

Fourth Trimester Podcast

Episode 14: Sandra Lloyd On Preparing For Parenthood

Sarah Trott: [00:00:05] My name is Sarah Trott. I'm a new mama to a baby girl and this podcast is all about postpartum care for the few months following birth, the time period also known as the Fourth Trimester. My postpartum doula, Esther Gallagher, is my co-host. She's a mother, grandmother, perinatal educator, birth and postpartum care provider. I've benefitted hugely from her support. All parents can benefit from the wisdom and support that a postpartum Doula provides. Fourth trimester care is about the practical, emotional and social support parents and baby require, and importantly, helps set the tone for the lifelong journey of parenting.

When I first became pregnant, I had never heard of postpartum Doulas, let alone knew what they did. So much of the training and preparation that expecting parents do is focused on the birth and newborn care. Once baby is born, often the first interaction parents have with medical or child professionals, other than the first pediatrician visits, is the six-week checkup with the OB/GYN. *What about caring for mama and family between the birth and the six week doctor visit? What are the strategies for taking care of the partner and the rest of the family while looking after your newborn?*

Our podcasts contain expert interviews with specialists from many fields to cover topics including postpartum doula practices, prenatal care, prenatal and postnatal yoga, parenting, breastfeeding, physical recovery from birth, nutrition, newborn care, midwifery, negotiating family visitation, and many more.

First-hand experience is shared through lots of stories from both new and seasoned parents. Hear what other parents are asking and what they have done in their own lives.

We reference other podcasts, internet resources and real-life experts who can help you on your own parenting journey. Visit us at <http://fourthtrimesterpodcast.com>

Sarah Trott: [00:00:47] Hi welcome back to the Fourth Trimester Podcast. I'm Sarah Trott and I'm joined with my co-host Esther Gallagher and a special guest Sandra Lloyd. Sandra Lloyd is a Depth Hypnosis practitioner. I would like to say that just right off the bat Sandra's work has been awesomely impactful for many women. She's been working for decades with new moms and with parents and her work addresses specifically the emotional challenges that arise prenatally, during birth and just throughout parenthood really connecting between the experiences that people have in their own lives as children and how becoming a parent brings those issues up and really proactively addresses those issues so that there's a better relationship for the entire family throughout their lives. Which is hugely important and it's something I would encourage all of our listeners and new parents and their friends to think about as they prepare to become parents for the first time or at any point frankly. So anyhow I want to start off with talking with Sandra and Esther here just about how does the work that you do help prepare people to become parents?

Sandra Lloyd: [00:01:59] Depth Hypnosis is a modality that allows us to kind of bypass the rational mind. It allows us to go really deeply into the wisdom and the information that the body has held. And that the body is holding this information, perhaps it can go way out there, from another lifetime, another experience of many lifetimes but definitely from this lifetime. So we all carry with us experiences of hurts or wounds or real trauma: accidents, death in the family, loss of a parent, divorce, cruelty of a parent, abuse on all levels. These things are carried with us. And for women when they become pregnant and even couples you know are looking at their pregnancy and stepping into parenthood, these things will come up, whether they want to admit it or not. So I would rather address it prenatally so that a mom and her partner could go through the birth in a more seamless way and a more useful way and that she would actually welcome the passage of the baby into the world as they step into the role of being a parent. If we've had very damaged relationships with our own mothers, we only learn how a mother through our own mother, we don't learn from our neighbor's mother how to be a mother, we still hold that information until we can actually address it, look at it, clear it, heal it, it's going to be difficult to step into motherhood in a way that might be unique to our self and empowering.

Esther Gallagher: [00:03:54] Yeah I always think that whatever it is we can connect with and acknowledge and do the work of clearing; clearing just meaning coming to terms with and perhaps releasing, maybe it's through a compassion practice, working with a spiritual guide that will help us walk through into a different reality, that's going to bring some ease to the postpartum transition as well. First the big transition that dumps you right into the next transition. Things keep moving after you have a baby. They don't suddenly become static. I think about getting through adolescence with my children, getting through young adulthood with my children. You're a parent for the rest of your life once you've given birth, no matter what it looks like. And so this preparatory work seems to me has the potential to really serve a person throughout that whole span.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:05:09] I can just talk personally from my own life that my son is a grown man now. But I stepped into a motherhood with a firm belief that I was not going to be like my mother. And the truth is I wasn't. But it took such great effort for me to really re-examine who I was as a woman and as a mother at every age that my son became. So in a way I was re-raising myself, when he was 1 year old, 2 years old it was a chance for me to really dig deeply into what I was at that age. It was a lot of work! I also suffered from powerful deep postpartum depression and there wasn't a name for it to my knowledge at that time and I was a person who had a network of women friends. We were all pregnant together. The Big 4 we called ourselves and I was the one who would sit in my room rocking, staring at the wall crying, thinking "what have I done?". And I love my son dearly and did then and stayed home from work and for quite a long time and breastfed and did all the right things but inside I was wondering why I felt so badly when I was supposed to be really happy to be a mother. So those places are in me you know, and I can look back at how I was mothered and I just had the stories of what my mother told me about how she mothered me. But it doesn't fit with how my life experience with her is. So those are the things that I needed to heal over my lifetime. And I spent a lot of years in therapy working on that. So I'm really glad that I now have a way to work with people that is profoundly useful in a lot of ways; helps people move through their issues really rapidly and then can heal on a really deep level so that you don't have to spend 30 years sitting in a therapist's office.

Sarah Trott: [00:07:25] I love that so much. So my baby is almost 1 years old. It's not like it's been that long ago for me that I was going through all of the preparation for having my first baby. Like I just been through this. And you know I got all kinds of material from the hospital and from my doctor, information about how to take care of baby, information about how to take care of the birth, myself during the birth. So much about in the hospital at the birth. And then just nothing really about me. Not a whole lot of information about how to take care of myself. And I don't think anyone's ever mentioned some of these ideas that you're talking about and it sounds so valuable. So it's a sort of a self-care aspect but it's also taking care of that baby too. Because it sounds like what you're saying is that there's a benefit to making peace.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:08:27] It's my experience with even more than a few of my birth clients who you know are excited to be pregnant but haven't really considered why they want to be parents or how they want their parents or how that even looks. They're in the pregnancy but they're not in what they're stepping into at all. And so I think that's important. I think you need to start to examine how do I want my child to feel, how do I want to be, what in me needs to shift or change what in me needs healing that will allow me to more fully step into the way I want to parent, as opposed to all those wild books out there, so much information that just makes people crazy.

Esther Gallagher: [00:09:19] I was listening just this morning to Thich Nat Hahn do a lecture (I'm not sure what you would call it) about reconciliation speaking specifically, using an example about reconciling with our own parents. And I remember you saying earlier, Sandra, that this work has deep roots in Buddhism. I'm not a sophisticated Buddhist, per se, but I think so much of what comes to us through Buddhism from the east to the west is compassion practice. And I think the first step is, so often is just uncovering what it is you need to be compassionate about and then towards. And what was so interesting about his talk was that reflexivity, that practice of seeing yourself as the child and sending your compassion to you as a child, the vulnerable hurt child. And then seeing perhaps your own parent as that 5 year old kid too, at some point, also vulnerable, also being affected by whatever these things are, and we know how generational they are. Which is why it's so interesting to hear you say "past lives". In a sense we hold, existentially, generations of love and harm. Like all the love that we

inherit from our parents, they inherited, and all harm as well. So having a practice that sits us down and asks us to go deep, right now, I think it's really very beneficial and I think it's the beginning now. I think it's the beginning of how to understand self-care. I think that word circulates in American culture a lot now and yet it means things like getting enough sleep, exercise, eat right. Rarely do I see that extend to: and do your work of healing the generations of trauma that you've inherited.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:11:54] Exactly. Actually it is a very interesting example with meditation you are describing because that is a piece that is very much related to shamanism and the work of soul retrieval. That is one of the foundations in Depth Hypnosis is really allowing yourself to, when we work with the body we're looking for where is the trauma held in the body. And then we do something called regression which is moving backwards into your life to the point in time where whatever incident or experience happened, it is the core of the problem as it's exhibiting itself today whether it's a panic attack or depression/anxiety or self-hatred or whatever it is, we go back to where the source because the body knows where it is. And when you're in that deeply relaxed state of hypnosis you're able to allow yourself to travel back through time in your life. And it doesn't so much matter whether the incident is all real or fully recalled exactly as it was because the body only remembers how it felt to the person and so that experience is held in its suffering and pain. So when we are able to do this beautiful thing you just described, Esther, you're really seeing the younger you and being able to bring the adult you into that experience to have compassion and express, in whatever way, how you feel towards that younger self. And then you know how the younger self be able to say what they felt, what she/he felt and how helpless or alone or angry or sad or lost or whatever the experience is, need to be able to express that so the adult you can really stand and maybe for the first time have that younger part of you heard in a way it's never been heard before. And eventually you know through that dialogue maybe even having the adult you confront the parent of your own person who harmed you, to be a stand up to them in that way in this deeply relaxed non-ordinary reality. And eventually we're able to fold or bring that younger child in. It seems that the younger self, it starts to feel better, they're like, someone heard me, I was heard this time, that I had never heard before, and wants to get closer to the adult self and we actually have a practice of folding the child into the heart of the adult and it is a retrieving of the soul

part that was lost. And the person feels much more complete. And some people have very subtle reactions to this over time or experiences of that, and some will have very profound changes like right away in their life where they realize like you know, I don't need this person in my life anymore and I'm not going to act that way in that experience again and they just find themselves acting different because parts of who they really are have been returned to them.

Esther Gallagher: [00:15:11] Well and one can imagine then, that there isn't learning at that moment right. There's a learning the thing that was missing and I think so often, and it's certainly my experience as a mother that so often, encountering an issue that might arise between my children and me or just an issue that arises. So often my experience was one of lacking resource. I have no idea how to behave in this situation. I'm looking back into my childhood for something that looked like this situation. And while I know it happened something like this, there was no resource. There was nothing. I was literally voiceless because there was nowhere to go with it. And so something like that leading to, Oh and if I feel voiceless, I feel the need for a voice. And if I feel the need for a voice I need the feel the need for some ears on the other side of that voice. On and on, right, so we're using the imagination to develop an interaction for ourselves that we did not experience and bringing that forward into a moment, with our children perhaps, that means, Oh now there's some resource; I've imagined a way to be in this situation with these people I love that I didn't actually get to experience for myself at that developmental stage perhaps. To me that's so generative and so resourced and resourceful that I really like that aspect of this kind of work.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:17:13] Also what you're talking about is you know what I heard again in that story about the meditation about the younger Self, it is really a way to foster self love. Because it takes a lot for the adult to actually love that child-self of themselves. And sometimes I have clients who have no compassion for that younger one and are actually acting exactly like their parents behave to that younger self. So we have a lot more work to do. I think another piece of this work that we're talking about and what happens for people, we can't forget the experience of birth for mothers. And this is an arena where not only soul parts as we call them, traumatic events can happen in a birth where parts of the mother, of her soul, of her essence actually leave because of the

experience. This is what we know happens in car accidents that people you know in the experience a sudden traumatic experience, part of the soul says, "I need to get out of here to survive" and so it leaves and has to be returned at some point. Only we in our culture do not have a method for doing that which is why this work that I do in Depth Hypnosis is so powerful because we actually can use the ancient shamanic practices in this very modern context to be able to bring back the lost parts of ourselves, that is really the essence of who we are. And the other piece in this, besides a soul-loss, is loss of power. And this is one of the primary things that as a person who has worked with birthing women for many years, you know, so much wanting to help her hold her power in the birth experience. Still we find there are so many ways that a doctor, a nurse, a midwife, a partner or a family member can try and steal the power that's really meant to be dedicated to mother. And this is why I use practice called Journey to the great mother in the therapeutic context and it's also an adaptation of a journey I do for a person to connect with a source of power within themselves for the length of time they are in therapy with me and it's something they can use in their lives. So it's just connecting them to a knowing wise part of themselves and so when a mother comes into the birth setting connected to this source of limitless energy and the Great Mother could be animal or plant form or human form or a mythological form or angelic form or light or sound or just essence or feeling, you know a sixth sense feeling of a presence. When you have that connection and you're grounded in it and you're connected to your baby, you're good! And if the person who's supporting you in birth is also connected to their own experience of the great mother, You have a lot going on in that birth room that's on the level of energy that can't be seen but can be felt and known. And so that's what I trust in that environment and that's what my clients learn to trust is their connection to their deep knowing and the limitless source of energy that could help them when you're too tired, afraid, not sure what decision to make. We have that other resource that's beyond words. And that kind of connection with the Great Mother also carries them into the postpartum period where they can begin on a deep level to sort through all the things they need to sort through and have an understanding of what it means for them to stand in their power as a mother connected fully to themselves and feel free to say no to the things that don't feel connected to their essence; that don't feel that the right choices for them to make.

Sarah Trott: [00:21:39] I have so many questions for you at this point. It sounds like what you're saying is that part of the healing process that women are able to do, adoptive parents, or anyone who is about to become a parent, all of that healing that people do before they become a new parent can help enable this empowerment that you are referring to. And while it may not be necessary to do all the self-reflexion, wow it helps. It really helps. And then a new kind of trust in oneself is able to exist and trust that they can listen to themselves and listen to that power in whatever shape or form it takes.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:22:23] The beauty of this work is that it is not a lot of talking. It's really NOT talk-therapy. There's some discussion in the first session. You know, to help me understand your history but it's not talk-therapy because we're moving beyond the conscious mind and moving beyond the ego. We can't understand it on that level. And so the use of hypnosis, the settling down into the deeply relaxed state with the mind really quiet, which is frankly really useful for birth anyway and parenthood. That mindfulness- state of mindfulness. It just allows you to let the information come forward. Well, and it often makes you know it may make no sense in the moment like, "why am I feeling this in my liver" you know, but there's a story there so we keep searching for what that story is and what that picture is. And that leads us to the time and place where an incident occurred that kind of gets locked there. I mean we can't mentally decide, I don't believe, I'm going to be a different kind of mother. I tried to do that and I had to learn how to unravel the parts of me that were wounded and had to unravel them and have some healing to be able to step forward and not react as my mother reacted towards me. And this is the foundation that Esther was talking about of Buddhism. You know what we bring from Buddhism into the depth-hypnosis work is the principles of attraction: what are we attracted to, what kind of partner do we pick, what kind of person do we pick to father our child, or mother our child. What do we avoid? You know like me saying, "I will NEVER be like my mother." Like that's like a big red flag. Because that tells me how much charge there is for me about that. And there's something I need to look at. And the other place is just called wrong-knowing or ignorance and it just means we're not even aware of the ways that we're working, the ways that we're moving through the world, it's a sort of unconsciousness. And once we bring forth the knowing,

it's pretty hard to not take responsibility for your behavior and your actions and to decide whether you want to make a change.

Sarah Trott: [00:24:50] What's a practical example of something that someone might have experienced as a child that comes up later?

Sandra Lloyd: [00:24:58] I think people who have had a lot of criticism, that they have to behave or be in a certain way, that there is you know your mother's way or the highway sort of. You carry that. So your self-esteem as a mother, your ability to just walking through life without kind pointing the finger at yourself all the time. I think for me that was the experience of postpartum depression was feeling like it was what was wrong with me because everybody else in the world was/had to be a happy mother. And you know I was happy to have my son but I was unhappy with mothering and profoundly wounded there. So I think that is that highly critical parent. There are many people who suffer from abuse on all levels in their families. The person who is the fourth child or fifth child in their family and didn't get a lot of parenting. You know they got it from the siblings. How do they know how to be a mother? I mean it's really, it's a lot.

Sarah Trott: [00:26:20] Yeah, I'm just reading the introduction of a book called Parenting From Within and there's someone giving an anecdote about feeling very stressed when they heard the baby cry. And there were something there and he couldn't, He kept trying to think like, "oh what is it. What was it in my past when I was crying" and he couldn't remember himself crying but he was like there's probably something there. He later discovered after months of kind of pondering this, because he knew he was like more stressed than typical, hearing his son cry. He remembered that when he had a doctoral internship at the UCLA pediatric center that he experienced stress associated with helping care for sick infants. It's a really interesting book so far, and I can't wait to finish, and I encourage our listeners to pick that one up too. But I thought that was interesting. Is that kind of the kind of thing that you address with people?

Sandra Lloyd: [00:27:15] I probably would be very inclined to take that experience and go back farther in that man's life. Because I know what's coming up for me, and I don't

know him, but I would be curious, because it's that curiosity always leads me there, what in his childhood, even when he was in his mother's womb, what was happening to him. Because the words that just came forward for me right now were helplessness.

Sarah Trott: [00:27:44] Yeah, he said that in the book.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:27:48] And so either as a child that he cried and nobody came, that he didn't know how calm or couldn't be with a crying child who just was crying because that's what they had to do, and his compassion was actually more than enough for those babies. But it was certainly triggering to him, it feels like to me, that helplessness, and that maybe nobody is here for you.

Sarah Trott: [00:28:17] Yeah. Yeah that's fascinating. Ok so let's let's pretend like we are about to have our first baby and we're listening to ourselves right now. I know something that is a huge temptation for me is having lists and wanting to believe that if I do these things that my birth will be perfect and I'll be a perfect mom which obviously don't exist. But it is so attractive as an idea. So if I were hearing this I would think I've got to do my depth hypnosis. I've got to work through a 100% of my issues before I have my baby, otherwise this is going to be a problem. So what can our listeners do, whether or not they've had their first baby, but what can they do now to sort of practically start thinking about these things to prepare. Maybe they have access to you or someone like you or maybe they don't. And is it ok not to fix everything.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:29:11] Absolutely. Well, we are on a continuum.

Esther Gallagher: [00:29:15] Remember that we inherited generations! Yeah right. So whatever's salient for us as individuals is the thing. Maybe that's why we're here, there's this one thing, generationally, that we can clear for the next generation. I mean I think that's one way to think of this rather than what we do tend to do which is you know, "OK another thing on my list I've gotta ace this thing". No, that's not existentially or even, from the Buddhist's perspective, what's going to happen. That's not reality. Reality is that maybe we address the thing in front of us. If we don't even know what's in front of us then that's an interesting thing. Right. That gets us, I imagine that would be like, "OK

I know there's something just don't know what it is" Perfect way to bring this into the purview of the Sandra Lloyd, and I can name several others that, you know somebody who can just sit with us and say, "OK let's drop down and find out what that is". Might not be just one thing but maybe it is, one big thing that's going to be the thing that we in our lifetimes address, and that changes things for the next generation. I like to think of it that way, too.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:30:48] You mentioned this several times and I think it's important to highlight it that we do carry the DNA of our ancestors. We also carry the trauma. I just attended a conference on trauma recently and just Holocaust victims, you know that that has passed cellularly through to the next generations. And we have trauma that comes through a whole family through many many generations. So this work is an opportunity to do that piece of the work here in this lifetime. Certainly I'm not looking at, boy I wish I could just say I can clear everybody's stuff! People come to me with what's presenting: I'm terrified of childbirth, I'm scared to be a mother, I'm afraid this is going to ruin my marriage when we have a child, I'm having panic attacks, I can't sleep. You know whatever, there's usually something that's presenting in the moment that a person is addressing and that's usually not the thing that we find you know underneath that. We're looking for where's the source of this fear, this distortion of the perception, this disconnect from their deep resources for themselves and what needs healing. And that's what this modality does. So it's whatever is on your mind so to speak, whatever seems to be intruding in your life that's making things hard, maybe you're fighting with your partner, maybe it's just you're afraid, or "how am I going to do this?", you just feel overwhelmed, life is too much, I have my job, my baby is going to come soon. "I don't know how we're gonna survive or how we're gonna put this all together"

Esther Gallagher: [00:32:47] Yeah, don't you think there's a lot of moms-- I can speak personally, but I also think this is a very common experience for moms that they don't anticipate necessarily, but then they find themselves in that which is, "now there's a baby in my arms. I have all the responsibility and none resource and none of the empowerment as you're calling it, which I love. But suddenly while I had that baby bump I was getting all kinds of strokes and attention and now I'm a fucking nothing. I'm nothing, and I'm especially nothing if my baby isn't perfect and everything doesn't looks

good. So I think there's a soul retrieval aspect to this that I think mothers in this culture generationally have been traumatized by, which is becoming annihilated in a sense very soon after giving birth. And so yeah, you know, you may or may not that's coming on a conscious level but I bet you do know in your body somewhere you know because again that's generational.

Sarah Trott: [00:34:03] So maybe just congratulations for even considering these concepts.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:34:08] Yes. For being aware that there's something that needs attention and usually there is something that's presenting for people in order for them to seek out help of this sort. One of the first questions that I ask when someone comes into a session is what do you know about your birth? What have you been told about your birth? Did your parents have a particular sex they wanted to have? Were there miscarriages before you were born? This is information that's really potent and important and it starts to lay a foundation for me to work with of understanding themes through lifetimes where people have experienced trauma and we can--that's like a template that I form to be able to work from as we start to go address an issue. So to me being able to have someone heal some issues that have been with them for a lifetime, for this lifetime for sure, that may even go back to their own birth; Someone who was born by cesarean, someone that was pulled out by forceps, someone who doesn't remember their other parent being present. We remember our birth: Someone who may have lost a twin. Yeah I mean these, you know we're conscious beings in the womb. So someone who has heard their parents fighting when they were in the womb and misunderstands; there's actually in tons of writings about this and research about this that it's not like to blame the mother, you know, if everything isn't perfect when you're pregnant but the child doesn't understand what all that noise is about. It thinks it's about them because they're experiencing the adrenaline, all the emotional chemistry of their mother, a mother who's like, "oh my god I've got five kids and I'm having another one?" Well that baby knows that and so we have to have conversations with our babies. "Hi! I'm upset today but it's not you! I've just had a hard time." Which is really something you can use on the other side too, when your children are here. I'm just not good today; it's not you, like I'm a mess. Not very well put together.

Esther Gallagher: [00:36:32] And "I'm learning how to take better care of myself day by day and I invite you to do as well. So what might we do together today that would be nourishing and supportive?"

Sarah Trott: [00:36:45] Now what can our listeners do on their own?

Sandra Lloyd: [00:36:50] Well, great question! A foundational piece of depth hypnosis is that I am using Shamanic tools that I'm actually teaching you how to be your own shaman. So you're actually going to learn the process of how to journey, how you connect with the guide, that the guidance that you have found in the sessions so that you can on your own actually go with your questions, your issues to work with your inner guidance to help you Problem Solve in this reality. And it's very useful; so this work isn't designed for you to be kept as a client for the next 10 years. You can come if you like, I'd be happy. But it's really to teach you tools that you can use and resource yourself and then maybe come back to visit me at various points in time when you get stuck and need me and more understanding and support around it. So we're actually teaching you how to help yourself and how to clear.

Sarah Trott: [00:37:58] Seems like the way we were raised is an instruction booklet that we store. And what happens is that unless someone is aware of those things they will go through life living by the instruction booklet as a default and so part of the work that we can do as parents is question that set of instructions; say, "This part I agree with and I really like so I'm gonna keep it, it's wonderful make it a tradition. Some parts maybe I don't like so much and there's an opportunity for parents to proactively have more awareness around the way they behave and treat themselves and their children. But it takes a lot of work to kind of dig into what are the defaults .

Esther Gallagher: [00:38:49] It occurs to me that something that parents could do is keep a little journal and by that I'm not talking about milestones for the child or what the color of their pee and poop is. I'm talking about, "This is the experience I'm having today. These these are the things that are challenging for me." Maybe some thought and writing put into, "I wonder what I might have needed that might have felt supportive

and empowering in this situation today." Those sorts of simple journaling tools. Part of what I like about this is that a journal is in a way a journey. Right. We're actually documenting our journey as it's happening or after it's happening. But even so that can be a powerful imaginative tool if you get to be three weeks out or two weeks or one week out and look back and go, "oh I'm seeing this I'm seeing the trajectory that I take, I'm seeing the feelings that arise. Especially if one's able to name, "oh I felt really sad. I felt angry in that moment. Oh I felt kind of desperate and anxious." If one can actually be naming feelings as they arise. Naming how the body feels like just from a sensory perception point of view, "oh I have pain in my knee and my back hurts now but my arms are really free and loose and nice and that felt really good." I think there are elements in all of that that hearken to all work that Sandra does that can make things available to us that we wouldn't have thought might be available to us as we go along. And you used the instruction booklet analogy and Annie Lamott had a book titled Operating Instructions and it's all about her trajectory as a single mom and the world she was living in and her relationship to her parents and just it's funny and fun too. And you know the other part of all of this is that while there is trauma, there are things that we want to address, there's also like can we identify the joy without denying the difficulty, right. That's a different thing than what the prescription in our culture is which is, you only get JOY And if you feel like shit there's something really wrong with you. We do not want to hear about it. That's not true in the world right. It's not true that there's only joy. It's also not true that we don't want to hear about it but it's a strong message that somehow we pick up somewhere along the line. I think you know being a person who can write it down and hear it is a step in the right direction so that journal leads us into a relationship to our journey as a parent. Which is life-long; we're always going to be a parent. So it's just a suggestion along the lines of what can we do.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:42:51] One of the biggest challenges with new moms is the isolation. And I think some of that comes from the fact that there's a short period of time that women have to be home to be a mother in those early weeks, this fourth trimester you're talking about. And then they're back to work. So when I look at that, like that's so unrealistic that one could work on the issues that are coming forward in three months time, get that all banged out; it doesn't happen that way. I mean you're barely surviving. And so you know the good news is we have postpartum doulas, we have you know they

can support new mothers and there's certainly more and more new mothers groups arising here in the Bay Area. And that's a helpful tool just for you to get out and see that you're not the only one struggling, or that your breastfeeding issues are different from somebody else's or you see a mother who's got a 3 month old and you've got a one month old he actually made it through this period where you felt like, "I'm going to lose my mind", like, "there's no way that I'm ever going to be my self again." You know one of the most profound places that I'm aware of in stepping into motherhood is it's the beginning of your learning to be of service to another being. It's just where we learn about service. I don't care where you've done it before. This is where you learn it because you're completely responsible 24/7 for this beautiful life you brought into the world and you have to dig pretty deep for that. And there's lots of planning that I see going on. You know, "we're going to get the night nanny, the day nanny, the this doula"... people are not wanting to step into that service very much. And I'm concerned about that. I feel a lot of concern about that. You're raising a human being, you're bringing a person into the world and you need to be present.

Esther Gallagher: [00:44:57] Yeah I just had something very... come up very strongly in reference to this and that, we are of course, because of the nature of this podcast, how we've evolved it and addressing specifically by mothers here. And I want to give a shout-out to partners based on exactly what Sandra just said. You know it's difficult and for partners it's a little easier to step away. However I think often stepping away is the thing partners don't want to do but don't know what to do. Right. And that's based on... the term abandonment came up very strongly for me as you were talking know. If you were a child to whose parents couldn't show up for you, now you're a parent and your child's doing things that are challenging and the thing to do is to step away. That leaves a legacy as well. That is the word we haven't used much of but I think it's out there and I think it's in here and I think it's a real cultural issue that we don't talk about. We've abandoned whole groups of society as a culture regularly. It's part of our zeitgeist that we're not able to really grab hold of. So again, I think being partners in parenting is difficult. There's always more to look at.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:46:55] I ask these questions! I ask these questions when I have a birthing couple. the example I use is gonna be a man. But you know this might be dad

who's got a hideous relationship with his father, doesn't speak to him, has been angry and separate from his father his whole life. His father was an alcoholic who was abusive. You know, so I look at, "and how are you, where are you going to find the tools to be a different dad. It takes more than just saying, "I don't want to be like my father." That man is kind of lost...

Esther Gallagher: [00:47:33] It takes a lot more than being angry and pissed off.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:47:35] Exactly. So you have to know these are the kinds of things that we look at this. This is exactly what you're talking about, what the instruction manual was/is. We get our instruction manual is what we grew up with. You know, what birth order we're in. How we were raised by our families and that's how we know mothering and fathering. We need to ask, "does this work? Did this work for me? What didn't work?", and we can't, I don't feel, we can just make those decisions on the intellectual plane. We can have a sense of, "I know this isn't working". Where do I go? I'm always want to go inside. I'm always going to want to go to beyond the words, back into the body, back into the places where you're holding what needs to be healed. Back to the source. Back to the origin of the issue of why you might not be able to be a mother who even wants to hold her baby. I come from a family where my mother was not, I don't have a memory of my mother hugging me and she can tell me all she wanted to that she did but I don't remember her being a touchy, huggy person as an adult. So it's hard for me to believe that she was that way when I was an infant, you know. So that's how I learned to be in the world and it's frankly the opposite of how I am. But you know it's things like that. I mean it's simple but not so simple, of how I learned to be in the world, how I learned to be a woman, mother, partner. So we have to ask and I don't think a lot of people ask, "how do I really want to raise my child and it's not in the books, per se. You know it's going back inside. What resonates with me? What in me might prevent me from being the mother I fully want to be and I'm all about looking what's getting in your way. What needs clearing, what needs healing, what needs shifting and changing. Because once you make those maneuvers even at the one level we just described earlier of that soul retrieval. Even just doing one of those totally shifts how you hold your power and your energy and you start making different moves; it's

very catalytic. You might seek different people to be around, a different person to help you. It's amazing how rapidly this work and make change.

Sarah Trott: [00:50:11] It's so much easier to say, "I don't want to be that" or to criticize something that already exists. That is so easy. What's difficult is saying, "I will be... and then fill in the blank. This is the kind of parent I will be. Make a list of those values or make a list of those practices and behaviors that you want to display. So I think that while it may be true that someone doesn't want to be X Y or Z like their mother or father, like filling that gap with something maybe is the part that just isn't happening. And so maybe you don't want to be like your parent and say I'm not going to be like my mom. But then you are like that anyway because you haven't taken the time or made the effort to fill in that blank and say well, "instead that I will be this".

Sandra Lloyd: [00:51:00] And probably the easiest practice to help bring that you know might be what Esther was referring to earlier: is just simple, meditative practice of giving love, self love towards you, sending love to yourself, compassion and practicing compassion for the self as well as compassion in the world. It really starts with yourself. It's pretty uncomfortable for many people to listen to a meditation say with something like Jack Kornfield, where he's talking you through connecting with your own heart center and sending love into your own heart. It's difficult. It's not part of who you've been raised to be. And that, if we can't do that we have no, we have very little resource for compassion to send out to all these other people in the world that we may not like very much you know that we need to send compassion to, to heal ourselves as well.

Esther Gallagher: [00:52:06] Especially if we perceive that they've harmed us in some way. Loving the self that goes to the gym and eats good food, that's easy! I know, I love those things too! Loving the part of me that wasn't present for my kids at certain ages and stages, looking back, that's hard, you know. Loving the part of me that felt weak and anxious and not up to the task. That's not easy. Loving the part of me that's still angry about the thing that so-and-so did is not easy. And when I can do that I make a lot more room in my life for the people who may have harmed me for a reconciliation there and for a way to move into a broader deeper love for them because I don't want to not love my parents or my children. That's what I want in this life is to love all my relations big

and small, old and new. I think in our culture we see compassion, we don't understand compassion at all. What we think about is excusing behavior. That's our idea right. Idea is, "oh well, uncle Bud did that stupid ass thing that's now been bothering me all these years. He's an alcoholic and he can't be held responsible." That is not the task here at all. That is not; the task is something very different. I want to read this little thing that I photographed on the sidewalk at Dolores park. This is Rumi: "Your task is not to seek for love but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it." Compassion is a lead into that. I look at that quote and think, "how?!?" How and I gonna seek and find...AAAAHHHHH!! Compassion is that doorway. And that practice that builds our capacity to be in relationship.

Sandra Lloyd: [00:54:39] Another kind of thread to this is: I use this one birthing with women and it's also kind of a piece of this work that I do with the Shamanic Healing and the depth hypnosis as it we're, and we forget this, we are all connected. We're connected to everything. everything on the planet: animal vegetable, mineral. We're connected to the stars, to the planets, to all that and we forget that. So we get stuck in our stuff and feeling that thread of connection, feeling that thread of connection to our ancestors, to our mother, to our grandmother, our great grandmother, all the way back, when a woman's giving birth I like to remind her that there are thousands and thousands of women at this very moment in time around the planet giving birth right now as you are. So if you can even step for a second into that power you can do no wrong here. You're going to be totally connected to your own ESSENCE as Mother. You will feel it and it will override, believe me, a lot of the stuff that might be in your way. So that's you know that's the work: if you're connected to your spirit allies through the depth hypnosis work, if you're connected to the Great Mother when you're birthing, when you're mothering your child, you have this connection to nature, to the earth, to planetary beings, to you know to all beings on the earth, all sentient beings. You can't help but feel that love and compassion. You know, "thank goodness I'm not alone." That is really a struggle for women in the birthing environment and women, women starting into mothering, is, "we're really just doing this by ourselves here in our house" and it becomes so small, when really there is so much resource just feeling the connection to the love and compassion that will be available.

Sarah Trott: [00:56:48] Love yourself, forgive yourself, think consciously and proactively about what kind of parent you want to be rather than what kind of parent you don't want to be. Great!

Esther Gallagher: [00:57:03] I think this has been such a rich interview. Thank you Sandra!

Sandra Lloyd: [00:57:07] Thank you Esther and Sarah. Thank you for this time.

Sarah Trott: [00:57:08] Anyone who is interested you can go online and you can google Sandra Lloyd. You can go to her website which is Sandra Lloyd dot net. And we'll see you next time! thank you. You can subscribe to this podcast in order to hear more from us.

Sarah Trott: You can find out more about Esther Gallagher on <http://www.esthergallagher.com/>. You can also subscribe to this podcast in order to hear more from us. [Click here for iTunes](#) and [click here for Google Play](#). Thank you for listening everyone and I hope you'll join us next time on the Fourth Trimester. The theme music on this podcast was created by Sean Trott. Hear more at <https://soundcloud.com/seantrott>. Special thanks to my true loves: my husband Ben, daughter Penelope, and baby girl Evelyn. Don't forget to share the Fourth Trimester Podcast with any new and expecting parents. I'm Sarah Trott. Goodbye for now.