

Fourth Trimester Podcast

Episode 132: Generational Parenting, featuring PSI Founder Jane Honikman

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: [00:00:01] Hi, I'm Sarah Trott and welcome back to the Fourth Trimester Podcast. Today's episode is a special one for multiple reasons. One is that we're participating in an event called Podcastathon, which is the world's largest podcast charity initiative, bringing together podcasters globally to raise awareness for charitable causes and by leveraging technology and storytelling and community engagement. The hope with this effort is to inspire millions of listeners to care, to act and to make a difference one podcast at a time. And you can learn more about this initiative at podcastathon.org.

Sarah Trott: [00:00:38] The charity we are shining a spotlight on today is Postpartum Support International, or see if you're a regular listener on my program, you know that we love this organization and we reference PSI and its resources fairly frequently, especially the phone numbers for resources for getting in touch with someone when you need to talk (<https://www.postpartum.net/>).

Sarah Trott: [00:01:00] Another reason this is a special episode is that we are featuring Rs founder Jane Honikman, and she's joining us today to talk about what every parent, partner, and grandparent should know for a healthy postpartum. And by the way, postpartum is forever, as her book title implies.

Sarah Trott: [00:01:19] And I'm going to introduce Jane in a little more depth here for you. So Jane Honikman is a pioneer in maternal mental health advocacy. She was inspired by her own experiences as a new mother in the 1970s, and she co-founded Pep, which is postpartum education for parents to create a community of support for families. Her work has led to groundbreaking research, international collaborations, and the establishment of networks that continue to help parents worldwide.

She authored the book *Postpartum is Forever: Social Support from Conception through Grandparenthood* and through her writing and her speaking and leadership, including co-founding the Postpartum Action Institute, Jane remains dedicated to improving emotional well-being during the transition to parenthood. So welcome to the program, Jane.

Jane Honikman: [00:02:12] Thanks for having me, Sarah. It's so good to see you again. An honor.

Sarah Trott: [00:02:18] Thank you so much. I love that you've been a guest on our program before, so we'll link to your previous episodes in our show notes for this episode for listeners who want to go back and listen to all of that goodness. Since we're really shining the big spotlight on PSI, would you mind helping describe Postpartum Support International and the work that they do?

Jane Honikman: [00:02:39] That's a big order. And because it's become so enormous since the days when I started it, I actually went to the website to emphasize what they want to emphasize as they describe themselves these days, since I'm not involved, And I think the most significant aspect of what I did start and got going and is prominent on their website, is the language, which is the universal message that you're not alone, that you're not to blame, and everything's going to be okay. You need to get help, get support. That's the essence of what I started.

Jane Honikman: [00:03:18] And the other was, of course, that it's a network and it's about linkage and connecting people to resources, but mostly to other people. So that's what PSI was when I started it, and it is today, and I'm extremely proud and I feel like a great, great grandma when I see all they accomplished. It's just tremendous.

Sarah Trott: [00:03:41] I mean, you're an absolute legend in the space, and you've helped pioneer a lot of the support structures and some of the ideas around postpartum for healthy families that exist today. And I think it's really neat to see how the network has grown and evolved over the years. And of course, you mentioned that, you know, you are a parent yourself, and we're going to talk about grandparents a little bit more, but I would love to invite you to share more about you and your background and your inspiration for creating Postpartum Support International.

Jane Honikman: [00:04:17] Just like so many other people in the world, it's a personal experience that catapults you into another space. I mean, I didn't set out to do anything other than fulfill. My childhood goal was to be married, have babies, and have a family,

and have a stable family experience like I had been brought up with. And then it didn't turn out quite so easy for me. In the 60s, after I met my husband to be, we discovered that I was pregnant and we gave that first baby up for adoption.

Jane Honikman: [00:04:51] So that's the story. That's the background that most people are not necessarily keyed into. You know, I'm very public about it, but it was shameful when all of this happened to me and this member of the 1960s. It's a very long time ago. It's a very different era. But just like so many other issues, nothing's really changed that much. There's still the not the denial that may be going through some hardships that you may be keeping a secret and the ignorance around that. That hasn't changed.

Jane Honikman: [00:05:28] And the other, the emotion that you feel, shame and guilt and embarrassment that hasn't changed. So my background really is a perfectly ordinary young lady who always was falling in love with boys. And my plan was to carry along that track because I liked what I saw, the way I was raised by my mom and my grandmother, very significant person in my life as well. Is that sort of set the stage?

Sarah Trott: [00:05:55] Yeah. That's perfect. Thank you for sharing your story. and it's almost like a lot has changed, but so much hasn't. Right? The emotions behind a story like yours are consistent and true today for people who are going through things that are challenging. One of the things that really stuck for me from our last conversation, one of them was that the greatest need that parents have is to talk. That was something that you said, and thinking about evolution and change of the organization you created and and what's happened in the meantime.

Sarah Trott: [00:06:30] You know, technology is really helping enable social connection in a new way. And I always love to share that on the PSI website. There are links to all kinds of online support groups for just that purpose to connect parents generally, but also there's so many online support groups or parent meetup groups, we could call them that are thematic. So it could be for NICU families or you know, dude groups for the dads. And I think that's really neat that technology is changing and enabling parents to come together and talk in a new kind of way.

Jane Honikman: [00:07:09] So my reaction to that is that it's still not replacing face to face opportunities to get a hug and really look in people's eyes. So obviously I'm a fan of technology. I'm kind of a with it kind of a, you know, advocate. But my preference is always to have face to face personal conversations. You can get so much more out of it and you can give your heart and soul more authentic in person than we are when we do this in any other form of technology. Telephone. I mean, in the old days, SEO was all about a telephone. I mean, I talked to thousands of people just with a telephone.

Jane Honikman: [00:07:55] But PEP, the real foundation of my work, is still existing in the same format that my friends and I started. And that's to get together on a regular basis. Because getting together in your own community, knowing that, you know, whatever you're going through your shared experience and that people have a variety of reactions to whatever they're experiencing. But the commonality of that you're not alone and much more authentic to me. I guess I can come back to that word than anything on a screen. I think we see that in the children when they, you know, are forced to use screens to learn, and instead of getting outside and playing with their friends.

Jane Honikman: [00:08:40] It's the same thing with all human beings. And it's not just language. I was just reading an article about nonverbal communication. And we think about that. But among humans. But what about animals? You know, we have to realize that it's an organic experience to talk or to sing or have all these other kind of expressions that go with our emotions. And crying is the biggest one that's so obvious, you know, but affect, I mean, how do we describe ourselves?

And I'm not feeling myself, you know, and then look into the eyes of that person. You can see, you see and you know, and you want to reach out and you can't do that with a screen. That's the sad part. So my original intent has always been founded in the idea of a PEP in every community where you actually physically get together with like minded people, same age and stage as you, as you are in your human development. And it's about human development. It's about growing old, growing up, Having new experiences and discovering that it's been going on for the beginning of time.

Sarah Trott: [00:09:52] And sharing those with other people, which is so valuable. Yeah. Thank you. Yeah, I agree, technology is never going to replace a warm hug or someone holding your hand or having a shoulder to cry on. Sometimes it's the next best thing if you don't have access to that. But I suppose what you've been working to do is to teach people how to create those groups and create community around themselves.

Jane Honikman: [00:10:18] Right? The idea of finding somebody who is like minded is very basic, whether it's sharing a recipe when you want to cook something, you know, you do that to being able to to say, I don't know how to cook something as simple as that as well. And then can you help me? It's just part of the growing up process of learning and as we as we have families and we reproduce and we continue this ongoing generational sharing. I want to always remind everybody that we come from someplace else, and that we're going to someplace else, and that we're leaving steps behind us, but we're also following in the footsteps that preceded us. And that's what postpartum is forever means.

That doesn't mean that you no ever outgrow growing up. I mean, even when we're no longer present in the physical sense, we certainly hope that we have a legacy. And that's, again, one of the things that I believe strongly about. And that's why talking is so good. And I love to write and I like to talk. and that's why I think it has to do with, you know, connections. Intergenerationally. I don't care for people who tag Hang on. partner or grandparent or it's all the same thing and nobody dominates. We have shared a commonality, and we have to learn from the past and our mistakes, and we can't discredit them. We can question them when we do.

That's healthy, that's evolutionary. But I really want to talk about ourselves as parents that we had parents and that we're becoming parents. And if you may not have a child yourself, you have a parental role. And there's an anthropological term about all this kind of stuff, because cultures have always had the role of family to raise the next generation can't do it alone.

Sarah Trott: [00:12:33] No, we're not meant to do it alone, are we? It just isn't how we evolved.

Jane Honikman: [00:12:39] Yeah. And I don't understand. When we were young, my friends and I used to say, why did we think we could do this alone? We thought that then. And the other thing that irritated us, and this was the 70s, is that everyone was telling us what to do. And there were all these books, and that was in the 1970s. So that's a long time ago. And we thought there were too many experts, you know, judging us at that point. That is increased. And that does worry me. and in terms of technologies, where are we getting that from?

And that that's, I think, a disservice to ourselves because, you know, we have to have those inner conversations. And then with our family members and, and I also want to bring up gender here because I've always struggled with the fact that there's sci you know, emphasizes the family everybody, the partners, everybody. But it's not shared. And in our day to day language, we're still using mother when we mean parent. We still using father when we mean parent.

And same with grandparents. There it is. It's right there in that generational pick. But we need to make sure that we're being more inclusive in terms of gender. And it's broadened. Oh my goodness me. It's broadened. Our awareness of others is certainly wonderful. but I think I still struggle with the fact that we think that we are the only ones who've had a bad time. Are we the only ones who've suffered like that? everybody has emotions. Everybody has the same experiences. There's no gender differences in emotion. None. Everybody shares that equally. So we know that based on research, not just my own opinion, but I think we sometimes forget that.

Sarah Trott: [00:14:44] Dad's, partners, other people in the family are going to have a lot of feelings. It's change. Welcoming a new person, a new baby into a family, into a home is going to cause a ripple effect on everybody involved. And it's going to create the need for integration and identity shifts for a lot of the people in that person's / that new baby's life.

I've had conversations with people talking about sometimes the frustration that dads feel around suddenly being like they might perceive that they're somewhat secondary in

their partner's eyes. Now that baby has arrived, right? And we know that partners and others can experience postpartum anxiety and depression as well.

Jane Honikman: [00:15:33] And so do grandparents. That's the point. So do the uncles and the cousins, everybody. And so what can we do? What do we really want to do? We met Golden rule do unto others, you know, but also have a happy time and all of these little clichés that we really want to have everybody be well and healthy and happy. Right? Sounds so simple. so we need to explore that in terms of the dynamics from which we came. And we tend to be reluctant to dig up the dirt as the expression is.

But I'm a big believer in genealogy. I happen to love knowing my roots. I love knowing why I am who I am and when and all of these kinds of things. And I encourage other people to to bring that up because you know what? Sometimes that neutralizes dysfunction or family trauma, if you can start talking, well, what do we know about our past? Where did we come from? Because we all came from somewhere. And it does. No. No. One group, no. One language, culture, ethnicity. Nobody has the. It was worse for me than anybody else's story. It's just not true.

You know, it's a struggle to be alive. And I have to think always back to my grandmother. Because I was raised by a grandmother and we were very, very close. And she was an immigrant at age eight. And I remember asking her very simple questions. Grandma, how did you go to the bathroom? Where did you go to the bathroom? As a child, I wanted to know these questions. It's a fundamental thing that we need to ask.

Jane Honikman: [00:17:17] Were you on a boat? How did you come here? You know, it's to me. It's fascinating. And I love these conversations and people share with me. Oh, I just discovered this, and I had no idea. and just to make it clear, there's a paper trail on everybody. We can always find our roots. We really. It's very exciting to do that. And it helps diffuse a lot of kind of anger that can, you know, boil up and, well, so-and-so hadn't done such and such at that time. I wouldn't be who I am, blah, blah, blah. Okay. That's just as an individual. But then you happen to partner up with somebody whose marriage or just living with them, there's, you know, one plus one equals two.

And you, maybe you're going to be a, you know, all together kind of couple, but generally speaking, you bring the baggage from that other family into your family and now you're creating your next family. So how do you do that? And that's why we need to emphasize intergenerational postpartum support, because once you have reproduced and then you watch your loved one reproduce, you remember and you're triggered. And we don't talk about that. We don't.

And what we do know from the research in terms of who's at risk for depression and anxiety, mental illness is that it runs in families. And we know we don't understand it completely, but we do know what we do know. But we don't talk enough about that. And I believe in prevention. So I like to use the word peripartum perinatal, anything that includes pregnancy because that's the we call it the nine months of assuming it's all full term window of opportunity.

Jane Honikman: [00:19:05] This is the chance. This is the chance to learn about where did I come from? How is it from my parents? You know, most of you hear people say, well, I'm not going to do it like they did it. You end up eating your words usually because, you know, it's not that simple. But this is the time to reflect and understand and and ask the questions. You know, how was I raised and why was I raised there? Why did we move so many times I hated it.

You know, this was so disruptive for me. And I don't want that for my children. I want, you know, those are the dreams and the wishes of the upcoming next generation. Right? But I think pregnancy is not fully embraced as opportunity. You know, we think about only well, okay, conception, go, go to term, push this baby out and then then it all happens. No, no. This is an opportunity to really talk. There's a new emphasis. I've met a gentleman who's been doing this even longer than I have who believes in bringing farther into pregnancy.

And I'd not heard this opportunity expressed as well as articulated by this man who I have become friendly with. and it really makes us all pause to think, what is the role during pregnancy of the father and what as women, what do we do? We have to

examine what is our relationship to ourselves and what's the relationship to the provider of the sperm? He's an equal, is he? So we really need to examine that.

Jane Honikman: [00:20:51] And we have to embrace the idea that we need to understand the father's medical history. Does anybody ever ask him to fill out a form saying his past history, the blood type going to be influenced, whether the baby's has a blood type, right. We don't even have them write that down anywhere. It's all about the mother, all about the egg. So I challenge people now to think about that because I think that's the next step. Maybe people know that I've with Danny Singley written a book called *Factoring in Fathers Parental Mental Health*. *Factoring in fathers*. And there's a workbook that goes along with that. And my dream is that every couple who go in as a family, even, I mean, maybe we can get the grandparents to do this too. But there's a workbook that follows the father issue factors to address one of the most significant things that women don't understand at all.

I raise my hand and say, I didn't know this until I learned it from Danny Singley. What is masculinity? What is masculinity? How many times has a woman under ever understood what it feels like to be a man? I know I have brothers, and I've had sons and son in law and husband of many, many years. But I don't know what it feels like to be a man. And as women, we really need to step back and in paws, and I think that would help a whole lot in preventing mental illness. All forms of mental illness at every stage.

Sarah Trott: [00:22:35] What could we ask people to do or advise people to do? If they're listening and they're feeling inspired and they're thinking about starting a family or pregnant now maybe they're in that window of opportunity. So how are they going to work with their families, their partners, the men, the grandparents? Right.

Because we often have a I mean, we could say outdated ideas about traditional roles and traditional roles that grandparents play and fathers play and other kinds of partners play. But like, if we're going to start challenging this and bringing more equality to the fore, where would someone start? I mean, I like your suggestion of looking at your history, right?

Jane Honikman: [00:23:19] Yeah. Well, you can start by listening to the book. We've just put it on audible. So factoring in the fathers is now something people can listen to and learn from Danny Singley about this very, very important topic from an expert. He's a man. I mean, I can write the things about the female, but I can't do that. But I have a big heart for my men friends. And that's where you start. As women. We have to start that. We have to start that conversation. How does it feel like to, you know, they can't know what it feels like to have the baby moving inside of us. But we always try to, you know, embrace that.

One of the things that we've done successfully, and I'm very proud of the fact that my sons and sons in law are such co-equal fathers and parenting. I mean, in terms of the greatest change that I've seen as a woman is that role which I really insisted upon. It was my generation when we were a part of the, you know, we call it Lamaze. But, you know, that was just a technique. But the idea of let's learn about our bodies and what's going on inside of us as women.

But when we started PEP in the 70s, it wasn't about mothers, it was about parents and the shared experience. And that the language here, that's really, really important to embrace. And I know I shifted. We all shifted as girlfriends. I mean, we felt very angry at how we were treated as feminists during the 50s and the 60s. And then we altered that by all these incredible things that have happened to women and improvements and such. And we always think of, well, of course, we haven't gone far enough.

Jane Honikman: [00:25:13] And that's true, I agree. But we mustn't at the same time do anything to diminish the importance of men and boys. And if you have a son or have any, any inkling that you're living with somebody who's not, you know, built the way we are genitalia wise, you know, we need to understand what this all about. And of course, there's again, the mixture of genders. It's all mixed up. It's fluid. It comes and it goes.

And we have this feeling or that feeling. I mean, I was surrounded by boys. I played with them primarily with little boys growing up. They called me a tomboy because I like to do the same things as boys did. But I also played with the girls and I had dolls, and I had I played all of that too. So it was very, very comfortable. And then we go into our roles

and you're right, there's still the old fashioned traditional role playing, but we need to talk about that.

And then the book that Danny has written and articulated and now you can listen to it and you can fill out the workbook. I think getting the workbook distributed, I think it should be given out to every pregnant couple. And then in the book we have the American Association of Pregnancy. Is it American Pregnancy Association. But they have a wonderful long questionnaire about how to what what's happening for the man to fill out. I've never seen it actually, in practice. I don't know about that. but how will we change this? How will we? I challenge everybody to consider. How do we bring fathers into pregnancy?

Sarah Trott: [00:27:02] Right. Beyond just driving to the appointments.

Jane Honikman: [00:27:06] Exactly. And thinking they're only there to support the woman who's supporting him. And there's a lot of depression in the men. And that's pointed out in the book.

Sarah Trott: [00:27:18] Yeah, it's also kind of a nice time to be able to level set around expectations for after the baby comes to write about roles and like, well, my dad didn't change diapers, so I don't. So I'm not going to or whatever it may be. So having those conversations during pregnancy really helpful. Yeah.

Jane Honikman: [00:27:36] And that's what in our book is to challenge those. And they're very clearly delineated in the, in the chapter on roles and masculinity. What does it mean? And there's a lot of women who do not want to do it either.

Sarah Trott: [00:27:52] Right.

Jane Honikman: [00:27:52] You know, it's just you know, I and then in terms of grandparents expectations of next generation, you want to know what it feels like. You can only live it. It's like saying you can't prepare for birth. You don't know what it's going to feel like to be a parent. And you certainly can't know what it's going to be like to be a

grandparent. When you're told that you're going to be a grandparent until you get old enough to have that happen.

And I mean, the average age is really young, actually. many of us won't have grandchildren. Many of my peers are not having that role, but that doesn't diminish the fact that they were raised by grandparents in how they were influenced. And then there's important roles. You're always an aunt and niece or a surrogate. You can always be there and help for other people. It's wonderful what we can do. Intergenerationally there's so much love to go around. It's so healthy and it protects us from illness. It absolutely all the research says the same thing and it's social support. It's absolutely essential for survival. And so I think we should do more of it.

Sarah Trott: [00:29:09] Yeah. Agreed. Talk more about preventing illness with intergenerational support.

Jane Honikman: [00:29:16] The most important thing is to ask the questions of is their mental illness, physical illness, any kind of other traumas, migrations, famine. All of these things need to be explored. And there's a tremendous amount of research in this field. And it's an anthropological, you know, grounded in all cultures. We know that we have rights and we have rituals in culture. Now, why do you think we have those? Why were they even? Why did they come about? You know, because humanity needed it. They needed to figure this out. They did not know and understand birth or death. They didn't know about the next day.

And that was interesting to discover until people learned about mathematics, they didn't understand what the next day meant. And so that's why there's religion and there's beliefs and spirits and the otherness because people just didn't know. And there's a lot of fear, you know, what am I going to eat? I mean, I'm pretty basic, you know, fundamentals of life. But in terms of prevention, we can do a whole lot more by knowing ourselves. And you can only know yourself by knowing the people who raised you and the people who came before you. And the whole feel in terms of science is epigenetics, because we know we pass down our past through our genes and genes, retain and remember.

And that's why the phrase it's not your fault, you're not to blame. It's true. You can blame your ancestors because they're gone, right? But we're on their shoulders and we are who we are because of whatever happened to them. So just just take the time to learn your history and to ask the questions while people can still answer them. Uh. Very important. I just recently dug up some genealogy about my father's side of the family. luckily a genealogist in the family, and they asked the right questions, and they wrote it down, and they wrote letters and they put it in notebooks.

Jane Honikman: [00:31:35] Sometimes they just sit there. And this is an example. I had not read this particular letter that my father wrote to one of his brothers. And in the letter he's describing my brothers and he's describing himself. And my father passed away a very long time ago. and we weren't particularly close because I was a girl. I didn't know what to do with me. He only had brothers. He only had sons. And then, whoops, here's Jane. and so it was. So it was very important to dig around. Where are those letters? Where are those pictures? Who was that? Ask these questions. Find out when I've traveled and talked to other people and they learn what I do.

Sometimes somebody will say, well, you know, I always wondered what happened to Aunt Susie. She just disappeared. And they discovered that she was in an institution for the rest of her life, and it would happened around the birth of baby. So we need to know these things and then we can talk about it. De-stigmatize it. And the wonderful thing, is that you don't have to argue about this past. I mean, this is a fact. They came over in this particular way at this particular date. That's kind of neutral. That's kind of, you know, but why did they leave that place? And what happened when they got here and how did people change their names? They started dividing up property. They had wars. We had all sorts of things happening. Right. You need to know this. And that's prevention. I think it's rather simple, but nobody really asked me this very often.

Sarah Trott: [00:33:13] Well, when you put it that way, Jane, it is kind of simple.

Jane Honikman: Understanding your past. It's also a lot of fun too. I love doing family history research and finding out more and digging up old pictures or photographs. And,

you know, it's interesting how connections suddenly get made. You're like, oh, the light bulb goes off like, oh, that makes sense. And you see divorces and remarriages and different family parts of the family tree splitting off in different ways and things that, you know, maybe as a child, you remember the family wouldn't talk about. There's like some right forbidden thing. You can go back and say like, no, I'm still curious. I want to know, like, why? Like what happened? What was so shameful. And actually sometimes it's very healing to go back and say, oh no, that's that's normal life.

Jane Honikman: [00:34:02] It's called therapy. It's really therapeutic. And back to the word talk. Talking is therapy. It doesn't matter who you're speaking with. It's when you exhale and your oxygen goes out. It's a biological experience. Your brain releases all these chemistries and chemicals, and the neurons fire. So it's all very biological. And we have to do it. And we really need to do it. And we like to do it. And sometimes we do it badly. We have some. Some of us have more skills than others on how well we communicate our feelings. But these are things we can learn and improve on, because if you're having children, you're raising the next generation and you want them to speak in the such and such a way. That's kind and caring and empathetic and non-judgmental, but do we do it? I just recently saw another article that was about that. Smiling is gender biased that there was a study that who smiles more, parents smile more and they elicit more smiles from girls than boys. And there's an imbalance. And then the boys are not getting exposed to expressing themselves in such a way, and then they're judged. So we're doing this to all the time, to each other, and we're just not aware of it. I thought that was fascinating. Just something as simple as smiling.

Sarah Trott: [00:35:38] Yeah. Again, something that was probably learned many generations ago and just feels normal. Like it's like an unconscious thing.

Jane Honikman: [00:35:47] Yeah, I think it's a gender and sex specific thing about back to being a man. Being a woman. How do you behave and what's the roles? Yeah. Yeah, it's a fascinating thing. And then we can go back to. Well that's. She never smiled. And they turn out she may have an ingrown toenail. I mean, she was miserable because she, you know, was toothache and painful. And, you know, I mean, that's silly, but it's

not really because we express our feelings and they reflect in our eyes and our smiles. Yeah. In our language, of course.

Sarah Trott: [00:36:22] Yeah. And as you were saying earlier, body language, which is hard to see over a zoom call or something like that, but yeah. Oh, yeah. So talking about grandparents, then you know, one of the things that came to mind when we were speaking earlier was that when, when people have children, they're triggered. And it's possible again, to, like, see your children have children and be triggered about some of those same things, maybe things that you've since done work with, work on. Maybe. Maybe not. but it can cause dysregulation. Like again. Right?

Jane Honikman: [00:37:00] Exactly. And it does. I guarantee you it does. It's. You're not immune. And people wonder, why didn't my grandmother come over and help me more? I really needed her because maybe that grandmother had postpartum depression. Nobody was there for her, and she didn't know how to do it for the next generation. And it triggers. The brain does not forget anything. If one sentence is the brain retains it just retains everything.

We may not be aware of it, and certainly genetically, we're not that aware. Well, I have blue eyes because my mother, my father did. And I look like my father. So I have blue eyes kind of thing. But dispositions and interests and all these things, they are passed on. And it's a watching and learning that you're going to become a grandparent challenges your You're you. Who you are as a person and your life. The life expectancy. I'm old, I can't reproduce. I liked it when I could. I don't like seeing myself get wrinkled and gray. It's reality. My mother was my role model, and she taught me about not being in a hurry. You need to slow down, Jane. Take a nap. You don't have to do it all at once. You're going to live a long time.

Jane Honikman: [00:38:36] And I try to pass that on to anybody who will listen to me. Slow down. You move too fast. You got to make the moment last. And you can do that so much better than we do. And when we're young and it's not particular to any one generation. Not better or worse now or then. but we do need to pause and breathe slower. Slow it down. And now you've got a long life. And so I predict myself, project

myself as becoming 100 years old. Because I thought my mother was going to get to be 100, and it was really annoyed with her, and she didn't quite get to 91.

But she, you know, she set that example and we can all do the same thing. Slow down. You move too fast. Take that chain. You just need to. And the other thing you choose to get so annoyed with, you're giving them too many options. Just tell them that's what's for dinner. That's another example of this is how it is. yeah. And we learn that from living long enough to have the joy and the opportunity to be with older people. Trust me, we're a nice people. Older people.

Sarah Trott: [00:39:58] Yeah. And it comes from interaction and having it feel normal to have different generations interacting on a regular basis. Right?

Jane Honikman: [00:40:07] Yeah. One of the recently gave a talk about Grandparenthood to a group of grandparents or older people. and one of the comments was I used to get invited and see my family every birthday I was at every birthday party, and now they don't call me anymore. They don't celebrate the kids' birthdays. They've all grown up. And that's so sad to see the loneliness and the isolation for people who are no longer connected to their children and their grandchildren.

Or worst of all, all of this is alienation. To see my girlfriends being told they could never see their grandchildren. Do you know what kind of pain that is? And is very common. And I hope every listener will pause and think about that. How are you treating your grandparents and your parents? Because it's going to come back to you. And nobody deserves to be told you'll never. I'll never let you see my children again. That's such a horrible thing to do to another human being. And it's a trauma. And I dedicate my book to my girlfriend, who was told that. And she died not knowing anything about her grandchildren. It's just heartbreaking. And of course, the children are the lesser for it. They'll never know. But a wonderful woman, she was. So it's another part of the message.

Sarah Trott: [00:41:52] Yeah, well, those children will need to be doing their own research and work into understanding who she was, as we were talking about earlier.

Right. They'll have to start from zero. Start from scratch and say, well, like what paper trail exists? That will tell me who she was because they'll grow up and have their own questions.

Jane Honikman: [00:42:12] Exactly right. Yeah. Exactly right.

Sarah Trott: [00:42:16] Yeah. That is a trauma for sure. Well, what else do you want to share about the role of aging and grandparents and support for all generations?

Jane Honikman: [00:42:29] I think you already hit it with the word support. It just is that simple. And another word I love and we don't use enough is friendship. The friends that we have and we go out and hopefully you can do something social. is social support and it's activating your neurons every time you do that, but you need to set time aside to do it. So the example for me is that when my girlfriends and I started PEP so long ago, we have maintained that same concept to meet regularly, and we've aged together and grown old and shared together, and we still do it.

If you ever come to my house and my neighborhood and you'd see on Tuesday morning we have breakfast together and it's not a closed group. It's open and welcoming and, you know, people come and go and they don't come every time, but they stop by and have a cup of whatever. And we just laugh and carry and care about each other and silliest things like, well, who do you use for a plumber? I mean, you know, there's some pragmatic kinds of things, but who do you ask? Well, you asked your girlfriends and your couple friends and the guy friends and. Yeah. Definitely not gender specific. You definitely need to have friends and you need to have friends of different ages.

And I particularly love my work. I do and continue to do because I get to meet all the young people. There was so much fun for me. I think others of us like the same thing, and hopefully it's transpired back and forth and grandchildren have the advantage. And then don't see my children very often anymore because they're so busy.

Jane Honikman: [00:44:26] And that's the advantage of having these devices called, you know, phones and texting, learning how to do all the technology to stay in touch.

That's really been very, very nice. And just by the way, the research shows that grandparents are very tech savvy, very tech savvy, and that we love it. And my, our first grandchildren were born at a time where we didn't have any of this, and they lived halfway around the world and we saw each other once, maybe every year.

But we had letters on those days and the telephone and I think back to my grandmother when she was eight, and she left her grandparents behind the foreign country to come to this foreign country. They never saw them again. Never. And that's happening today. The displacement, migration, all of these traumas that happen again and again and again. Ah, but somehow we soldier on and keep going. And you know that another ethic of positive moving forward. My mother was not a big believer in looking backwards. She thought it was silly that I was so interested in all the other genealogy.

But, you know, she was pragmatic, and I know she got it from the generation that her parents, when they came from, you know, Europe during war. I mean, you know, you have to move on. How do you do this? Somehow we keep doing it and then we have another generation. We hope they'll be living in peace and harmony. But friendship really is fundamental, and the partnering of generations is fundamental to human development.

Sarah Trott: [00:46:25] Yeah, yeah. And I appreciate that. You talk about how it's very open and it's not gendered, and you're inviting people in to create connection. And it's the opposite of isolation.

Jane Honikman: [00:46:37] Is exactly right. No man is an island. No one stands alone. We all need each other.

Sarah Trott: [00:46:45] And is there anything else that you want to speak to is specific to fatherhood and partners.

Jane Honikman: [00:46:51] Well, embrace it and speak up and say what you're feeling. I want to point out something that I've witnessed in my field that is that it is still too pink. There are too many females ruling the field. And an example was at a conference I

attended once I went up to one of the few men. there I said, how? How? How's it going? Are you having a good time? You're meeting people. And he's. His response was, well, I was having this conversation with meeting somebody new.

And then another woman walked by and she turned away from me, turned her back on me to speak with that other woman instead of continuing or embracing him. And I thought, wow, we do that. That's not okay. Not okay at all. This should be equal numbers of males and females in the room having conversations around parenthood. Exclamation mark. And then it should be. And where are the grandparents? And then you get all these wonderful stories.

Sarah Trott: [00:48:10] Right. Because there's a lot of experience that comes with that life experience and education over the years. Yeah.

Jane Honikman: [00:48:16] Yeah. And shared trauma.

Sarah Trott: [00:48:20] And would you say the same is true for I mean, you talked about more diversity for the topic of parenthood, but does that extend into birth and postpartum specific topics as well?

Jane Honikman: [00:48:33] Absolutely. I mean, again, I my generation of the husbands, when they knew they were becoming fathers, we made them come to childbirth education classes. Okay. It's like. Huh? What are you talking about? We made them hold the babies and diaper the babies. That's my generation. We started that. Okay. And we've been very successful in seeing that change. It's not weird anymore to see the man pushing the stroller.

And we don't go up to him and say something. I mean, just a few years ago, people would say, oh, aren't you wonderful? You're babysitting? Well, he's my baby. I'm not sitting him. He's my baby too, you know? So we've come a long way. We just need to do that more genuinely. yeah. And it definitely starts with conversation of even. Should we become parents? I mean, there are people who are saying, and this is why some of my

friends are not having grandchildren because their children are saying, I don't want to, we don't want to.

We don't like the world that they'd be brought into. And I think, what a shame. What a sad state of affairs. How are we going to make it a better world if we're not here to do that? So we do need to, you know, carry on from what we've inherited and make it a better world. You can only do that by reproducing and with good conscience and support. And everybody is part of the picture and, and embraces the idea that back to it's not an easy thing to do. And there are more unknowns than there are knowns. You have no idea what you're getting into. I'm sorry, honey, but you just and I it's a platitude, I know, and I keep my mouth shut, but I go mhm.

Oh, by the way, the number one rule for grandparents is to keep your mouth shut.

Sarah Trott: [00:50:31] Still. Is that true?

Jane Honikman: [00:50:33] Absolutely. And so may it be for you when it's your turn.

Sarah Trott: [00:50:40] I'm listening, Jane.

Jane Honikman: [00:50:42] Yeah, because we don't like being. We didn't like being told what to do. And I know my kids didn't like being told what to do. I'm still, you know, suffer the consequences. But now that I can say just you wait when you're a parent. And now they all are. And so it's really been fun to have that journey and then, you know, learning to keep your mouth shut. And fortunately, a lot of the alienation issues are because my friends did not know when to do that and not. And when they're told, don't meddle. You have to not meddle. It's kills you because you know you did it right. You did fine. The kid came out okay. Well, maybe not so much, you know, and now it's coming back to roost. But yeah, it's all about conversation and talking and learning and sharing and discovering you're not alone. Yeah.

Sarah Trott: [00:51:38] Yeah, new generations are going to have their own ideas about how to evolve and make things better for themselves and their children. And it may be different from what I think or other people think. Yeah.

Jane Honikman: [00:51:51] Oh, one last word. Please don't make judgments. Judging is poison. Do not judge others. It's not the way you're going to do it. But you shouldn't judge them as being done that way. It's really hard because you really do think that you know better, especially as you age. I'm so wise now. I can't tell you how wonderful it feels to be older and wiser. I love this, you know. And I can say what I want to say, and people can laugh in my face or, you know, whatever, turn on the heel. But generally speaking, yeah, elders know they've lived longer. They've witnessed it. They watched it. They suffered it. You know, we should respect that. And don't judge. It goes both ways.

Sarah Trott: [00:52:47] Yeah. It sounds like the trick is to know when to listen and also to know, to tap into that wisdom like ask, ask your elders, get involved with them, have those conversations, develop friendships with people who are older than you.

Jane Honikman: [00:53:02] And different from you. Very different from you. Yeah, whether it's an ethnicity, racial, cultural, whatever it may be, you know, ask and learn from each other. Don't judge. And yeah, be open and honest and authentic. I like the word authentic the best. Be a real self.

Sarah Trott: [00:53:24] Yeah. Jane, is there any final word or thought that you want to leave us with?

Jane Honikman: [00:53:33] Go forth and multiply. I don't know. But embrace each other with a smile and continue on. We're doing so much better than we think we are. And the world is a better place. Actually, people think that it's not. But some of us can say no. It was. It was hard then. Listen to me. Because I remember you know, embrace each other, try to be in person and be together and care. Yeah. Come and see me anytime. I'd love to have visitors. And if I meet you. If I meet you at another event or something, please come up to me and let's hug. And then just remember, I probably won't remember your name. I'm beginning to I was I've never been good at names, so I'm not

going to say it's because I got older. But it's true that, you know, you really may recognize it, but you don't recognize somebody. But don't judge me for that.

Sarah Trott: [00:54:48] Yeah. No judgment at all in any direction for any of us. And I love that message as well. Jane has been such a pleasure to speak with you. If people do want to reach out to you and get in touch, I know it's not in person, but is there a way for them to find you online and connect with you?

Jane Honikman: [00:55:05] Oh, absolutely. And jane@janehonikman.com. And you can find me and you can go Google me and whatever me. I never did manage the other social medias very well, but I have a Facebook account and I love I post things there and I'm very prideful. I keep deciding, do I really post a picture of the dog my granddaughter just got or is that. I think that's too much. So you're probably not going to see that. But yeah, I friendships mean a lot to me. And I find all opportunities to embrace people a gift, an absolute gift. And I feel very blessed. So thank you, Sarah so much for this opportunity. It's really special.

Sarah Trott: [00:56:00] Thank you so much for being a returning guest on the show. Thank you for your friendship, Jane. And again, thank you for all the amazing work you've done to help create more friendship and connection on this planet. And again, Spotlight on Postpartum Support International for this episode and all the great work that you have done and your amazing legacy. With that, I want to say thank you again and we'll see you next time.

Jane Honikman: [00:56:29] Thank you Sarah. Bye everybody.

Sarah Trott: You can subscribe to this podcast in order to hear more from us. [Click here for iTunes](#) and [click here for Spotify](#). 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.