

Fourth Trimester Podcast

Episode 88: Positive Parenting Starts From Within - Empowerment Coach Lisa Chin

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 benefited 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 a 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: [00:00:00] Hi, this is Sarah Trott. Welcome back to the Fourth Trimester Podcast. I'm here with Lisa Chin, who is a returning guest on our show, and I'm so happy to have her back. Hi Lisa.

Lisa Chin: [00:00:10] Hi Sarah I'm so excited to be here and having kind of a 2.0 conversation.

Sarah Trott: [00:00:15] Yes, definitely. And we've had a really great warm up session right before this, which has perfectly primed our conversation.

Sarah Trott: [00:00:25] And I would like to remind everyone that we have a website which is fourthtrimesterpodcast.com. Please go check it out. Sign up for our newsletter, subscribe on iTunes so you can be alerted every time we have a new show.

Sarah Trott: [00:00:35] Lisa and I talked a while ago on Episode 16. She was one of our earliest guests and one of the things that she and I connected on very early was the preciousness around the first few months after giving birth. And Lisa, you have such a tremendous story around your traditions. You talked about your own confinement story specifically, and we talked about other kinds of traditions, which are not necessarily part of your Chinese American heritage, but examples such as providing a mother with food, with warmth, with cleaning and caring for the home, with emotional support, and a lot of interesting topics that are touched on with lots of different cultures.

[00:01:24] So anyone who's listening, if you want to hear more about Lisa's confinement story and that topic, please go back and listen to my prior conversation with Lisa because it's excellent. And Lisa, since then, Congratulations! You've had two more babies. I'm so happy for you. Can you tell us a little bit about your Fourth Trimester experience with number two and number three?

Lisa Chin: [00:01:47] Sure. The it's so funny because you think you did it once, right? And you've like conquered it and things just, you know, they'll get easier and it doesn't it doesn't quite get easier. But with two and three there were two different experiences.

[00:02:03] So my mom went through confinement with me with my oldest, and she stayed with us for 40 days. And then she went back home. And then with the second, I had a very normal, "normal" birth - the most normal of the three.

[00:02:24] But the transition from 1 to 2 is really, really difficult. And no one can I don't think anyone can adequately prepare someone for that situation. And it was it was a tough transition for my daughter, my oldest especially. We we went through confinement and we did all of that. And it was wonderful to have my mom there again and helping us. And then when she left and I had my baby and then I had my daughter come back home and, you know, and she wanted attention and she needed this and that, and it was just too much.

[00:02:58] So then I ended up inviting my mom back to live with us so that that confinement really has extended the past six years. And then with my third, we actually moved to the suburbs of Boston and that and my mom was here. My mother in law came. And what was really interesting about that experience was I had a friend who said, you know, I'd be happy to bring you food.

Lisa Chin: [00:03:26] And I'm like, Well, my mom's here. My mother in law is here. I have more help than anyone else that I know. And yet I said yes to her almost because I didn't want to disappoint her, in a way. However, it made me realize like, why? Why shouldn't I accept all this help? You know, people want to give help and I'm in a in a position where, like, I could use a little bit of help. So I accepted every single invitation for food that that came my way.

Lisa Chin: [00:03:56] And I think some parts of us may feel selfish in doing that. But for me, what I realized and what I reflected upon afterwards was like, This is how community is built. The not just giving, but the receiving. Like like my friend couldn't give to me unless I was open to receiving. And so when I'm examining like how relationships are formed and how they're nurtured is through reciprocity, right? And it's through giving and on the other end of it, receiving.

Lisa Chin: [00:04:29] And through that experience, I formed better, stronger relationships with these women who I had really just met in the last six months before I before or when I just moved into the suburbs. So that was a really big learning for me too. So confinement has just been like, it's it's amazing. And you know, I milked my last confinement because I was planning on that to be my last one and I milked it for all it was always worth for sure.

Sarah Trott: [00:04:56] You felt more confident, it sounds like in the second and third saying yes and receiving help.

Lisa Chin: [00:05:01] Absolutely. And I think that's a lesson that we all need to learn as mothers, as humans, really, that we should not be doing it alone. There is no badge of courage. We don't get anything extra for trying to do it ourselves. It's really important that we actually bring that back into our culture in the idea of community, the idea of helping one another out and and also the humility that is needed to receive.

Sarah Trott: [00:05:36] Did you ask friends to bring you things or was it just being volunteered or what did that look like?

Lisa Chin: [00:05:40] It was just volunteered. So one person started and then we're part of a group. So then other people in the group started offering and it wasn't a lot of food. I mean, you know, I think I had maybe like 5 or 6 meals, which is a decent amount and, you know, there's leftovers and whatnot.

Lisa Chin: [00:05:57] And what was really great was one one person brought over this amazing, like pork butt and cabbage. It was like a it was a slow cooker Instapot braised kind of deal. But it was a pretty plain but it was delicious and what was really awesome was I was able to invite another mom who was like maybe three months postpartum and I was at that point like a month and a half or maybe I was only a month. And she she came over and we shared that meal together. So this one friend gave a meal to me and then I was able to share it with another mom who was in a very similar position. And it just and we have a memory from it. And then I actually serve that same dish. A couple months ago, we had, you know, a bunch of us had lunch together and I served

that. And it was just it's amazing, amazing to have those experiences and to, you know, and food is also such a unifying topic.

Sarah Trott: [00:06:51] Yeah, it sure is. Lisa, thank you for sharing that. And before we go further, I want to give you a proper introduction. So, Lisa, you have been doing a number of different things in the perinatal space. You've done events such as the Fourth Trimester Summit, and I know you're thinking about what's next with that.

Sarah Trott: [00:07:10] And right now you're focused on coaching. And so I would describe you Lisa as an Empowerment Coach. And what you do is you really light a torch for purpose driven women. And this is focused on reclamation and empowerment. So those are the two words I would use to describe you and your work, which I have firsthand experience of, and I couldn't recommend your work more. So thank you. And really helping women become more confident and visible in the work that they do and being their authentic selves.

Sarah Trott: [00:07:40] And you are someone who uses both sides of your brain, balancing the masculine feminine and viewing the world in a gray scale. And you have a website which is lisaforreal.com, where people can go to learn more about you. You're also a mom, which you've just talked about, and you are a second generation Chinese American as well, which plays into your identity quite a bit. And and is part of some of the stories you've shared with us here on the show. So that's your proper introduction. Thank you. If there's anything I've left out, feel free to chime in and share.

Lisa Chin: [00:08:16] No, it's wonderful. Thank you.

Sarah Trott: [00:08:17] Okay. Okay, great. So, that feeling of sharing food and sharing community is so critical in that time period in particular, because. Why? Why do you think that matters?

Lisa Chin: [00:08:31] Well. For a new mom. I mean, you've just given birth. You literally are emptied out. Right. And the whole purpose of the fourth trimester, and particularly that first month, is to rebuild you. So what better way to do that than through care,

through food and nurturing and in love? I mean, at the end of the day, that's what we all need at that during that time period. We don't need toys for the baby. We don't need someone to come and, you know, gossip about what's going on at the, you know, somewhere else. We don't need, you know, crowds of people coming into our homes that we have to take care of. We the mother needs to be centered in this experience because if the mother is centered, then the baby can be centered for her. And that is that's why it's so crucial.

Sarah Trott: [00:09:25] And the work that you're doing now came from work that you've done, the empowerment work, the reclamation work. It's coming from some experiences you've had personally. Is that right?

Lisa Chin: [00:09:36] Yeah. I mean, motherhood. I mean, my whole self identity journey was ignited through having my first and. My trying to understand who I am has led me down a path of trying to understand not only myself, but also how other people are and how they operate. And by being a mother, I also feel like I have this first hand experience of like seeing how we were, how we develop as people, right? And how what I say impacts them.

Lisa Chin: [00:10:09] And then as I examine myself, I think about what happened when I was little and then seeing the impacts, the longer term impacts on myself. And it's this weird position I'm in, where I feel like these timelines are overlapping as I'm viewing them. And it is only through having children and observing my children and being a mother that I actually have come to this work that I do.

Sarah Trott: [00:10:42] Are there any stories or examples of something that you could share that triggered this for you?

Lisa Chin: [00:10:47] Yeah. So to me, mothering, we're most of us, I would say I want to say all of us. You know, it's hard to say. All 99.9% of us are mothering parenting from experiences that cause us not to be seen, heard or taken care of and our children. I think motherhood as well as business. I think motherhood is this amazing opportunity

for us to heal ourselves. If we're open to that and if we have kind of the mind space and the capacity to do it because we're often so overwhelmed by other things.

Lisa Chin: [00:11:27] When I observe my kids, I see that if they're triggering me, I think about, okay, what did I not get at that age? That they're expecting me to give to them that I need to look at.

Lisa Chin: [00:11:43] So, for instance, my son, my second, he was, I think like two and a half or three. It was the Olympics maybe a couple of years ago. And he he wanted to stay up and watch the relay race, the women's 4x4. And of course, you know, it's the last race. So we stayed up until 9:59 PM or whatever time it was when they decided that they were going to air that race.

Lisa Chin: [00:12:10] And then he finally watched it and then he completely lost it afterwards. Right. Trying to get him to sleep. And it just he was way over tired. And after I finally got him to sleep, I went and I and I wrote because that's often how I process things. I also write every day. So it's a it's kind of an excuse for me to help process things. I was writing and I said, you know, what is it about this that didn't allow me to be there for him in a way that I would want to like every fiber of my being, wanted to take care of him and, like, be patient and and nurturing. And yet I didn't. I'm pretty sure I yelled and, you know, got really frustrated and I thought, well, it was because when I was three, I wasn't heard. You know, I didn't have the permission to do that. So it was part of it was like, how dare he? Because that's what I've ingrained in myself. How dare he act out like that? How dare he? You know? And after I've given him something, he should be so grateful and he should go to sleep. And this is the narrative that's going on in the back of our heads.

Lisa Chin: [00:13:15] So then I went in and I went into meditation and I spoke to that part of myself that three and a half year old, part of myself who wasn't taken care of in that way. And I reconciled that experience.

Lisa Chin: [00:13:30] And so that's pretty much the process that I take my clients through. So the first is the identifying, the experience that's triggering and then looking

at what underlying patterns or behaviors that exist in your life that you've gone through, and then pinpointing a memory that may be kind of a core memory. It's probably not the memory, but it's a core memory that contributes and kind of reinforces that neural pathway that says, Hey, if you do this, you should get this or you shouldn't get this or whatever it may be. And then we work on healing that. And that's kind of the process that I take my clients through.

Sarah Trott: [00:14:08] So you're tying it back to an event or a feeling from early childhood?

Lisa Chin: [00:14:14] Yes. Because at some point that belief was imprinted in us. Right? And the thing is, some people say, well, what if I don't remember exactly what happened? And I say, well, you know, it doesn't necessarily matter. It actually matters more that you are pinpointing something because if that feels true to you, then that means it lives in your body.

Lisa Chin: [00:14:36] So like I worked on my time in the womb. My mom hid her birth with me for six months, and then it was found that she was pregnant. And then my grandmother didn't want her to keep me. And so I worked through that. And I don't know exactly what was said. I don't know exactly what what happened or where it happened in the house or anything like that. So I worked through feeling and I am part of it was working on like understanding what my mom was going through and all of that.

Lisa Chin: [00:15:13] But the healing that happened actually was the forgiveness for my grandmother, because what I realized was my grandmother wasn't speaking because saying that because she hated me. Right. Which is something that you could possibly internalize as you get older. And that interaction kind of embeds and you're like, well, she didn't want me here because she doesn't like me because, you know, she yells at you one time to like pick up something and then that gets internalized.

Lisa Chin: [00:15:37] And so when I was kind of going in through that healing and there's a Facebook Live on this describing it but what I realized was that she was just scared. You know, she was she was an immigrant. My mom was an immigrant. You

know, wasn't like we had a bunch of money rolling around. And my brother has a disability and I think she was scared. She was scared. And so what I did was I went in and I said, you know, I'm not my grandmother's fear. And I just repeated that over to myself until I came to a point where I believed it and was able to release it. And then I actually felt myself like every time I say this, it feels weird. But I felt myself like wiggling out of the birth canal, kind of reborn in a way, in a way that released that fear from me.

Sarah Trott: [00:16:25] Have you had the opportunity to talk about this with other people in your family?

Lisa Chin: [00:16:35] No. So what's really interesting is, like I my mom really only speaks Taishanese, which is our dialect of Chinese. And I don't have the vocabulary to actually share this with her. Like I literally had to Google the word for psychology because I don't it's not things that we talk about. It's not something that like, I don't have the words to put to what I'm trying to do. So no, I've never actually shared it with her.

Sarah Trott: [00:17:02] And your, your feeling of, of being reborn, giving you so much joy that started happening when you were forgiving others or like, where did that start or how did that come about.

Lisa Chin: [00:17:15] Yeah, that I mean that one experience. I haven't reborn myself in other ways. That was very much just following what my body felt like it needed at that time. And that really was once I, I think once I released it, once I released that belief that somehow my grandmother imprinted on me her fear. And you know, this there's I don't know, there's probably some neuroscience or whatever attached to this. But for me, it's kind of all out there.

Lisa Chin: [00:17:46] We all hold these memories in our bodies. And when I was able to identify or disidentify with her fear, I was able to just shake that part of her off of me. And because that happened in the womb, I almost had to go through the experience again to, kind of, come back to the now.

Lisa Chin: [00:18:10] So one other time I was actually taking a class with a woman, and she was taking us through like a somatic experience. Experiencing sequence. And then I was in the class and she said, you know, put your feet up almost like in stirrups and like, maybe this will remind you of giving birth or something like that. And it did. It reminded me of giving birth to my second, which was my normal birth, right? But it was actually my most traumatic birth because control was taken away from me.

Lisa Chin: [00:18:43] I was told that I shouldn't try birthing on my knees and that I should get on the bed because it was Sunday. And this woman, I'm pretty sure, just wanted to be out. And I and so I did that and agency was taken away from me and I pushed for 45 minutes, which was less than a quarter of the time with the other one. And he was perfectly healthy and all of that.

Lisa Chin: [00:19:07] However, I left that birth traumatized, like not as connected with him as I would have loved to have been. I had nursing aversion and then just in addition, it was just chaos at home with a second. And so through this class, in that moment, I was kind of taking myself through this process and I basically walked myself through my body, through the through the process that I would have loved to have, giving birth to my son and gave birth to him like gave birth to him. And I sat with that. And it was there was a you know, it was a big process. And then I went that night and I nursed and I didn't have an aversion.

Sarah Trott: [00:19:50] So you released something for yourself?

Lisa Chin: [00:19:54] Yeah. And I think that we all have these moments like that in our bodies.

Sarah Trott: [00:19:57] And so the work that you do is helping women address these topics and. What? Overcome. Empower. Reclaim the experience they have. Reclaim their sense of authentic self.

Lisa Chin: [00:20:11] Yes. And it ties very much into this idea of like putting ourselves out there and visibility, and particularly for women who are trying to grow a business.

Right. Or trying to create a podcast and and put a part of them out there that feels very vulnerable. And, you know, you and I were talking about like, especially in professional settings, that isn't an okay thing to do. And that idea is very much embedded in all areas of society. Like we can't be too real in any conversation, I don't think. And if we can claim and reclaim these parts of ourselves that wanted to be seen and heard for what we truly needed at that time, then we can put ourselves out there in a way that allows us to be confident and comfortable in being visible as who we are.

Sarah Trott: [00:21:07] And so how does forgiveness play into this? You touched on that a little bit.

Lisa Chin: [00:21:11] Forgiveness is kind of the next level, I think, because forgiveness is something that. We can't. I don't think we can offer forgiveness. I mean, it's like saying I'm sorry with, like an empty, you know, an empty I'm sorry. Like, we don't want to teach our kids to say I'm sorry, just to say I'm sorry. And forgiveness is kind of in the same idea that we can't just say we forgive someone. We really have to feel it.

Lisa Chin: [00:21:39] And when things happen to us. Part of it is just reconciling with it within ourselves of like, what happened to us was, you know, that there were certain failings maybe through the system or the school or the teacher or the parent or the grandparent, whoever it may be. And then once you come to be okay with that, then it's kind of going to the next step is this forgiveness of that person, because we're all kind of working through a glass half full. Right? And if you think about. And when I think about my mom and how there are things that I, you know, I wish that she had done. And the thing is, like she couldn't you know, she was an immigrant. She had she didn't really have money. She didn't speak English.

Lisa Chin: [00:22:28] Like all of these experiences that I could have been, I could have held her accountable, accountable for when I look at it from a lens of forgiveness. And she's probably not the best example because I don't actually hold much against her. But it's the same idea, like when I think a lot of a lot of my clients have issues with their parents. And when you have that lens of like they were at fault for it is very different than I forgive them because they were coming from a place of not having a full glass

and not having a full bucket. Not having enough spoons. Whatever analogy you want to use. They didn't have enough to give to me. And while I recognize that bad experience, I come to terms with it through the work, and then once I've come to terms with it, then I can offer that forgiveness. Because if you still hold that resentment or anger or whatever it may be, it's if that's still living in your body, right? So to kind of fully complete the cycle is to release any sort of attachment to what you really wanted in that moment.

Sarah Trott: [00:23:41] As always, Lisa, thank you so much for your insights, your stories. This has been such a powerful conversation. And I want to understand if someone's listening and they want to work with you directly, can they do that? How do they do that?

Lisa Chin: [00:23:56] Yeah, you can learn more about me at my website. Lisaforreal.com. And there are my offerings on the page. You can also contact me at Lisa@lisaforreal.com. You can find me on Instagram at [@itslisaforreal](https://www.instagram.com/itslisaforreal) and that's where I share some of my writing but you can kind of find me in all different areas, but just email me if anything.

Sarah Trott: [00:24:18] Yeah Lisa has a fantastic newsletter. I receive it, I read it. Please sign up for her newsletter as well. It's Lisaforreal.com/newsletter. We'll post that information on fourthtrimesterpodcast.com. So if you want to reference, you can come back and see the article about the show there.

Lisa Chin: [00:24:34] And Lisa has incredibly generously offered to give a discount for Fourth Trimester listeners. So if you go on her website and you want to book a session with her, you'll get 10% off your first session. You have to use the code FTPODCAST, all one word, and sign up and work with her. She will work with you putting together a framework custom based on your goals, issues that you're addressing, and make sure she's addressing specific needs based on what you're trying to achieve. So incredibly powerful stuff. Please go work with Lisa. I highly recommend her. She has done wonders for me. And Lisa, once again, I appreciate you being here. Thank you so much.

Lisa Chin: [00:25:21] Thank you so much for having me.

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 Podcasts](#). 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.