Introduction to Holiday Overgiving

Friends, I'm your host Dr. Elizabeth Samana, the intuitive psychiatrist, and you are listening to Stepping Into Soul Power. Friends. We're getting into holiday season and there's a lot to do, there is a lots to and some of us are our givers, some us our caregivers and we are giving and giving.

There are so many of who are taught that love means giving saying yes, showing up, holding space for everybody else. But what if that habit keeps us depleted, anxious, disconnected from our truth?

And so today in today's podcast, what we're going to explore is how can we support other people, others without abandoning ourselves. This is so important for the holiday season.

And our next guest is a psychotherapist. She's a Yale clinical instructor. thousands of people who are high achieving individuals move past the anxiety, perfectionism and self-doubt and really start aligning with their inner truth.

She's got an upcoming book, Serial Fixer, and is here to really help you reclaim your truth, boundaries, release of responsibility and let go of what's not serving you.

Leah Marrone, welcome to the show. Thank you so much for having me. I'm very excited for our conversation today. Yeah, so I would love to hear a little bit about what got you started on this path.

How did you decide that you were going to help others move from over giving to a space of really listening to themselves as their truth?

Why Fixing Becomes a Habit

Yes, yes. I mean, I think it was just something that I was consistently seeing across all boards, right? Like I would see in my private practice. passion-driven fields.

And I was just seeing this kind of, you know, we could talk and regurgitate all the things associated with burnout, like just say no and just, have certain structure with your day and turn off the computer and all these things.

They sound wonderful, in the moment when we're logically thinking about them, but when it's our turn to execute these boundaries. and say no or to take care of ourselves.

It's very challenging. And so I was constantly wondering, you know, we have all this information, especially in the last several years about compassion fatigue and burnout and boundaries, which is amazing.

But what is it really at a deeper level, a psychological level and with our internal conflicts is preventing us from recovering and setting these boundaries and getting caught in this cyclical exhaustion?

Can you speak a little bit to that? What is it specifically that makes it so tough to break the cycle? Yeah. Well, I think you started to allude to it, which was wonderful because I do.

I mean, so many of us from a very young age, we start to build these strong associations and, you know, kind of overextending, always being there, caregiving, you know, caring, solving, fixing.

We equate that with love, right? And rightfully so, but then we would kind of miss having ourselves in the equation. And so it was almost depending on how we were raised and a lot of times we had to fill these roles that we have to be three steps ahead.

If we soothe everyone else, then ultimately we'll sooth ourselves. And so you can see where that kind of kickstarts us oftentimes into this role that takes a lot of emotional intelligence to always be, again, steps ahead.

How can I fix and solve and soot so that I'm okay? And it really does perpetuate this overextension, this exhaustion when we're constantly putting ourselves in the roles of the fixer and the solver.

For people who, you know, see that pattern and are ready to break free from that patterns, can you give us like a step by step of like, okay, how can we break through?

We don't want to do this anymore. We see the madness. How can we start to move towards a place where we're no longer fixing everyone else's problems, but there's more compassion for ourselves?

Right. And really, it's not about not continuing to lead with that compassion and that empathy. We don't want to get rid of that.

Support Without Solving

Those are like strengths, right? It really is kind of, again, I think first and foremost, collecting your data. So it's really start to recognize when you're interacting with your child, when your interacting your partner or a co-worker.

and they share something that might be distressing to them. They share some thing that's challenging, just creating some negative or hard emotions. If your first step in hearing that is to immediately start to give advice, immediately to say, we'll just do this.

Or yeah, my friend went through this three years ago, this is what she did. So you immediately go into fixer and solver mode. You're occupying that role and you again are not meeting the person and the situation where it currently is.

And you can see that that's actually robbing that individual, whether they're 15 years old or 45 years, old from getting some of their own processing skills and repetitions in.

to build some of their own self-connection and self confidence. And so you can see that, you know, the biggest thing is to first start to notice, yes, I immediately start give advice.

I want this person to not feel these hard things anymore so that I feel that sense of purpose. And I think the first step after you've started to realize this is to begin with validation.

Begin when somebody shares something that might be hard for you to hear and you can clearly see that it's hard to them to say because they're experiencing this discomfort.

is to first just say, you know what, I'm going to support, don't solve. I am going validate this person and create this space and let them keep ownership of what they're feeling while I lead with empathy and validate and letting them know that I do my best to decode the message that they are sharing with me verbally or non-verbally.

And that right there, it's a collaboration. You're not over, you know, kind of taking the bait, or you're over extending, and you are not taking false ownership.

And, that, right, there is the very first step. It takes practice. I love that. Okay, so there are just so many good things about that that I want to talk about.

So noticing, being self-aware about what you're doing, step one, great, validating. And what are you really talking about? It sounds like you are learning to hold space.

Yes, yes. And you know, this is the thing, you're not going to perfectly execute this every time. That's not the goal. It's like getting out of that rigid thinking.

But it's almost like if you envision the person having a tangled, messy ball of yarn. Right? And if you are constantly letting other people throw you their tangled mess for you to unravel, like that's the problem.

And so it's really allowing people to keep ownership of their Tangled Ball of Yarn and you might be there to pull at little threads here and there, to help and support and empower, but your job is not to carry everyone's tangled mass around because you can see that then you don't have time for your own.

And it reiterates this kind of self-fulfilling prophecy and also it's very egocentric where we think, well, I'm doing everything externally. I am purposeful, useful, solving things, people come to me, and I need it.

But you can see that that almost checks this box and distracts us from really the work internally that we need to do in conjunction with showing up for the people that love and support.

It's very true. It can be, and you said the word, it's a distraction. And that is such an important truth to realize that you're so busy solving everyone else's problems that like, hey, what about what's going on in here?

Holding Space for Family and Teens

What's going on in here? And the other thing I love that you said is that, you're giving other people the opportunity to step up to the plate. The feel I'm getting is it's like a little bit of a paradigm shift that needs to happen.

Absolutely. I mean, you nailed it. And it does. These things, it's just like when we're getting in physical shape, we need repetition. We need consistency.

that you're occupying in relationships, that takes practice. That takes reps. Again, data collection and you experimenting and trying things. And that right there is really boundary setting, but in a healthy way.

You're noticing that this is not working. I am working so hard to be there for everyone, every which way, even when I hear distress, when i hear a sigh from the other room for my child.

I immediately like try to be five steps ahead to prevent that discomfort. I'm taking the bait constantly. Whereas if I would just start by meeting the person and the situation where they're at and letting them sometimes even work through some things while they know that I am there to comfort and support, it's such a recipe for an internal peace that's still feeling that deep connection and you're leaving room for you too, right?

It's not the state of urgency all the time. I love that. I think sometimes what happens, especially when you're in a family, there might be certain dynamics that are going on.

For family members who are used, I feel like there are some people who might interpret you not coming in as a certain type of Like, how do people start to have that conversation so that things go a little more smooth?

Yes, it is. And again, like, great point that when you're starting to shift a bit, when your maybe noticing or working on a reframe, people around you that are used to you maybe always jumping in and structuring everything for them and being five steps ahead, They might be like, you know, what the hell is happening?

Where's the shift? Like, where's mom? Or where is this person? or where my boss? You know all these things. And so it is sometimes having that discussion.

Especially, I mean you can even do this with your children and your teenagers. If they start to share something and you're typical response is, well I'll just call the teacher.

Well we'll figure it out. We'll, just don't worry about it. You're trying to like quickly get through that to check it off. and convince yourself to like, see, I'm a good mom or see I am a parent because I did this and my kid's okay and we fixed it.

But rather coming, you know, sometimes to that interaction and validating, if you hear that sigh, oh I hate school or I was so stressed, it's sometimes just even starting with like no, really, no you have had a busy week.

And validates, kind of paraphrasing, meeting that person where they're at, seeing what your child or your teen says after. They may start to go into looking at options.

They might start doing that. they may want to vent for a few minutes, but refraining from going in and trying to fix and solve and button it all up. And sometimes even sharing, I know I've had to do this with my teenagers.

I have said, you know, several times, like, You know what? I don't think I'm giving you the benefit of the doubt here. Sometimes I jump in, and I am sorry if that communicates to you that I do not necessarily trust that you are resourceful enough or that can handle it.

And that right there, I think is so empowering for them. And it's so good for me to hear because when I can't, yeah, right. I love that validating to nail it, really getting in there and be like, Yeah.

Validating their experience, but then also sharing exactly what you're thinking. Mm-hmm. Yeah. And it is. It's hard.

Managing Intense Emotions

I mean, I'm thinking, too, with my own teens, you know, sometimes it's is hard, and sometimes I'll even try to hear it, but I hear myself saying, like, No, this is a really tough thing to feel.

Like, I wish that we had this quick answer right now. And sometimes just that, you know, is so helpful and it doesn't make it all go away. It doesn' nip it, and cleanly put a ribbon on it and just be like, don't worry about it.

Just go, move on. Tomorrow's a new day. You know our teens are like ugh, they don' like that. They get frustrated when they hear the parent jump in and start like oh, we'll just do this and this, or when I was 17 this was what I did.

So it really is like coming from that place of compassion, keeping the ownership, the tangled ball of yarn with them, but maybe pulling on a few threads and letting them know through your, like just refraining from jumping into fix and solve that you trust that they're going to get through this and that your there with.

Yes, yes. Oh, so powerful. The other thing that came to mind is I think that sometimes emotions can get really intense. Like someone is really feeling that anger.

Somebody's really in the depths of despair. And like when that's going on and you're like, oh, you try to hold space, are there specific techniques, practices that you feel can be incredibly helpful when things are like on a 10? Yes, ooh, and that happens a lot, doesn't it?

And we kind of go back and recycle that scenario with our children. Yes. That can happen a lots. And so again, you know, try, it's so hard, but trying, a lotta times, not just our teenagers or children, sometimes people will almost project it onto us, right?

They almost want us to battle it out with them and meet their emotion where it is for them to have a distraction of what's going on internally. It's like, well, if you and I can get in a battle, That'll give me this distraction externally from what I'm really feeling and not even sure where to start internally.

So it is, it's really, you know, when you're, someone is venting, Someone is really getting into the weeds of how they're feeling. I do think sometimes that pause, sometimes, that head nod, Sometimes just even saying like, paraphrasing, It's not drilling them with questions cause that can ignite them further.

But it, is it just kind of, You know your children, your teens, the people that are closest to you. It sometimes even asking when your like I don't know what the hell to do.

Is just sometimes saying, It seems like it's helpful for you to get this out or like, what would be the best thing that I can help you with right now?

They might not be there yet, but even asking those questions, you're helping them identify what they may need in the midst and in depths of all this emotional turmoil.

It's inserting a bit of logic. You know, like, what would be most helpful now? Do you feel like you need a minute with us? Can I check back in on you later?

Like some of those things where it's not in your mind, it is control. It's trying to kind of mask the discomfort you fell. That's theirs. This is excruciating for me to watch.

I wish this wasn't the case. But like they need to feel this and they have to come out of it. And that's how we build resilience as humans. I love that.

It's incredibly simple. I mean, it can be a tough situation, but really getting at the heart of, okay, what do you need? What do need and then working with whatever they say to help resolve that?

that this specific group of people, the over-givers, you've worked with lots of them.

Inner Conflict, Guilt, and Boundaries

Are there specific things that you feel like this group needs as they're navigating this change? Oh, yeah. I mean, again, think about too how you might even be listening to this and thinking like, yes, I do need to set more boundaries, or yes I need do say no, you're thinking through a different filter right now, if you will.

And again, when it's time to execute that, we have these internal protective parts of us, almost like our internal bodyguards that creep up and be like, ooh, well, you don't do that for this person, then you are probably not a good friend.

If you do not take that on for somebody, and people are going to think that you were selfish. These very rigid, strong associations and these protected parts about us like the inner pleaser in us.

The inner critic in And they challenge sometimes this logic we had two days ago or two hours ago. And you can see where sometimes we're overridden with guilt, we are overwritten with like, well, if I do that, I'm probably selfish.

Or oh, If I don't handle all of this for my family, then I am probably not a good wife. I probably am not good mother. You can just see hearing that the rigidity, but that's what goes on a lot internally.

So it's really understanding these conflicts that rise within us, where one part of us might really be working hard to try to protect our peace, but another part is really trying to project potential judgment from others, disconnection, not being labeled by something that is negative, like you're selfish or you are not there or not a good enough this.

And so I really would challenge you know, everyone to generate, it's hard work, but get those repetitions with looking inward. And when things pop up and there's that internal struggle to think, what are these parts of me trying to protect me from?

It's like this part of giving me 10 bodyguards when I only need one. What if I started to make these little efforts and almost experiment with myself to try to convince these protective parts, these body guards that nothing catastrophic actually happened?

And that, again, is getting an emotional shape and building that internal resilience and convincing those parts of us that it's not all or nothing, that we're not going to be completely chastised or experience these heinous things if we start to insert ourselves into the equation.

Oh, wow. It's so powerful. Really getting at confronting, it's like some hard, hard truths, really getting at the heart of what are you, there's fear there, like, what're you trying to protect yourself from?

For people, I think that it can be challenging to go up against these paths, and I, think the feel that I'm getting is that there are definitely some people who are gonna need to do this through therapy, therapy's gonna be incredibly helpful.

Yes, absolutely. And it is. This is a huge reframe for a lot of us. I think I mentioned this before, but the biggest thing for me was when someone would sigh in my house.

Like I'd hear the deep like, oh, and that for, me as a mother, as wife, it would kick me into like serial fixing. like I would be like oh my gosh, somebody's in distress.

Somebody's not happy. Something's going on. trying to fix and solve before I even knew the context. I kind of made it about me, right? Like, what am I not doing?

Oh, was dinner not this, this this and trying go through and internalize everything to fill in these gaps. And just maybe some of you hearing that can relate, but also think like, oh my God, that sounds exhausting.

And it was. And so it's thinking about where these triggers lie, where are these things happen. A lot of it we can trace back to our childhood. We can chase back the roles that we were pushed into or occupied within our family dynamics.

There is hope to kind of gain more insight. start to experiment and sometimes break some of these patterns while again still leading with that empathy and that compassion but building true connections with others and yourself because I've found that the biggest like indicator is when you feel stuck when And you're like, I am in all these imbalanced relationships where I'm craving depth, and craving this, working so hard to make sure all of these things are done and people can feel this way so I can be okay.

And that right there, if we tweak that formula a bit, it's amazing how you start to clear out some space and get inner peace and also empower the people around you.

Yes. It, there's so many wonderful things about making that shift.

The Soul Lesson of Letting Go

It's self-empowerment, but like also it can change the whole dynamic of your family, your community, if you're able to make that, that. I did want to ask about, because you said a word guilt and that's something that rings true for a lot of caregivers.

And it can be so difficult to let go of the guilt. So are there things that can ease that process? Because sometimes it's not as easy as just being like, I'm not going to do this.

That's right. It again is like, you're absolutely right, like a lot of times we look at it again as all or nothing, as black or white, and it would invite you to find the gray.

So there's a part of you that might be like I need to say no to all this stuff, I can't do anything, i'm exhausted, it's very extreme over here. And the other side of view is I'm ridden with guilt if I do something for myself and I don't pick up the phone every time this person calls and i don' do an X, Y, Z.

So you can see that those are very different parts of you that are trying to protect and are motivated by very Different things and so think of yourself as kind of the internal mediator with these parts Of you but are Very conflictual and what they're trying To protect you from and So it's finding that gray zone and that's where again you start to play just experiment with little subtle shifts where if somebody is calling you non-stop and needing something all the time and and you think I have to be available because if I'm not, I not a good daughter or I am not

good wife or not I good mom.

That's the association that we're trying to tweak. And that's when we can start to make these little adjustments and little experiments where it's like, you know what, this friend calls me every night after 10 p.m.

and I've told her repeatedly like hey, i'm probably going to bed at this time because I gotta be up at five with my kid. And so they're bulldozing through your boundary.

And it's thinking about reiterating that and sharing and saying, you know what? I don't know if I'll be available. Our inner pleaser perks right up and we're like, oh my God, then we are not a good friend.

What if something happens? It's all our fault. But that's where we make these little adjustments and experiments and think, I'm going to text her before I go to bed and say, hey, I'd love to talk to you in the morning.

And that's where, again, you collect the data with, did something catastrophic happen? Am I still a good friend? Are we still talking? Those are the things that we need to start doing in finding the gray zone and not thinking in extremes.

But these little experiments help build that inner trust and soothe those protective parts of us. It's great. It is a work in progress. Everyday taking steps, everyday learning, every day learning.

I guess there's a lesson. A lot of people on this listen. really interested in being true to themselves, really connecting with their soul. And I wonder whether, like in your opinion, is there a spiritual lesson, a soul lesson that is to be learned with this history of moving from over giving to something that's a little more balanced?

Yeah. Oh, I think there's a lot of depth and a lots of connections there. And it is. I mean, sometimes I thing solving and fixing and sometimes how we view compassion is just sometimes control and disguise, right?

It's almost like, yeah, it's like this kind of, you know, this need to kind control or to fix and to solve to alleviate, fuel our sense of purpose and connection and worthiness externally.

Book, Resources, and Closing Thoughts

And as you can see, that leaves us, again, kind of left empty. And our soul, I mean, has not been nourished consistently. I think that that's a huge thing, is really understanding when you're leading or trying to lead with that compassion, Is it actually kind to soothe your discomfort?

Is actually trying confirm something for yourself that you're doing it right or you are a good this or your worthy. And I think that too, there's some internal turmoil and the soul is probably screaming at you for some recalibration.

Oh, important truths. Important truths, um, What I love about your book is it speaks to this global empowerment by letting other people step into their soul power and releasing that control.

Empowerment is all over the place. And I wonder for yourself, you've written the book, what's the main lesson you'd love for people that read the book or listeners here to take home.

I think the biggest thing is, you know, and hopefully something that sticks and you can add your own flavor to it, is just like how like support don't solve.

How can I support? and not solve. And I think that, again, you will make that and insert that depending on where you're at in life and your relationships and the chapter that you are navigating.

But I do think And such a wonderful approach when you're combating consistent burnout, cyclical exhaustion, overextension, serial fixing, and compassion fatigue.

Like, how can I be that supporter and lead with the amazing gifts that I have, compassion, empathy, emotional intelligence? But again, let people keep their tangled ball of yarn while I'm there to help them unravel it, but not do it for them.

Perfect, perfect. Can you be very clear about, okay, what are the behaviors that is, so what support, What does that look like? Yeah, support is meeting the person, the situation, where they're at.

Asking questions that really help them work through what's going on. If you have great advice that you want to share, do it. But maybe you start it by saying, what would it look like if this?

Or how would you do this, or what do you feel like your next step might be? You may know very well exactly what the playbook looks like and you probably have certain friends or people in your life that you've given the same advice to week after week and there's this frustration and like why are they nodding their head and saying that makes sense when we talk and then there is no execution.

It's because they don't have ownership. They haven't added their own flavor to it. And so it's again like being patient and refraining and emotionally regulating yourself because not everyone is on the same timetable as you and that's so hard as a human.

Yeah, not everyone is on the same timetable. You gotta let, I love the words that you use, patience. Let people, let them go through the process and regulate yourself.

But you can be there. Absolutely. You can't be. Oh, lovely, so tell me, because I know people are going to want to get in contact with you. I don't people going want read this book.

How can people connect with? Oh, I'd love to connect with you all. Um, my website is leahmarone.com. You can find me on social, most social channels, you know, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, all the things.

And you can buy the book pretty much anywhere where you like to buy books. So I mean, it's on Amazon Barnes and Noble bookshop. It might be in your local bookstore.

If not, can put in a plug for me if you want, but, um, II really do. I hope that it is a helpful resource. And I'd love to hear from you. I also on Substack do a whole segment on different types of serial fixing and I have people write in to me and share how their serial fixer and it's not a bad thing.

It's just something again, we need to tweak and like reframe and you're not alone. So that's another outlet too, to kind of keep this conversation going.

Lovely, lovely, thank you so much. You have helped us be discerning about, hey, carrying, you know, truly carrying what's ours to carry and letting go in a loving way of what it's not.

Thank you, so, much for being on the show. Oh, it has been my pleasure. I appreciate you. The soul in me honors the soul and you." If you want to see more episodes like this, please subscribe or click here.

And friends, if this spoke to you, leave a comment below. We would love to hear from you!