that they could understand.

[00:09:32] **Lindsay Gibson:** And that's very empowering to people.

[00:09:34] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. That's so interesting and really compassionate too, because you're talking about people dealing with other people who are emotionally immature, you know, we often see in therapy, people whose parents were not what they needed, they didn't do. They didn't meet their needs in every way that they needed them to.

[00:09:54] **Laura Reagan:** I mean, so in other words, the parents were human, but also if the parents experience, you know, not having their needs met or abuse and losses and things like that, or having to grow up too soon and. Like things that our parents and grandparents had to go to work when they were 10 and stuff like that.

[00:10:12] **Laura Reagan:** It's not that the parents didn't want to take care of their kids and try to do a good job it's that they didn't have the skills, the emotional development to be able to do it. So consequently, the kids, you know, their kids have. Maybe deficits as well. They may have certain areas really. Um, well-developed and others are sort of stuck in certain times when things went wrong.

[00:10:39] **Laura Reagan:** But I like that, you know, I like that way of looking at it better than for example, it's never resonated for me when people say, oh, your parents have narcissist, you know, it's like, well, I mean, of course people can be very abusive and I can understand, but oftentimes like, Preoccupied parent could be seen that way because they're just, you know, they're depressed or they're dealing with their own trauma or whatever.

[00:11:04] **Laura Reagan:** So I like a compassionate approach because you know, it's more, there's more space there for healing.

[00:11:10] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah. And you know, nobody likes to call their parent a name. Right. And that's what diagnosis is, is it's boiling down the entire personality to one set of defensive systems. Essentially. And then the other thing is that people know that their parents aren't behaving narcissistically or borderline, or, you know, whatever they aren't doing that a hundred percent of the time.

[00:11:39] **Lindsay Gibson:** It's more like the parent is like a layer cake. You know, sometimes they get icing and sometimes they get cake. Then I get something else, but it they're not. You know, they're not a homogenized entity. That's one of the problems with emotional maturity is that the self-development has not proceeded to a place where that person is truly integrated and whole inside with good self-development instead they're their personality developed and kind of in little pieces that kind of stay separate inside if we can conceptualize it that way, that means that the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. So the parent may blow up and then, you know, half an hour later they're okay. You know, or something has happened to make them feel better. And now they're, they flipped and now they're fine.

[00:12:34] **Lindsay Gibson:** But it's, it's like this, um, stock market graph. You don't know what you're going to get because you, you never know which part of the parent is going to be an ascendance. It's all, depending on whether that parent feels threatened or anxious, you know, anything that triggers defensive behavior and they go into a part of their personality and then it's, you know, No holds barred.

[00:12:58] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yes. They don't stop at anything in order to get themselves feeling back in control and safe and empowered again. And that's going to be pretty hard on a kid when the parent is, you know, kind of fighting for their life like that. Psychologically speaking,

[00:13:15] **Laura Reagan:** What a beautiful description this is. I love this already talking about this.

[00:13:21] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah. It's so helpful to understand it that way, because one of the hallmark features along with emotional loneliness, for an adult child of an emotionally immature parent is confusion. Uh, they experienced what, what one person said she called it brain scramble, meaning that you, when you were around them and you're kind of following their reactivity, it becomes very confusing because one minute, they're saying this, and another minute they're saying that, and then the next minute they're denying that they ever said the other thing and it becomes very, very confusing. So if you can explain to them that it's not that, and that's what makes people feel crazy. And they doubt themselves and say, well, wait a minute, maybe, you know, maybe I have it all wrong.

[00:14:12] **Lindsay Gibson:** That's because they're self reflective. When your strength, you know, works against you. As you're thinking, maybe I have a part in this, maybe I didn't hear that. Right. But you probably did hear it. Right. But for them it doesn't coalesce. Into something where they go, well, I can't have a and B at the same time.

[00:14:32] **Lindsay Gibson:** So let me put those together and see what I think the, you know, see what C is they don't do that. They feel comfortable with that contradictory inner construction that allows them to be one way, one minute in one way or the other. So I like explaining it that way because otherwise. Uh, a lot of what, uh, emotionally mature people do, doesn't make sense and it's, you know, ill, it can be illogical, but when you try to follow what they're saying, I mean, I wish that we could have like automatic transcripts

[00:15:09] **Lindsay Gibson:** um, no, that just, I don't know, like a ticker tape, you know, that just comes out and you get to look at it later and you would see how they jump and how they're moving from one personality part to another, to another. But all of it is geared toward keeping them safe and keeping you in a subordinate position because that is how they feel safe.

[00:15:31] **Laura Reagan:** By having all the power and not letting you have.

[00:15:34] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yes. Yeah, cause they're scared to death. I mean, you remember these are like little kids inside grownup clothes. Now, if you imagine like the little boy and his dad, he suit, or the little girl in her, mommy's high heels, you know, they're off balance and uncomfortable because they're

having to function without a fully integrated self. And so they're easily threatened and they are, they easily get reactive because of that.

[00:16:01] **Laura Reagan:** Yes. I mean, I'm really, you can, we're seeing each other and you're probably seeing like the wheels spinning in my mind. I'm like, Hmm, because I'm not a psychologist so my way of conceptualizing this, it's just it's.

[00:16:14] **Laura Reagan:** I see what you're saying. And I don't have the training in like the self in the same way that, you know, psychology tends to do. And I love I'm just like, Ooh. Oh man. I gotta read this

[00:16:27] **Lindsay Gibson:** it's um, it's so it's, it's actually very practical, I think, because we all know what it feels like when we are in ourself, you know, when you feel together. When you feel calm, when you feel authentic, you know, there's a very distinct experience when you're in your true self. And when you're, when you don't have good self development, you know, those people feel off-balance all the time. And their defensive behavior makes it, they're trying to get their balance back, usually through some kind of interaction with another person.

[00:17:02] **Lindsay Gibson:** Like they depend on other people to help them with their emotional stability. And they depend on other people to help them with their self esteem. This, this has not been internalized to a degree where I'm able to keep myself pretty stable and I'm able to keep my self esteem pretty good. That's not something that they do by themselves very well. So they will recruit, uh, the people around them to stabilize them emotionally, regulate them and make them feel good about themselves. But that is your child. Who's having to perform those functions. That's really hard on that child because they're essentially asking the child to function as an adult, as a fully formed adult without their own needs, in order to keep mom or dad calm and functioning as an adult.

[00:17:53] **Lindsay Gibson:** And it gets skewed towards let's meet the needs of the parent, as opposed to let's help this child discover themselves and grow up strong inside.

[00:18:03] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, oh, it's, you're describing it so beautifully and it's so painful to think about at the same time, you know?

[00:18:12] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah. Yeah, some elements of it are tragic,

[00:18:17] **Laura Reagan:** but I know that many people who are listening are going to be thinking, wow.

[00:18:22] **Laura Reagan:** Okay. That explains so much because I think like you said, that confusion of trying to follow well, how did this happen? Why is this person suddenly erupting when they were smiling and calm five minutes ago or 30 seconds ago? You know, did I do something? What are they reacting to? And when it's your parent who you depend on for your own safety, I mean, children can't, you know, they can't buy things, they can't drive, they can't, you know, cook and so many other things, of course the emotional needs, they, they are relying on their parent for, and if their role is to fill the parent's emotional needs, there's just get, you know, they're not on the list.

[00:19:03] **Lindsay Gibson:** Right. And then as they grow up, It's very hard for them to engage in good self-care at, at an emotional level because they've kind of been trained to believe that their goodness, their worth, their love ability comes from their ability to sense the needs of other people and put them first. So there's this weird moral component to it as well, which I think is very destructive where the parent acts like the child is bad for not thinking of that parent first, which is, you know, a stretch for any normal child, you know, to put themselves in somebody else's shoes. I mean, you know, in some ways this is like a, a premature maturity that they have to go into.

[00:19:53] **Lindsay Gibson:** So what happens is. They become prematurely sensitive to other people, to reading situations, to, you know, worrying about how something is going to affect somebody in the family or being very careful about self-monitoring self-editing self-censoring because they know how that's going to affect the parent.

[00:20:19] **Lindsay Gibson:** And so instead of thinking to themselves, You know, in, in self care terms, um, like I need to rest or, uh, this is too much for me, or I need to ask for help. They don't think like that in terms of self care, because the survival mission is to be alert to the status, the emotional status of that parent, because it's so unpleasant when the parent starts to lose it and no kid likes to see their parent become disorganized.

[00:20:51] **Lindsay Gibson:** Logically, it's very, very scary. So they learned to, you know, to put that parent first and then they learn that in order to be a good person, they have to be self-sacrificing, there's an equation made of it. And then they learn that to be a good person means that I don't set boundaries and limits. 'cause that's being selfish and good people would think about what other people need.

[00:21:14] **Lindsay Gibson:** And then we're not even going to go into the religious component of that. It's very psychologically unhealthy in the long run to live by that kind of parameter for what makes you a good person and sets you up. For being exploited by emotionally immature people who really see it that way, that you really should be self-sacrificing that you really do owe them that kind of attentiveness.

[00:21:42] **Lindsay Gibson:** So it really is a that's part of why I wanted to get that this recent book out there, because I want people to get the idea that they have been kind of brainwashed out of their own emotional self protection and out of their instincts for their own self care, you know, like people can tell inside at a feeling level, if something is not right for them, I mean, we get a feeling of dread.

[00:22:11] **Lindsay Gibson:** We get a feeling of apprehension, we get anxiety. Uh, we get joy, we get interest. We get curiosity. All these things move us toward and away from things that are good or bad for us. But that system gets monkeyed with, by the emotionally immature parent who keeps sticking their finger into that and say, wait a minute, you're supposed to be thinking about me and why didn't you do this?

[00:22:37] **Lindsay Gibson:** And why weren't you? You know? And so the person becomes disconnected from those, I guess, self knowledge and self achievement that would guide them towards self-care and sometimes. It takes an illness or a psychological symptom before they realize that, you know, they've gone too far and they they're way out there on the gangplank and needing some way to find their way back to taking care of themselves.

[00:23:06] **Lindsay Gibson:** So in this, in this most recent book, it's a collection of 76. I call them insight pieces because they're just like these little bits. They're like you think of that? Like a book that's like Tappas or hors d'oeuvres it's not a, uh, you know, a scholarly academic book. It's it's little vignets that try to give a little piece of wisdom about something that has to do with either emotional self care and protection, dealing with relationships or coping with life's challenges.

[00:23:40] **Lindsay Gibson:** And I made it in that format because I wanted people to be able to pick it up, you know, before they go to sleep at night or, uh, you know, sit out on the back porch and read a couple of little chapters are like two, three at most pages. So they're very short, but they have a little reminder in them not to forget about yourself or to handle things in ways that support you as opposed to always being worried about what someone else thinks.

[00:24:12] **Lindsay Gibson:** That's what I hope people will get out of the book.

[00:24:19] **Laura Reagan:** Hey therapists. This is Laura Reagan. If you listen to this show regularly, you're hearing a lot about trauma and attachment, and you probably know these two underlying concerns are what drive most people to seek therapy, regardless of how the symptoms present. The good news is trauma's becoming a buzzword.

[00:24:35] **Laura Reagan:** And that's great because more people are discovering there's a reason they feel the way they do. And now they can name what they need help with, but they need to find therapists who can help them. And that's where you come in. Join trauma therapists, networks, therapist directory now at the founding member price of \$33 a month.

[00:24:51] **Laura Reagan:** And you'll receive a beautiful listing that can function as a webpage. If you don't want to set up your own site or even if you have your own and you can include links to videos of yourself, blog posts and you're part of a community. Right now we have quarterly calls for all members. Our first one happened in October and it was lovely.

[00:25:12] **Laura Reagan:** Everyone said they really enjoyed it, but I'm adding more content that will begin to be available March 1st, 2022. And if you sign up before February 1st, you'll be locked in at the founding member price of \$33 a month. February 1st, the price is going to go up to \$97 a month to reflect added value of these new offerings.

[00:25:33] **Laura Reagan:** And everybody who signs up as a founding member for \$33 a month, will get all that content beginning March 1st, as long as you keep your membership, I'm really excited about what's to come. We're going to have weekly, live calls - 4 per month and one will be a Q&A, one will be focused on self care. One will be case consultation, and one will be training on a certain topic. Hurry on over to [traumatherapistnetwork.com](https://traumatherapistnetwork.com) to sign up and become a founding member of this beautiful community of wonderful, passionate, and skilled trauma therapists. We need you, people who have trauma or out there looking for you, and they don't know how to discern.

[00:26:15] **Laura Reagan:** So if you specialize in trauma come on over to the trauma therapist network and get listed. Join our community and this movement, [traumatherapistnetwork.com](https://traumatherapistnetwork.com).

[00:26:29] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah, it sounds perfect. The way you've organized it, because for people who are struggling with self care, you know, uh, uh, 15 to

20 page chapter feels a lot more daunting than just being able to pick it up and look at it when you're in the bathroom. Or, you know, when you have five minutes and you know, you can actually get something meaty from that time.

[00:26:52] **Lindsay Gibson:** That was definitely the hope for it. Yeah.

[00:26:55] **Laura Reagan:** So can you talk about what some of the ways are that your book helps people with, you know, what are like some of the things that describes that people can do to improve their relationship to their self care needs?

[00:27:12] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah, like in the first section, the protecting and caring for yourself, talk about being true to yourself and how to do that.

[00:27:22] **Lindsay Gibson:** And one of the ways is that you have to remember that you're a real person who is unique from everybody else. And that needs to be discovered and supported and celebrated. And it needs to be put into words. You build a better relationship with yourself when your, when you're able to define yourself concept with accurate words and that you.

[00:27:54] **Lindsay Gibson:** Begin to look at what feels good and bad, like I mentioned before, so that you can even get the signal that you need to protect yourself because adult children of these parents often have been trained out of that. And as an example of things to do. I really encourage people to be proud of themselves and to spend time on that experience.

[00:28:21] **Lindsay Gibson:** And people are often very reluctant to be a self enthusiastic, um, because they feel like they're being, you know, self-centered or grandiose or conceited or whatever, all things that an emotionally immature parent might call the child. But we have joy about being ourselves. That's I mean, when you're in your self and you're in your element, you feel joy because you, you have a reunion with your, with your true nature.

[00:28:51] **Lindsay Gibson:** And that comes out as this positive energy. So when you take time to be proud of yourself, that is something that helps you to define your self concept. And it also is you saying, I'm going to claim this moment of feeling good about myself for these reasons. And when you do that, you are mirroring and reflecting your best qualities so that you can have a sense of love for yourself, and a sense of definition about who you are and what you're about.

[00:29:25] **Lindsay Gibson:** And that's not something that emotionally immature parents tend to be very helpful with, with their, with their kids. In fact, a. Uh, one of the chapters is, or one of the little pieces is a case of mistaken identity. And that's when you've been led to believe you have a certain identity in the family that just isn't true.

[00:29:48] **Lindsay Gibson:** And you feel bad when you're not in that identity, even though it doesn't fit you. I had a, uh, a woman that I worked with once who, she was, probably, I think she might've been in her early seventies, but she finally pieced it together after we had done a, quite a bit of therapy together, but she pieced together that she was intellectually gifted.

[00:30:14] **Lindsay Gibson:** She had not lived her life like that. She had not assigned herself that way, but evidence was accruing that she was very intelligent. And when she. Got to this point in therapy, where she was really looking at herself, she was able to see the evidence of her intellect. And it was like, it was like a complete aha moment when she realized that she wasn't just the, one of the kids.

[00:30:43] **Lindsay Gibson:** She was really a gifted child and that has shown up in spots all through her life. But because her parents had never identified her that way, she wasn't able to actualize that. So you have to think about how you might be different from your family's view of yourself. And you have to be very careful about what kind of criticism, you know, mockery or ridicule that you're going to be taking in from them, because it can be so inaccurate.

[00:31:13] **Lindsay Gibson:** And that's one of the benefits of therapy is, you know, Is being able to reflect back to a person what their true strengths are. Yeah.

[00:31:21] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Um, gosh, I'm thinking just how powerful, the way the roles that we are assigned in our family and the labels that are placed on us sometimes before we're even consciously aware, can become.

[00:31:35] **Laura Reagan:** How we see ourselves and, you know, I was thinking, so I did another interview right before this, about talking with someone about boundary setting and just thinking about how, like, parents they're projecting their own stuff on the kids obviously, and have these like expectations and, and, you know, there's, I'm sure you've seen so many people who, you know, they.

[00:31:58] **Laura Reagan:** Go through school, pursuing the things that their parents are interested in, and then they get a career that is what their parents want them to do. And, and you see it more now, people saying, well, I did this, but this isn't what I want. Um, I feel like there's more people now kind of saying I'm going to do something different.

[00:32:16] **Laura Reagan:** I have other options, but you know, it's, so I don't know, persuasive is the word that's coming to mind, like what the parents want and are sort of telling the child that the child wants, becomes what the child thinks they want. And then they're like, well, I don't really know what I want, but why am I not happy?

[00:32:33] **Laura Reagan:** I know I've always wanted to be a doctor. I've always said I wanted to be a doctor. Why am I not happy with this?

[00:32:38] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah. If, if I could do anything. For the people that come to see me for therapy, it would be to get them to honor their inner world. One of the chapters in a previous book was that the emotionally mature parent was hostile toward the child's inner world.

[00:32:58] **Lindsay Gibson:** And it was funny because the editor said, uh, Lindsey, could you find another word for that? Did you mean like they don't appreciate the inner world or. I said, no, that's the word they're hostile towards ridicule mockery, leading the child to mistrust that inner world. And so in the book, I talk about the importance of picking your inner voice, that you're going to listen to, how your emotions are there to guide you toward what is going to help you to thrive and flourish.

[00:33:36] **Lindsay Gibson:** It's, you know, they're not just useless firings. Um, they really are trying to get you to the environments that will allow you to grow. And you can only sense that through your inner world, through attuning to your body and. Oh, how you, how you feel inside. So it's, it's very, very important that that that interior of a person is honored and listened to because that's what tells you, I don't enjoy being a doctor.

[00:34:11] **Lindsay Gibson:** It might say, do you want to do this other thing? I really love it, but that's all coming from the inside. And it all, you know, what you want to do in therapy or in self help. Is you want to learn to treat yourself with interest, want to be interested in why I had that reaction? Or what does it mean that I'm not enjoying this job?

[00:34:33] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah. Or what does it mean that I don't feel like I can say what I truly want to say what this person does. It mean that I'm not really comfortable in this situation, you know, that kind of curiosity and interest in the self is, you know, where you get back to finding out how you want your life to be.

[00:34:52] **Laura Reagan:** I love this.

[00:34:55] **Lindsay Gibson:** We recognize it. Don't we? Yeah. Mean we, we hear about it. And when we hear about it, we recognize it. Beautiful thing about this is that we don't lose that, that receptivity to the truth about, you know, feeling alive or, or being in your, in your authentic self, the way we thank goodness, we, we retain that always.

[00:35:18] **Lindsay Gibson:** We can tell when we're, when we're allowed to do that.

[00:35:24] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. Yeah. And this is like, you know, it's, I mean, this is always the case for me on doing these interviews. It's it's so thought provoking because. You know, you're just, of course, multiple clients are coming to mind and people I know, and people in my own life and relationships who, you know, times where some of these things you're talking about apply to myself and some of them apply to these other people that I know.

[00:35:49] **Laura Reagan:** And, um, it's just, I'm like, Hmm, I'm really excited to go and read all of this. Can you, or do you in the book talk about how to like, hear that inner world and how to connect with it for people who don't who've had that experience where, you know, they, they shut off from that and it's still in there, but they don't know how to access it.

[00:36:16] **Lindsay Gibson:** So one, one thing that's that's important is the sense of emotional safety when we are around people or situations that make us feel emotionally safe, there's a particular kind of calm and comfort that comes from emotional safety. But how are you going to know if there is, if it's an emotionally safe situation, if you can't pay attention to what goes on you.

[00:36:46] **Lindsay Gibson:** Right. You know, I defy you to figure that out without paying attention to whether your stomach's or not, or whether your heart's beating fast or whether your poems are sweating or whether you're scared, you know, all these, we, we are equipped through our emotions. To know when something makes us feel bad.

[00:37:07] **Lindsay Gibson:** But what often happens is that we don't, we don't feel like we have the right to assess that in other people. And that's in the section about dealing with difficult people. Lots of times we feel bad about, you know, saying something about someone who hurt us and we'll say, well, yes, she did that, but she's really a nice person.

[00:37:29] **Lindsay Gibson:** And I'm like, uh, no, she's not.

[00:37:33] **Laura Reagan:** It wasn't nice what she did was it?!

[00:37:36] **Lindsay Gibson:** You know? And, and I sometimes tell people, I said, well, you know, if you had a, you know, had known somebody for a long time and then, you know, they, they shot you in the foot, just all that time that they were nice. Does that fix the fact that they hurt you, you know, it's like you can't wipe out your experience and that's good.

[00:37:59] **Lindsay Gibson:** That's that's instinct, you know, like we learned from it that this could happen. That's all we have to know. This person will do something like that. All we have to know and yet people feel guilty for making a judgment about keeping up a boundary against someone who has been mean to them or has given them the cold shoulder or isn't, you know, isn't kind, they feel bad about that.

[00:38:25] **Lindsay Gibson:** And I, uh, one of the, the insight pieces, um, is about relationship wolves using the story of little red riding hood. And it's like, a lot of emotionally immature people present themselves as victims and helpless. So, you know, that's granny in the nightcap who actually turns out to be the Wolf, but little red riding hood is coming closer and closer, you know, marveling at how she doesn't look like granny, but she's not been, I know a lot about little red riding hood's family.

[00:39:01] **Laura Reagan:** This explains what happened there.

[00:39:03] **Lindsay Gibson:** Why is it? Yes, because she's staring at a Wolf and she's willing herself to not know it, but then she's, she can't resist commenting on, you know, those big ears. And, you know yeah. But I, I want to try to help people to see that these things that they do that are self-protective that protect them against other people who would exploit them or hurt them, that, that is healthy. Uh, you have every right to protect yourself and to set your own boundaries, but emotionally immature people will make you feel guilty or ashamed or afraid or self doubting, uh, when you try to take care of yourself. And that's why it's important to, uh, you know, I think read little things like this

because it starts, another way of thinking, starts to get in your mind and that counteracts the brainwashing from the people who wanted you to be a certain way for their good, for their advantage.

[00:40:11] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah! Well this is so, so, helpful. And just the specific way that you explain what you're talking about is so helpful and clear, and I really appreciate it.

[00:40:24] **Laura Reagan:** It's just, it's very resonant.

[00:40:26] **Lindsay Gibson:** Um, yeah, I'm glad to hear it. I, it's a topic that I'm endlessly fascinated by, and there's a section in, um, in the book about, uh, how it feels to be treated well. And that's important because you also in addition to knowing what you want to move away from. You want to know what you want to be moving toward and people who treat us well, give us certain kinds of feelings.

[00:40:54] **Lindsay Gibson:** So I, I described that with, um, uh, different, uh, people who are, um, leaders or could be. In different roles in your life, but they will have a certain way of making you feel that lets you know, that you're being treated well. And this is an area for these adult children this often, like I said before, very confused because they're maybe they're not being treated well, but they can't put their finger on it.

[00:41:23] **Lindsay Gibson:** Because their mind has gotten muddied up with oh, but she's such a sweet person or, um, she didn't mean to, or these kinds of rationalizations and, um, you know, attempts to make everything okay. And that's something that they learned to do with parents who yeah, lots of times were very nice to them.

[00:41:46] **Laura Reagan:** Well, and that's the thing that I think when you use that example of little red riding hood, you know, she's looking at a Wolf. And she's trying to tell she's using mental gymnastics to figure out why is this grandma and not what it looks like, which is a Wolf. And, you know, I think the, the other side of that is when people are. So in terms of relationships, when people have had relationships with people who have harmed them and they can't identify the, the real harm that took place as being real.

[00:42:18] **Laura Reagan:** Then the same way. I think people, and I see this somewhat so much, they may get into a relationship with someone else. And the person is truly very kind to them and they don't believe it is real. And they don't. They're like, how can I know if this is just going to be like that before? You

know, even though, as the therapist, oftentimes when you're hearing them talk about that relationship and you've already heard them talk about those other relationships, you know, This is clearly very different, but you know, for the person it's, it's deeply confusing because it's like, you know, anyone could be secretly unsafe because the people who I do call and think of as being safe when they weren't, I couldn't take that in.

[00:43:00] **Laura Reagan:** So how can I really discern?

[00:43:04] **Lindsay Gibson:** And, uh, and if. Say, gee, you look like a Wolf. I was talked out of that or I was made to feel bad about myself. We're being so unkind as to see her as a Wolf and you know, in this and the self doubt that, that stirs up along with the guilt and the shame and the rest of it. Yeah.

[00:43:27] **Lindsay Gibson:** It's really staggering what it does to a person's ability to, you know, have healthy instincts.

[00:43:34] **Laura Reagan:** Yes. Trust their own instincts. Yeah. But I'm just, as you were saying that if they actually said, well, why do you look like a Wolf then the other person should say, oh, I'm wearing a Wolf costume right now. That's all, you know, it should be like that.

[00:43:49] **Laura Reagan:** It was okay to say that. And they don't talk you out of it. You know, like that, maybe that's a way that it would be, you know, a clue that, you know, because the gaslighting and the manipulation, those are red flags, but problem with manipulation, people who are good at it, you don't, you don't know what they're doing it, right.

[00:44:06] **Lindsay Gibson:** Exactly. Yes. Unless you have a concept. And if you have a concept that you can put someone's behavior in, you can observe it. And even if you have gotten unhooked from your instinct, Your, your inner guidance on that. If you have the concept, you can start looking for that inner guidance again, or asking yourself, how do I feel around that person?

[00:44:31] **Lindsay Gibson:** Do I look forward to being with them? You know, you start to ask those kinds of questions. When you can get reconnect, you know, reconnected, uh, through a concept that you now have that, you know, not all grannies are nice. Yeah. Yeah. And not all grannies in bed are helpless and not a threat.

[00:44:56] **Laura Reagan:** Yeah. And if I see Wolf, ears and Wolf teeth, that is what a Wolf looks like.

[00:45:02] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah. And I don't have to stick around to. You know, have a conversation

[00:45:07] **Laura Reagan:** look closer inside their mouth to find out if it's really. Yeah. Wow. This has been so, so interesting. Fascinating. Thought-provoking and I feel like I'm thinking about some of these ideas differently after talking with you. So thank you again for your willingness to explain this and to come on the show. Before we finish up for today, can you, because I didn't say it before. Can you tell the audience, what about the other books that you have too? This is your newest one. Yes.

[00:45:41] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah. The first book I wrote is called Who You Were Meant To Be, and these are all available on Amazon or other, um, bookstores. They can be ordered. The last three are probably on the shelf in Barnes and noble, that kind of brick and mortar store, but they certainly are all available on Amazon.

[00:45:59] **Lindsay Gibson:** So who you're meant to be is about figuring out who you were meant to be. Um, but it, it also gets at this thing about how family loyalty and. And that kind of confusion that happens as a result of, of excessive loyalty and guilt keeps us from finding out what we really want to be doing with our lives.

[00:46:21] **Lindsay Gibson:** And then the next book was the Adult Children Of Emotionally Immature Parents. And that was the one that really seemed to strike a chord with readers. That was the one that lays out the concept of the emotionally immature parent. So that was sort of like the original classic one. And then the next one was Recovering From Emotionally Immature Parents.

[00:46:43] **Lindsay Gibson:** And that one has a lot more practical tips. And kind of, or coaching about how to handle them, but it also has some other insights in it. Other concepts about the dynamics between the, those parents and their adult children that supplements the first book. So that it's not a repeat, it's a, I'm always thinking so new stuff in that one.

[00:47:09] **Lindsay Gibson:** And then this most recent one, like I say, Completely different format of, of these little insight pieces that are, you know, kind of chunky and hopefully delicious, um,

[00:47:21] **Laura Reagan:** based on this conversation, I think that they are. So do you want to tell people where they can find, keep up with the things that you're doing?

[00:47:32] **Laura Reagan:** I know the books are on Amazon and bookstores, but maybe your website.

[00:47:37] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah. Find out more about what I do. My website is Dr. Lindsay with an a gibson.com. So it's doc drlindsaygibson.com.

[00:47:48] **Laura Reagan:** Got it. And I will put a link to that in the show notes too, right?

[00:47:52] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah. Yeah. And then if, if they want to contact me any further. You can find me online. Just look me up.

[00:47:59] **Laura Reagan:** Okay, wonderful. And you do therapy in Virginia. Do you, are you, do you take new clients now or do you have like an established caseload?

[00:48:09] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah, my schedule right now is, is very, very full. I've moved to a short-term model. I do a short-term therapy and coaching, and I work with people all over the country.

[00:48:22] **Lindsay Gibson:** But I tend to stay pretty full. It's just a sort of, uh, you know, luck of the draw as to whether or not I have openings.

[00:48:29] **Laura Reagan:** Okay, but you are still practicing and you're still doing therapy now. So if people are interested in working with you, they can at least try if they want to.

[00:48:37] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah, absolutely.

[00:48:38] **Laura Reagan:** Wonderful. Well, thank you again, Lindsey, for being my guests on therapy chat today, I really, really enjoyed this conversation

[00:48:45] **Lindsay Gibson:** Aww thank you and I, I just realized that I should mention Laura that.

[00:48:50] **Lindsay Gibson:** I also do therapist training, uh, or, um, PESI the PE S I training giant and I do those pretty regularly. So if you go to the PESI site if you were a therapist and you wanted to get trained in the method or the approach that I use. Those are regularly available and they're recordings that are available in their therapist store.

[00:49:16] **Laura Reagan:** That was great. I'm so glad you mentioned that because I know that probably many people who are listening are like, how do I learn how to do that? So that's wonderful. Thank you. Thank you so much again.

[00:49:26] **Lindsay Gibson:** There's one coming up on November. That's the next one.

[00:49:30] **Laura Reagan:** Oh, awesome. Awesome. That will be after this comes out, but we can go on PESI and find whatever's current.

[00:49:37] **Lindsay Gibson:** Exactly.

[00:49:37] **Lindsay Gibson:** Yeah. But thank you so much for having me Laura, it has been really a pleasure talking with you

[00:49:43] **Laura Reagan:** For me too thank you again.

[00:49:48] **Laura Reagan:** Therapists. If your practice doesn't accept insurance, go to the [super bill.com](https://www.superbill.com) to get started with superbill, a service that can help your clients get reimbursed. Superbill is free for therapists and your clients can use the code therapy chat to get a free month of the service at the [superbill.com](https://www.superbill.com).

[00:50:03] **Laura Reagan:** Also, you can earn \$100 for every therapist you refer after your clients complete the one-time HIPAA compliant onboarding process. You can just send us their super bills. Super bill will then file claims for your clients and track them all the way to reimbursement by helping your clients get reimbursed without the stress of dealing with insurance companies.

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