



## Conscious Life presents

### Talk Therapy vs Somatic Therapy

Guest - Crystle Lampitt

*Disclaimer: The contents of this interview are for informational purposes only and are not intended to be a substitute for professional medical or psychological advice, diagnosis, or treatment. This interview does not provide medical or psychological advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical or psychological condition.*

#### **[00:00:09] Meagen Gibson**

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, your conference co-host. Today I'm speaking with Crystle Lampitt, a licensed therapist, speaker and trauma specialist. Her passion is helping others who feel stuck in survival mode to find a greater sense of alignment and self-trust. After years of her own self-sabotage, burnout and dysfunctional relationships, Crystle was diagnosed with multiple auto-immune diseases, which forced her to stop, refocus and change.

She left her career as a TV journalist to go back to school to become a therapist, and in the process, to confront the trauma that was keeping her sad, sick and stuck. Now Crystle's mission is to help spread hope and encourage others to never give up on themselves, even when prospects seem bleak. Using a somatic, relational, and neuroscience-informed approach, Crystle supports others in finding peace, healing trauma, and creating the life they want. Thank you so much for joining me today, Crystle Lampitt.

#### **Crystle Lampitt**

Hey, thanks for having me. It's always good to be here.

#### **Meagen Gibson**

So I love talking with you. Since I first interviewed you, gosh, I want to say a couple of years ago, you have started Somatic Experiencing therapy. And so I wanted to talk to you because as somebody who's just started this recently and also had a career outside of psychology and therapy before you became a therapist.

You have a unique way and lens of being able to talk to people about what is the difference between conventional therapy and Somatic Experiencing trained therapists. And also, you have that kind of journalistic lens that we can never let go of once we're... journalists.

#### **Crystle Lampitt**

I know. It's in your DNA.

## **[00:01:49] Meagen Gibson**

Yeah, exactly. And we look at things as the journalist to explain things to a consumer. So I'd love if you could start there of just that journey to there and how you ended up here.

## **Crystle Lampitt**

Yeah, the journalistic instinct, right? Do you find kind of a skepticism that comes with that, too? You want to question everything. You want to research everything. You're like, is this real? Is there evidence? Is there data backing this up? That was 100% me. That's just 100% me. And I still have those parts.

Love them. They're great. They help me connect with my clients, I think. Now that I'm in private practice and seeing clients regularly and starting to work with Somatic Experiencing and introducing people to this. Because honestly, sometimes the trauma work feels a little convoluted. And if you're someone who likes to intellectualize, you could be in therapy, talk therapy for years and years and years and years, and feel the support that comes with that.

There is a lot of value in verbal processing. But what we see a lot is, I'm going through my story. Things are making more sense. Oh, I get why I do that now. But then I'm still having panic episodes, and I'm still feeling really stuck and sluggish. And when I came into this work... I come from a family that's like, "Therapy? Why are you in therapy? What do you need therapy for? Your childhood was great. Your life is great. You have nothing to be upset about".

And again, from the journalistic instinct, it's like, okay, talking about my feelings, like, what? So I really did. I actually had to allow those parts to be there. Ask a lot of these questions. I did a ton of my own research on EMDR, actually, before I first sought therapy, because EMDR has been around for a long time. It's got lots of evidence-based studies behind it. And that's what helped me put my skepticism aside just for a little bit.

And then when I started getting into that and seeing that mind-body connection, all I knew was that it seemed to help. Yoga also seemed to help me. I don't know why. Connecting with my body seemed to soothe my system. And eventually, I did seek out a Somatic Experiencing therapist, had my first session, and it completely fell flat.

It was like, what is this? This is so weird. She was, like, asking me to notice... My fingers and my hands. I have a little bit of a skin-picking thing that I do with my fingers and my cuticles. And she's like, "What would it be like to notice you touching that area of your hand?" And I'm like, "What is she talking about?" I was so weirded out by it.

Never in a million years did I think seven, eight years later I'd be here in a training for three years, heavily into it, introducing my clients to it. And I think it just took my own pacing. It took my own exposure and research. I see it as almost like a bit of buy-in. And not in a salesy yuck way, but just in a genuine sense of, I've been doing talk therapy for x amount of years.

And you know what? You might need that first before your system, before your mind is going to be open to something like somatic work. And that's okay. I think it's all part of the journey. And I needed that. I needed talk therapy. I needed EMDR. I needed to do some of this before I could really get to a place where somatic even sounded interesting to me.

**[00:05:30]**

And I'm still learning. I mean, I'm in the training right now. Like, I said, it's three years long, so I'm going to be in it for a little bit. And I still have moments where I'm like, "Oh, that's what that is".

I tell you what, I don't think I was really very connected to my body at all for most of my life. And I'm only just starting to get sensation back, starting to notice things in my body. Even from the food that I eat. How does this food sit with me? Unless I was having mega-symptoms, I didn't notice anything.

So it's been a wonderful journey of skepticism. What is this? To really slowly but surely coming around to getting my master's degree, becoming a therapist. And then after you graduate, you pretty much can choose what you want your continuing education to look like. And it just kind of worked out.

I saw an opportunity. The training came to Kansas City where I am, and I was like, "All right, it's a sign". And here I am having a whole new body... A whole new relationship with my body, I should say. Skepticism is still there, though, and I kind of appreciate it because it helps me with my clients when they're like "huh?".

And then I can say, "Oh, okay. Do we want to go through some of the research studies? Do you want me to tell you about some of the reasons why? Some of the science why this might be helpful. And I do find that that helps people kind of open up to the process a little bit.

### **Meagen Gibson**

I love that. I want to circle back to so much of what you said because... Yeah, healthy skepticism, for sure, as a former journalist myself as well. I feel like a lot of people with trauma histories get into a profession where skepticism can be leveraged, right? Because that's the way that we're going to leverage our always seeking safety. Like always trying to re-establish safety, get enough information, get enough instinct, get enough evidence that we're safe.

And also, I love that you said that it depends where you are on your trauma healing journey, and I'm sure that you remember where you were when you first started. I remember where I was when I first started, and I didn't even know I had trauma. I just knew that I had these specific symptoms and feelings that I was desiring to be rid of and how I was going to get there.

Had no idea what was going on underneath it and what I would unpack. Because much like you, I was from an environment where therapy was not normalized. Mental health support was not normalized. And I can't remember what else I was going to say...

And just to be in a therapeutic environment of talk therapy, where your feelings and your experiences are being validated for the first time. There's no discounting how valuable that can be. And I don't think either of us are discounting that. Like, talk therapy does wonders for people who have never in their life heard anyone say, "The way you feel makes sense". Right?

**[00:08:28] Crystle Lampitt**

Yeah, such a relief.

**Meagen Gibson**

But then after three years of hearing "the way you feel makes sense", you might find yourself saying, "Great, now what? Okay, great. I understand why I feel the way I feel makes sense. And now I would like to stop feeling that way. So what's our next step? What else do we have available to us?".

And I see that as being the beautiful benefit of things like EMDR and Somatic Experiencing. But we have not said exactly what Somatic Experiencing is. Give us a little bit of an insight there.

**Crystle Lampitt**

The simplest way to really introduce Somatic Experiencing, when I tell my clients about it, is it includes the body in the conversation. We're still going to talk. We're still going to have conversations. We're still going to check in with your life and your system. And in fact, when you're tuning into your body, you have to be able to verbalize to me. You don't have to be able to, but you're going to be most likely verbalizing to me what's going on in your system.

So it's just a type of therapy that... It works really well for trauma, especially shock trauma. However, I work with a lot of complex trauma, which is more of those little chronic and prolonged traumas that. Like you were saying, "I didn't even know I had trauma. I don't know if I would consider that trauma".

And the thing I really appreciate about SE is one, because we're including the body, we're opening up another channel in a way. The meaning-making channel is the thinking channel that most of us use. You know, the intellectualizing. The research. The "Oh, maybe I did that because my mom... And this and that".

And that's a wonderful channel to have. And insight and awareness is brilliant, but we also introduce sensations. We introduce urges. Do you notice any urges in your body? We look at emotions, the emotionals of where the emotion shows up in your system? How does it feel to be with that emotion? Which probably comes up in talk therapy as well.

And we also use the image channel. So this comes up with EMDR a lot. Again, which is why EMDR, for me personally, was a nice introduction to Somatic Experiencing, because you do use that image channel of "Oh, can you see what we're processing? Can you see the person that you're talking about?". We have that all in our mind's eye most of the time.

So whichever one is your strongest channel. I think of it as literally like you're flipping channels on a television. Most of us, I would say it's the meaning-making. It's the stories. It's the narrative. And that's, again, talk therapy. That's brilliant. And if we can also include... Because think about it, it's like we have these five senses. Most of us, right? It's like, if we're only using one, how much important data are we missing?

**[00:11:23]**

And that was a really important missing component in my own journey, doing my own therapy here too, was... I could have all the awareness. I read all the books. Not all the books, but a lot of them. And I had all of this information. And the intellectualizing was a safer place for me, and for a lot of people. It just felt safer to be there.

So, with somatic work, we introduce all these other channels. Yes, meaning-making, but also behavior, urges, emotions, sensations. So we get more data, and it just offers another layer of support. But I do think it requires a little bit of openness or understanding of how our nervous systems work so that people aren't just sitting there totally like, "What is this? What am I supposed to be looking for?".

So we want to introduce parasympathetic, rest-and-digest in the nervous system. We want to explain. What is sympathetic, fight-flight-freeze? How do you track that in your system? I even have people use a number scale sometimes. If they're having panic, if they're having anxiety, explaining that as this is part of your nervous system trying to protect you.

Anxiety looks a lot like fight-or-flight. I mean, think about it. Clammy hands, heart racing, dry mouth. That's your system going, "Hey, we got to protect you". And so, first and foremost, I like to invite people to track their systems. This is what I did.

Most of the time, where would you say your system lives? Are you at six or above? Somewhere in your fight-flight-freeze? Feeling panicky, feeling anxious? Ten would be like... On a scale of one to 10... 10 would be like "Urgh". Me in my total meltdown, or total freeze and dissociation. And five or below might be, I'm somewhere in my parasympathetic rest-and-digest response.

And I know I'm here when I'm eating dinner with my husband, and we're able to digest our food. My body is functioning, and I feel relaxed, and I feel calm. And one is not better than the other. It's just if you're living at a six or above or you're living at a ten, God forbid, which most of us can't probably stay at a ten for very long. But if that's where your system is really used to living, in a somatic sense, it's exhausting.

Makes your adrenals, your cortisol, makes everything just out of whack in your body. And that's what really it came down to for me was my own chronic health issues. And I started to see, like, okay, something's got to give, something has to change.

And so... Different people, it's different things. Oh, it's the relationship. Oh, it's the body that starts to give out. I don't know why. I just can't move. I feel stuck. And so whatever that is, if we can just start to invite tuning into your system and what it might be signaling to you. Because it's not the problem, right? The symptoms are problematic. Don't get me wrong. But the symptoms are actually signaling you towards something.

And I sometimes see this visible sigh of relief when people are like, "Oh, so I'm not broken. My anxiety is trying to tell me something. My symptoms are trying to tell me something". And then we can get really curious. And that's one area that I really appreciate with SE work is, you get to look at the whole system, and you get to look at all the different channels that are available to you.

**[00:14:36] Meagen Gibson**

Absolutely. And you wouldn't think that we would need someone with specialized training to teach us how to be in tune with our bodies and our systems, but we do.

**Crystle Lampitt**

I know I did, 100%.

**Meagen Gibson**

And I'm not in any way bragging about my parenting, because moment to moment it's like a very... I'm not consistently awesome. But my kids do know what the nervous system is, and they do understand when they get all puffed up... I have two boys, so there's a lot of activation. They're not in too much rest-and-digest a lot.

But I talk to them about their cues through modeling it. I'm like, "I've noticed when I'm getting really angry with you guys, I purse my lips. I go like this. And that's my cue that I am starting to get upset with you guys. And I need to regulate myself so that I don't speak to you unfairly and I don't blah, blah, blah".

But I had to be taught to tune into it myself so that I could then model it, so that they can then understand it. Because nobody had ever taught me that. We'd just be these big meat sacks that react all the time instead of responding to things.

**Crystle Lampitt**

Yeah. Do they respond to that too? Do you find that your kiddos actually can make sense of that?

**Meagen Gibson**

They do. I will warn anyone who's watching, who has kids, who's like, "Oh, that sounds really powerful". There's this tipping point when they become teachers, where they tune into the way you're talking to them. And my oldest started about a year ago. He was like, "Here comes mom's therapy voice".

So I had to just shift into a consultant voice, not "mom therapy voice". So this teenager shift thing happens where, yeah... But now I'm not teaching and modeling as much to him, as much as receiving and getting consultation requests.

He's like, "I've noticed this thing's happening. What do you think about that?". I have to wait for the approach instead of... Basically like, the first twelve years are establishing that I'm a safe person to come to.

**Crystle Lampitt**

Twelve years. Look at that. And it's slow and steady, right? Slow and steady wins the race. Like, twelve years.

**[00:16:46] Meagen Gibson**

I hate to tell you parents, but it's a long investment before you get a return. But it is wonderfully worth it. Anyway, this is not about my parenting. This is about everything else.

But it just occurs to me how it can sound so ridiculous to be like, "You have to go to somebody who's been taught how to feel and sense their body safely, and then they're going to teach you that".

But I cannot under-estimate the strength in that because intellectualizing doesn't make things make sense, right? As far as, even if you could tune in. Someone teaches you to tune in. If you're only at the surface level, say, somebody says, "Hey, we'd love for you to present this data at the meeting next week". And you start sweating, you might know, "Oh, wow! Okay, I guess I'm nervous".

But you don't actually know know. You don't know what the core source of that is. You might not have the felt sense of, like, when have you not been supported in times of spotlight? Or what is it? The actual feeling. What are you actually afraid of? And you might not have ever had a container to do that in. So you can understand that something's happening and not...

**Crystle Lampitt**

Not on a cognitive level.

**Meagen Gibson**

Yeah. And not feel any power or safety. Or know how to establish safety, right?

**Crystle Lampitt**

Yeah, absolutely. And kind of what you're naming too is what upon reflecting on my life and my previous career in TV news and being on camera every day. And I hosted a live morning show every day that was so fun. And I could get this adrenaline rush and I could get this excitement and found that I really liked interviewing people. I do. I genuinely love people. And I think that helps if you're going to be a therapist.

But I was dissociated for most of it and for really a lot of my life. So what's been really interesting about starting to dip into more of this somatic work is, more information is coming up in the form of body memories. That also, then I have more images that become available. Because I was almost in that meaning-making, that cognitive channel for so long, I didn't realize how much I was dissociating.

And what's interesting about this is sometimes I hear clients say they have almost a sense of amnesia. Like they've forgotten. They've gotten really good at forgetting, which can be an adaptive survival strategy, right? I know for me that was one. And so sometimes people will say things, "Hey, remember when that blah, blah, blah happened?".

**[00:19:33]**

And I'm like, "No. Did that happen?". And so it takes me a while, and it's a slow process. I even tell other therapists this when they're struggling. And I tell myself this when we're working with someone for a long time. Okay, so I have a lot of clients who are like, "Hey, I'm coming into you because I know I have this trauma and I want to process it and I want to work through it".

And a year goes by and they don't even want to talk about it. Because it's that, like you said, twelve years. Maybe not twelve years with my clients who are consenting and who are adult. But often it is, you're first creating that safe container. You're first creating that felt sense. And I don't rush it.

What's interesting is the less of an agenda you have... Because a lot of people's nervous systems pick up on agenda. Like, "Oh, she's trying to get me somewhere". The more you come with curiosity and compassion and validation and like, "Oh, what was that sensation in your body just then? Oh, what was that facial expression?".

One thing that's been interesting that has been reflected back to me as other people practice SE on me is that I show a lot of emotion in my body and in my face and I don't feel it. And so until another person is reflecting back to me, "Your face looks sad", or "I'm noticing a facial expression right now. Do you notice what your face is doing?".

I have had to come back multiple times and go, "Oh, really?". And really sit and go into, "What am I actually feeling?". And it's still really quite challenging for me at times because I got so good at dissociating. I got so good at putting on this really... Authentic, but also a little flighty, dissociation energy where I could interact with people but not really be embodied.

And so it's been interesting to see how much starts to come back. How this amnesia plays a role in, like... If I just need to get through something, I'll just get through it. And then later you'll look back and be like, "What did I even say?". This still happens to me sometimes when I'm presenting in groups. I'll be like, "Did anything I say make any sense at all?".

And like you said, it's just when you don't have that container or that support or, "Oh, that's why my hands are clammy. Oh, that's why I'm out of breath". And you don't understand what's happening. And you don't have someone to teach you that. Your body just does what it needs to do and what it's learned to do really, to adapt.

And so, yeah, it's a long, slow learning, and you cannot underestimate the power of that safe container and that slowness. There's a saying in SE, "Slow is fast. Trauma happens fast. Healing happens slow". And I tell myself that all the time because my system's like, "All right, let's go". It's just not how it works.

### **Meagen Gibson**

Crystle, what you just said is very relatable, and I can totally remember points in my career where that exact same thing happened. So what is global high intensity activation when it comes to Somatic Experiencing?



## **[00:22:38] Crystle Lampitt**

Yeah, this was a term that was introduced to me recently. And it's funny because in these training sessions, you're in a room with, like, maybe 100 other therapists and 100 other nervous systems, and people are like, "Oh, is that what's going on in my system?".

Global high is essentially, it's a nervous system that is kind of lit up like a Christmas tree. So when I was talking earlier about that... You know, if you were on a scale of one to ten, where would you put yourself most days? Someone with global high might feel like, "Oh, I live at, like, a seven. I live at an eight. Or I'm chronically at a five and a half".

And it can kind of feel buzzy. I go, go, go. Maybe a high achiever. You might describe yourself as, "I'm type A. I'm just really organized. I'm just really ambitious. I have a lot of energy. I just do a lot of things". You know.

Different presentations. Sometimes someone will come in with a global high. For one person, this might look like... At the training, we like to have a little trampoline and pillows and tools and props that we're using, and someone with global high might just bound into the room and start jumping on the trampoline. "This feels good".

So it might even look a little bit like ADHD. So there's a lot of crossover. It doesn't have to look that quote unquote hyperactive, let's say. It can be an internal global high as well. And it just essentially happens when our system is used to being chronically on alert. It can happen from shock trauma. Things like drowning. Things like really scary, threatening experiences where the body hasn't really had a chance to process, digest and discharge some of the energy that can come with those traumatic experiences.

What was funny about learning about global high is how many people had this sense of, "Oh, well, that's not me" or "Oh, that's definitely me". And in my system, this looked a lot like ADHD. So I've been diagnosed with ADHD and my brain is like ping-pong! Go, go, go!

Like I said, this worked really well in television because I could meet someone. The whole point of the morning show, in order to have a good interview in really four minutes, right? Like, really quick, was to meet the person in the green room, help them feel really comfortable, give them a sense of what to expect...

Now I know from a nervous system perspective why that worked. When you tell people what's coming, they feel a lot less nervous because their system can go, "Oh, I'm safe. Oh, I know what's going to happen. And then she's going to ask me this question".

I'm like, oh, I didn't even know that's what I was doing. But that's what that sort of priming allows for that nervous system to settle. And it had to be kind of quick. We'd go in and out. I mean, I'd be interviewing four or five plus individuals every day, maybe more. If I was interviewing a band, let's say there could be five people in that band.

I would come out of it, no idea, not remembering anything. Sometimes it would be embarrassing because people would remember me and I wouldn't remember them. To be fair, I mean, when you're interviewing 30 plus people a week, that's probably fair...

**[00:25:56]**

But I also believe part of it was my ability to dissociate and kind of function in this global high state, where I could move really fast. I could do a lot. I could help people feel comfortable and then get the interview done. In, out, boom.

And when I was learning about this, what was funny was... I could access more if the other person was meeting me at that pace and then slowly slowing down rather than trying to slow me down too fast. Because then my system would go, "Why are you asking me to slow down? What are you doing?".

And I'd get really activated around it. At first, when I learned this term, I couldn't even use the term. I came up with gray hippos. So, G-H-I-A. Global high intensity activation. The word that came to mind was like... I couldn't even say the word. Something about it activated my system of like, "That's not me". I'm totally embodied.

### **Meagen Gibson**

Offensive, like, actively offensive. You were so identified with it. Sort of yourself knew, and it was like, "nuh-uh!".

### **Crystle Lampitt**

Nope! So it's become a bit of an inside joke now, where suddenly I could access it if I called it gray hippos. And I could laugh at it, and I could be a little silly with it. It was really interesting because when we named it and I started to access that energy in my body. And the person working with me was able to meet me in that energy and then slowly, slowly slowed down, I burst into tears. No idea why.

I became acutely aware of how protective this mechanism is. And it just made me realize, wow! These global high parts that sometimes prevent me from taking care of myself and how neglected my system actually is. My body, my everything. It just brought up this huge grief wave.

But if it weren't for naming that and understanding that pacing, I don't think I would have been able to access that. You can't slow people down too fast. It's kind of like an on-ramp. Like a really long on-ramp when you're working with global high.

And so I do wonder sometimes if people who identify as workaholics, people who have perfectionist parts, if it may be possible that your system has this pace because it is a protective mechanism. And in the long term, it is exhausting. And it's okay to be exhausted by it. And it's okay to like this part and see how useful it is and also be tired of it sometimes and want to start to shift it.

But just know that it's a slow process. You can't rip away all those security blankets all at once, otherwise the global high ramps up even more. So it's a system that just lives at that slightly activated state most of the time.

**[00:28:40] Meagen Gibson**

It was funny, you said really long on-ramp, and I was thinking of those emergency off-ramps for trucks when their brakes fail. So it's like one of those where you're just like, "I'd like to invite you to go up this trail that goes nowhere, but you'll eventually stop".

**Crystle Lampitt**

Yes. Slow, slow, slow. I love that. Yeah, I like that even a little better. Sloooooow.

**Meagen Gibson**

That was where my mind went.

**Crystle Lampitt**

Love that. Yeah, great analogy. Can I use that? Can I steal that?

**Meagen Gibson**

Of course, yeah, it's yours now. You came up with it.

**Crystle Lampitt**

Thank you. I appreciate it.

**Meagen Gibson**

And as you were talking, I'm thinking about people like you and I, who are like, "How do I know I have trauma?". And also, I want to take the opportunity to say, and you've explained it earlier. But there's the very acute DSM diagnostic traumas that everyone is familiar with. And then there's either CPTSD or, I don't want to say smaller, because it's not a size competition. But lesser traumas that are just as impactful because our body doesn't get to decide what society deems is real trauma and what isn't real trauma, right?

And so I'm thinking of something like, my youngest son had an incident when he was about six years old. We went on a ski trip, and he was with the dads. I'm not trying to throw the dads under the bus, but you'll just understand what I mean in a second. All the moms will be like, "Yeah, that tracks".

But the dads were just taking it... They had a trail of kids behind them. Everyone on that slope had identical snowsuits on. Helmets and glasses. So we're all like unidentifiable aliens. And my youngest, because he's like, "squirrel" does not keep up with the group and gets lost. He gets left behind and does not know where my husband is, or any of the dads are. And everyone looks the same, right? And that was created later...

And thankfully, because I'm hyper-vigilant, I had given him a picture of our family in his pocket with my phone number on the back. And I said, if you get lost or you get scared on the slopes, my number is on the back. Find a mom and ask her if you can call your mom.

**[00:30:45]**

And so he knew exactly what to do. He had been prepared for this moment, but it was no less traumatizing, legitimately for him. Even though I didn't feel like it should be traumatizing. My husband didn't think it was traumatizing.

But then for the next four years, anytime we were in public, he was completely anxious and just gripped to our side. Holding onto a t-shirt or holding onto a jacket or a leg or something. Or very much like "where...?".

And so even though somebody could look at that and be like, "Oh, your son got lost on the ski trip". It was for him... The circumstances don't matter. For him, he was separated from a parent and it scared the heck out of him. And so I say that because I want to share an anecdote like that before we say, how do you know you have trauma?

Because people automatically... Their minds are going to go, "I don't have trauma. What happened to me wasn't important. That wasn't bad. So many people have it worse". Like, our minds will automatically start doing that before we even hear what trauma is. So how do we know we have trauma, Crystle?

### **Crystle Lampitt**

Yes. Perfect example. And I love that you mention the age. You mentioned what that nervous system is going through at such a young age, it needs a higher level of attachment and secure attachment than someone who's 25. You need to know where your parents are when you're six. You just do. It's just part of safety.

And this is probably the most common misconception that comes up in my sessions with clients is, "I don't have any trauma. I'm totally fine. I just have all of these weird symptoms. I'm anxious all the time. I'm depressed all the time. I hate myself. I have really low self-esteem. I have really low self-worth. No one ever said this to me, though. I don't know why I feel this way. But I don't have any trauma".

And so we really have to practice looking at trauma from the lens of the nervous system's perspective. It is more about the way the brain interprets danger or safety signals than it is about your cognitive understanding of it or your narrative of it, especially as an adult. And I did this the other day. It's so funny even being immersed in this. Studying this.

The other day... I didn't say I don't have any trauma, but I'm aware of my trauma now. But I minimized an experience when I was about eight years old that actually was a pretty acute trauma where I got kicked in the chest by a horse. And my body was really small, and I actually walked away without any major injuries. I was just really scared. I was really startled. And this event... Nowhere on my radar, right? For better or for worse, my life has so many other stressors.

### **Meagen Gibson**

You're like, "In the comparison chart of bad things that happened to me".

## **[00:30:45] Crystle Lampitt**

Yeah, whatever. It was like, in my head as an adult especially, I was like, "That's like falling off your bike. It's not a big deal. I wasn't injured. I didn't go to the hospital. I went to the doctor, got checked out. And I found myself minimizing it. But you have to think, I was eight. I was scared. I got pushed back.

As I started working on this memory and processing more of it, I had all these physical sensations associated with it that I was not aware of. I didn't know where my mom was for a moment. I dissociated pretty hardcore. And as I started working on this, more details, more memories started becoming available. I remember crying a lot. And then there was a lot of shaming around crying in my family. You weren't supposed to cry in my family.

So then there were all these layers of, "Wow, what got really stuck and frozen in my system at that time?". So we have to think about it from the perspective of an eight year old's nervous system. And we have to think about it from the perspective of what that specific nervous system can digest or not.

And so when we're looking for trauma patterns, one, we're looking for patterns, right? So when we're looking at potential trauma, you want to look... Another saying in SE is, "What's incomplete repeats". So if you notice something that keeps coming up in your life. I keep dating the same type of abusive dude. I keep doing the same thing to my body. I have a workaholic part that just drives me. A slave driver, right? That pushes me into the ground sometimes with this work ethic.

When you find these patterns, sometimes there's something keeping that in place because it's what your body has learned to do to adapt, to keep yourself safe. Your brain's number one job is to keep you alive. So it's keeping you alive, but it might not feel very good the way that it's doing it.

And then we also want to look for things that seem a little mysterious. Sometimes I hear people judging it as, like, overreactions. Like, I don't know why I'm so sensitive about this one thing or why I'm so triggered by raised voices. Or if somebody tells me what to do, I get so mad. I go to a ten. So sometimes what we might judge as, like, a quote unquote overreaction might even be something in the system that just hasn't been processed, hasn't resolved yet.

So we want to approach it with lots of curiosity. We want to be able to see it from the perspective of what that nervous system was going through at that age and understand it from the lens of the nervous system. Anything that is too much, too fast, too soon, or not enough that it overwhelms the brain's coping capacities that can end up living in your system as trauma. And so it's interesting what goes off our radar.

And I like to invite people to just be really open because I came into therapy with, like, these are my big things, right? And then as I've continued to work through them, there's all these other layers. And it's amazing what... just what you described with your son, how many people will come in and...

It'll be something from when they were five years old that they perceived as a rejection. "Oh, my mom didn't read me a book when I really, really wanted her. And I was having such a bad day at

school, and I was getting bullied. And she didn't read me a book. And I still remember that night". Again, from an adult perspective, you might be like, "Huh, what?".

### **[00:36:44]**

Moms can't always read their kids books. So that's why we want to look at it from, okay, but from your perspective at that age, given your nervous system, given all the circumstances, your brain received that as a danger signal. A potential loss of attachment, a potential rejection, potential alienation.

So we want to look for those. We want to look for those cues. And if it's repeating over and over again, and if you're feeling really activated around it, maybe it's worth exploring. Sometimes it's nothing, and very often it's something, or it leads us to something. And so we just get to explore those layers.

### **Meagen Gibson**

The subtext that I'm hearing is that it isn't about blaming other people for your experience in the now. It's about healing whatever was misattuned, misaligned, missed... period, when you were a child in your adult self. This is an inside job that we're talking about.

It might involve somebody else eventually, if that's a safe pursuit. But really, this is about finding where that misalignment, the misattunement, the safety miss occurred. And being able to establish now in your adult self, with your child self. Like, "I got you, I got this. We're safe. We're good".

### **Crystle Lampitt**

Exactly. Yeah, exactly. It is. It's giving your system what it needed at the time that it didn't get. And that could be attunement. Just a little clue sometimes... If talk therapy and being validated has been a really nice sigh of relief for you and you're really enjoying it. Often, that's a clue that there's some relational trauma, right?

Because someone who's been attuned to really well and who knows their system, who has normalized feelings, who's allowed to express themselves... They're going to come into therapy and be like, "Of course my therapist is validating my feelings. Of course they're doing that".

Someone who hasn't had this, which can be a form of neglect, right? Emotional neglect. And it can feel life-threatening when you're growing up. They're going to eat that up and they're going to be like, "Really? It's okay that I feel angry. I'm allowed to feel sad".

And so if you notice this big, like, "Wow, it was just so good to be validated for the first time in my twenties, thirties, forties, fifties. Sometimes there's a clue that, "Wow, how long have I been misattuned to or lacking in attunement altogether?". And maybe there's some relational trauma, right?

And that's understandable. Look at the world we live in. Whether it was from parents or... Again, I'm not in the business of blaming parents. I trust most people are doing the best they can with what they have. But if we can identify where some responsibility might need to be held or some

accountability is, so that we're not carrying so much burden, sometimes that just helps give us perspective.

**[00:39:27]**

And we also have to look at the whole system, right? What messaging is society giving you about your worth? About the right to be authentic, to take up space? We have to look at all of these pieces. And it really is. It's a whole person perspective when you're doing SE, because when you start tuning into the body, it starts telling you another story.

So you have your narrative, you have your cognitive story. And then your body has its own story. And that's where sometimes there's these little things that were missed. And if we can give the body what it needs now in real time, it can actually fully start to settle and go, "Oh, I really am safe now". And it's a slow and just gentle process, hopefully. But it can rock your world.

Sometimes things come out that you're like, "Oh, boy, I didn't realize I was opening that can of worms, but here we are". And it's really cool, though, to start to feel the felt sense and to start to feel, "Oh, this is what it's like to have a body. I didn't know that was there".

**Meagen Gibson**

Yeah. Well, Crystle, I want to be mindful of your time and respectful of your time. Crystle Lampitt, where can people find out more about you and your work?

**Crystle Lampitt**

Yeah, please visit my website, [clwellnesskc.com](http://clwellnesskc.com) and I'm trying to be more active on Instagram. There's plenty on there already. But Crystle Lampitt, that's my handle. [@crystlelampitt](https://www.instagram.com/crystlelampitt) for anyone listening. I hope to offer some more workshops and those types of offerings here soon. So the best way to get that is to sign up for my email list on my website and you'll see everything there.

**Meagen Gibson**

Thank you so much for being with us today, Crystle.

**Crystle Lampitt**

Thank you. Good to see you.