Healing From Within: Internal Family Systems, Astrology and Dreamwork Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Show Introduction and Guest Background

Welcome to Energize and Revitalize with Dr. Amy. I'm Dr Amy Coopersmith, a doctorate prepared nurse practitioner. And this show is about empowering you to live a radiant, healthy, and balanced life.

I'm very excited to introduce today's guest, Genevieve Camp. Geneveve is a licensed mental health counselor, a board certified art therapist, certified IFS, internal family systems therapist and a certified apprentice practitioner of evolutionary astrology.

And she has a master's in art therapy, bachelor's, in fine art. So thank you so much for being here today. Yeah, thank Yeah, so we're going to talk about a few things, but the way I met you, I actually came across the internal family systems technique, if you will.

I heard a podcast featuring Dr. Richard Swartz, who founded this type of therapy. Oh, the model model. Model. Yeah. Like the Model, yes. So and I was really intrigued by it.

And I got his book called No Bad Parts. I read through it and he has some really wonderful exercises to explore these parts that we'll talk about. But when I did I said, I feel like I need a little more help kind of going through this and understanding it, and that's how I found you.

Which I think is a really cool story, because I was just looking for people licensed in this model of communication, and I found you. But when I clicked on your site, you're here in Florida, as I am, but you also have a place in Newport, Massachusetts, which some of my listeners know I'm from Massachusetts.

And I grew up very close to New Port. So I felt like that was kind of a connection that we needed to explore. I know it's so strange and just feels like yeah sometimes.

Understanding Internal Family Systems

I don't know I call it synchronicity, but you know meaningful coincidences and I've had that happen with other folks as well where there's some connection to my home.

And even though I'm in Florida and it always feels really meaningful. So I always thought that was neat and I've really enjoyed exploring internal family systems.

If we could start there, can you explain what that is? Yeah, so like I said, I would call it a model. It was developed in the therapy context, but it is much more widely applicable than just as a therapy.

That's something that can be applied to all different sizes of systems, not just the internal system. I was going to say to me, it kind of feels like almost like a way of life.

You know, once you sort of understand that lens, that way, of looking at your internal world, just it can become just sort a the way being with yourself and really empowers.

Yeah, you didn't ask this question quite yet, but sort the difference between traditional talk therapy and IFS, one of the differences is that it really impowers the client to be able to do their own work.

Because it's not, the IFS therapist or coach is not viewed as the one who is the expert on the client system or is doing the healing. It's really more about.

um, helping the client to access their own inner healer and inner, inner wisdom so that they can then, you know, do this, Do this work on their. I love that.

So I used to kind of call it the voices in my head. Um, but using this model, we kind acknowledge different parts of, of ourself and we all have many of them.

um So it's just kind getting to know your parts and understand them, which I think for me gives me a better understanding of why I am the way I. Yeah, just what you said, it's, IFS is based on this idea that we don't just have one singular mono mind, like our personality isn't singular, It's actually multiple.

It is made up of many different parts or sub-personalities, each of which has its own set of thoughts and feelings and beliefs and perspectives. You know, a set of priorities.

So, you know we, whether or not people are familiar with IFS or we use parts language just colloquially all the time when you people talk about like, You now, part of me feels this way.

A part me, feels that way or, someone might say like I feel really torn about something. You don't mean they've got sort of being pulled in two different directions or.

heard people say like, I'm of two minds about this issue. So it's something that we're all sort of aware of because everybody experiences internal conflict at some point or indecisiveness or just difficulty knowing how they want to handle a situation.

And it is often because they have different perspectives going on in there. It's not just one singular thought or perspective. So yeah now some people have described parts therapy and this is a little different but similar is that correct?

Yeah well so IFS would fall under the larger umbrella of parts work or parts there be there's some some different you know ways of doing parts, therapy out there but um IFs is is sort of a specific a, specific way of working with those parts and understanding their different roles and um The other thing that's unique.

Well, I mean, it'd be unique to IFS, but it's very critical to if this is this understanding of the self, which is the sort of core essential aspect that we all have that can't be damaged doesn't need to be developed.

It's just inherent to who we are and The self is viewed as the natural leader of the system.

Working with Parts, Inner Critics, and Self

And so when we're doing parts work, we are trying to help build a trusting relationship between parts and self so that the parts feel trusting that self can lead the way and they can step back a little bit and relax.

Because when a part is trying sort of lead the way or, you know, drive the bus to use the driving metaphor. We don't usually feel like our full authentic selves because not all of us is being represented.

And we can sort experience some internal disharmony or imbalance, when you've got some parts that are dominant and other parts are maybe being ignored or brushed aside.

So when we're self-led, we feel most most like ourselves. And so self is the other key piece of the IFS model. So I think a lot of people can relate to maybe that negative voice, the one that's maybe not so nice, it says like you're dumb or ugly or something like that.

Let's say somebody had a part like, that how can they use that to connect with the self and go on a healing path? Yeah, so because of painful life experiences, trauma, various types, we call lots of things trauma.

It's basically how it impacts you. So anything that felt emotionally painful, those emotions, some parts can end up

sort of taking that on and carrying that if it wasn't resolved, if we didn't get the resolution from that experience.

And so if work carrying around some emotional pain, it kind of forces other parts into a protective role where they're trying to prevent that pain from reoccurring.

And the inner critic is sort of a classic example of protective part that it sounds mean and at first glance it can feel like, oh, this part's not on my side.

This part is out to get me. But in getting to know the part and understanding why is it saying those things? What is doing? we always discover there's a good intention underneath there.

And so in the case of inner critics, it's often, I would say that the part is trying to preemptively criticize the system because if we've already told ourselves the negative thing, we won't hurt so bad when someone else says it.

So it is a way of kind of protecting us from external criticism. But what that specific Role is and you know what exactly that part is doing for each individual is something that you that's what we would explore through that process of getting to know the part and when parts feel understood when they feel known and appreciated and and Yeah, and understood, then that's when they tend to feel more trusting that it's okay to step back because they trust, okay, there is a wise leader here who can guide the way.

And so in getting to know our parts, they will naturally start to relax. That's how we access more self-energy. So I think it's interesting. Yeah. Like to give the parts kind of a personality and sometimes a name and really just getting to know them like you would any person.

Exactly. They have a personal side view. Right. We can think of our parts as unique entities. It's kind a weird sort of taboo thing that a lot of people are sort like, what are you saying?

I'm dissociative identity disorder. You know, no, but like for most people know like, you know that is sort of the extreme end of spectrum but all of us have parts and there's nothing wrong with that.

It's how we're made. So there is nothing pathological about that and that's, the other thing I really like about IFS is it's not pathologizing. it is not about saying, oh, there something wrong you.

Its about really, respecting our systems, understanding how and why they developed the way they did and really just You know, sounds kind of cheesy, but accessing unconditional self love, you know to do the healing work.

That's what from my experience, self has sort of the energetic signature of unconditional love. that's, what it feels like when we're able to really connect into that.

So it's yeah. It's not about trying to like side with some parts and push out the other ones, like some other types of therapy might try to get you to, um, You know, rationalize with an inner critic and convince that it's wrong and give it all this evidence that, you know what it saying is not true.

But all that really does is creates more internal tension because now you've got. You're sort of fighting against that part as opposed to in the IFS model, really just listening to the part, understanding where it coming from and trusting that that will lead you where you need to go to do the deeper work.

If there is some deeper healing to. And I like that because I have heard that other philosophy of, you know, kind of trying to quiet down the parts that aren't behaving.

Like, interesting, like, You know like you're wrong, the part that's saying you are stupid. Well, tell it it's wrong. And you had kind-of likened that to telling a toddler to be quiet.

They're not gonna be quite until they're understood, right? So, someone having a tantrum is gonna continue on until it gets what it needs, Yeah, when we try to ignore our parts, it doesn't work, they just get louder.

So it's a really interesting technique.

Burnout, Perfectionism, and Healing Younger Parts

And, you know, I think people who maybe have tried traditional talk therapy and just aren't getting where they need to go, or even someone who just wants to know more about themselves.

I Yeah, I think it's useful for everyone. Like I said, it doesn't have to be something that's only done in a therapy office. You don't to have mental illness or being really struggling a lot to benefit from it.

It's just a useful way of understanding yourself, like you said. When somebody comes to you, how can you help them kind of connect with their parts? What are some things that you do?

Well, we all have parts around all the time. So it's more a matter of just kind of taking a moment of noticing who's here right now. You know, I usually just start with people with whatever parts they notice in the moment.

And so parts will show up in a form of thoughts, emotions, body sensations. Sometimes they'll be like an image. or even like an impulse to do something.

And so I'll usually just invite clients to notice who, what they're aware of in the moment. From there, we can start to get a sense of the parts that are around and kind of, sometimes there's more than one and we might choose one part to start with.

But it's, I usually, find that whatever parts are most loud in the moment, those are the ones that you've got to work with because they're usually not just going to go away just because there's a different part you want to talk to.

They're are usually allowed for a reason because I need some attention. So much like children, it's the children within ourselves, right? Right. Yeah.

Many of our listeners are high performing people, professionals. Can this model help with issues like burnout, perfectionism, people pleasing, that sort of thing?

Definitely. Yeah. I mean, like I said, self is a natural leader of the system. So when we have parts that have been working really hard and doing a lot of work for us and, you know, lots of people have like our parts are good.

We need them, and we can have arts that are super helpful. And, someone who's a high performer may have some really skillful go-getter high achieving parts, that has really helped them to be successful.

in their careers say, but if that part is kind of dominant and leading the way, that alone can lead to burnout because it means that not, the whole system isn't sort of being utilized in a balanced, harmonious way.

And just the fact that it's, you know, parts that are doing all the work, it not sustainable. You know self is when we're leading, when were self led, thoughts what allows us to show up authentically and sort sustainable energy, but you know, for, For anyone, you it's about kind of getting to know what are some of your dominant parts?

What are the parts that do the most work for you day in, day out, and really appreciating them, loving on them and, um, understanding that they don't have to do it alone.

You know? Like they. Have to be working so hard all the time without support. So, that's kind touching on burnout. Um, yeah, with people pleasing perfectionism, when you say that, I think about, You know, there might be parts that are really in a protective role, trying to make sure that other people are happy that.

Other people. Pleased with, with the person so that they don't disappoint anyone or, you know get criticized or. You just feel bad with any protective part.

The assumptions are protecting something. So getting to know that part and what they're doing to try to help the client. And then once you have a sense of what part they are, protecting, it's often.

much younger part that's feeling vulnerable, that is afraid of being hurt again. Then you can access that more vulnerable part and do some healing there.

That's the key that actually relieves these protectors of their job. They're doing what they have to do, but once you've done that deeper layer of unburdening the vulnerable then the protector is kind of freed up to maybe help out in a different way.

So you mentioned younger parts. Do different parts become themselves at certain times in person's life? Yeah, that's such an interesting question. I'm still open to learning about parts, journeys through the lifespan.

Either the way I kind of conceptualize it is we're all born with sort of the, all of our parts sort in their seed form and their sort potential form. And then as we go through life, our part sort grow and develop with us.

But that said, I have in my own experience with myself and with my clients noticed that regardless of how old you are, you will have young parts. You will child parts, adolescent parts and parts sometimes even parts that are older than your current age.

So not all our parts do we perceive them as being our current chronological age and sometimes that's because there's been some trauma, some like arrested development.

The part was sort of stuck at the age when something happened and still sort past time.

How Genevieve Found IFS and Remote Practice

But in my experience, even when you unburden those young parts, they don't just suddenly grow up and become your current age. They usually stay children, but now they're like free to actually be children.

And they are free, to be playful and carefree and, you know, bring their youthful energy into the system. So yeah, it's sort of an interesting thing. I, I you, know I don t claim to know to be the expert in anyone else's system.

So I'm always just learning from my clients about how they perceive their own parts and what age they feel like to them. How did you end up getting involved with this type of model?

Yeah, so I first heard about it. It was like 2010. I was fresh out of grad school, and my first job I working in an eating disorder treatment center. And my supervisor at the time Um, it was trained in IFS and I remember her talking to me about it a lot and just really was a big fan and particularly found it really helpful with eating disorder clients.

And, um, so it's always kind of the back of my mind. Like I was on the mailing list for trainings for many, many years, but could never. Never make it work, because it would require travel and, you know, paying for.

You know, airfare and hotel stays. It was just not accessible. So it wasn't until the pandemic in 2020 when they started offering online trainings that I could access it.

And so, yeah, it was sort of long time coming, but I was finally trained in 2021. I love when the pandemic was such a terrible time for a lot of us, but so many people took that as opportunity and said, OK, I'm in this situation.

How can I make the best of this? So that's really cool. Yeah. And so, many things became doable from a distance. Suddenly, we realized all these ways that we could work with people not having to be in person.

So, that was also when I started seeing clients remotely. discovered that I actually really like working with people in that way. Not everyone does, but yeah, it's so convenient.

Because we're busy and so to just take away the travel time and it just, you know, allows us to do a little more. Yeah, and some people like to be in the comfort of their own home, you know, it's nice to people to to because in your own space.

So you and I have not yet explored the world of astrology, but it is something I find fascinating. It's sort of a funny story. I didn't know a whole lot about astrology for a long time.

My association with it was like, oh, it's silly, like horoscopes in a magazine. And it never really seemed very serious and didn' t seem very relevant for me.

So I'd kind of just written it off as silly. But I read a book that, It was a memoir and the woman mentioned her astrologer. a rough time in my life and something about, I don't know, something, it was just sort of the timing was right.

Astrology, Birth Charts, and Personal Insight

I just, there was this thought of like, huh, want to look up this guy. And so I, you know cause she had given the name of her astrologer in the book. So I looked him up, found his website and saw that he, we, had sort some connections in terms of where he had gone to school and, people I knew.

It just felt aligned and I made an appointment for a birth chart reading. impactful for me and really helped to make sense of some things that I was going through and sort of give it some context and some reassurance that it wasn't going to be forever.

And so it just, it really opened my mind to what astrology really can be about, you know, that is so much more than just what I thought it was. So I just started to look into it more and it sort of became a special interest.

I just wanted to learn as much as I could. So I started taking classes and just bringing it into my work with clients. And so it just kind of evolved from there.

Yeah, so you mentioned the birth chart reading. Can you describe what's involved with that? Yeah. The birthchart is just a map of the sky at the moment of your birth.

It shows where all the planets were with It's hard to describe a picture with words, but basically there are the 12 zodiac signs and that kind of makes like a pie chart of 12. And then the planets fall into those 12 pie slices.

Then there's also another pie of twelve slices of the houses, which have to do with sort of where these different energies are showing up in your life, different domains.

So everyone has a birth chart. Not everyone knows exactly when they were born. You kind of need to know to the minute to have an accurate birth chart, but.

Basically, it's symbolic, you know, It's not astronomy. We're not talking about where the planets were. If we're zoomed out looking at the solar system from outside, But it is really from the perspective of the person on the earth.

where were all the planets against the backdrop of the sky and the constellations. And so it's the the planet's, they symbolize different psychological functions.

and then depending on what sign they're in, the sign sort of colors how they are expressed, sort what the intention is for each of those planets. So it is a very complex system and I kind of think of a birth chart like You know, like a lot of people are familiar with the Myers-Briggs personality type indicator, or like the other personality, type models.

And I think of, you know with, with those, it's like, there's a limited number of types, Myers Briggs are 16, Enneagram. um, nine, you know, there's, so there is like, everyone has to get sort of put into a box with a limited number, which I never liked because I feel like that, I don't like being put in a Box and I, feel that's limiting, but with

astrology, it's sort like a personality type model, except that there are as many different types as there, are individuals in the world.

So everyone gets their own unique type. And so it is the birth chart sort a map of your personality. But there's just, there is so much that can be gleaned from that and it can sort of be a lifelong journey of understanding your birth chart.

And that's not even talking about looking at transits and progression, sort of how the planets are currently and how they activate your birth chart. So there's just, it's really vast.

And I think the complexity of it is part of what I like about it, because it feels like there will always be more to learn and keeps me engaged. I don't get bored with it.

I had a reading done and I found it so interesting because my son signs a Leo. And so when I'm doing a podcast, I am a leo. But I always said, well, not really like other leos.

So I've found out that my rising sign was Capricorn. I've shared with my listeners, you know, when I turned 50 and I started to go, what am I doing now?

What am i doing next? And so much of how I am professionally, like when i read that description of of How Capricorns are in terms of their profession, it was just like like dead on.

And it was so helpful in terms of introspection and understanding myself. Yeah, just what you said. I mean, not everyone who has a son and Leo is going to look the same, right?

Like, that's, there's so much going on in the chart, your Where's your moon? Where is your rising sign? You know, variables that play into it. Do you find that that's well accepted in your field?

I've talked to different astrologers, and some of them feel like everybody is good and supportive. And some some do get a little bit of blowback, if you will.

Yeah, I mean, in the little world that I'm in, you know, it's pretty, pretty accepted. I kind of feel it gets becoming more It's been around for ever.

You know, it's one of those ancient systems out there for understanding ourselves in the context of, you know the larger world, but yeah, they'll, there'll always be skeptics and that's okay.

Dream Work and Closing Advice

Like I think, skeptic are, protected parts, right? Like they're parts that don't want us to be duped, that doesn't us be fooled and want to make sure we're not available.

And so we can have appreciation for that. So I'm not bothered by people who are not into astrology or are skeptical about it. That's totally fine. I am not here to push it on anyone.

Now you also do some dream work. And so I think dreams are fascinating. Our subconscious just telling us things. But are you able to take a person's dream and incorporate that into their healing path?

Yeah. I just let clients know, hey, I find dreams fascinating. If you ever have a dream that's, you know interesting to you and you want to bring it here, we can look at it together.

Our dreams, yeah, like you said, it's our subconscious bringing some information forth that is wanting to be integrated into the conscious awareness. And our dreams don't waste time telling us things we already know.

So it's always information that we don''t quite have conscious-awareness of. It might be the missing piece to sort of

understanding why we're doing what we are doing or getting stuck in the same pattern or just feeling conflicted about something.

With dreams, there's no finite number of meanings or layers of meaning a dream can have. So there's just a lot of information packed into the symbols that our subconscious comes up with.

Well, fascinating. So we're almost out of time. OK. But if there was one thing you wanted to share with our listeners, one little piece of advice, what would it be?

Yeah. If you're curious about IFS or just kind of exploring your system in that way, the simplest thing that you can do is to just start reframing how you think about what you're thinking, what your feeling.

So what I mean by that is like, say you are feeling really angry about something rather than saying like I'm really, angry. It's, I have a part who feels really anger.

And just that simple rephrase of I am a heart that feels blah, blah blah or that thinks blah. Blah, it creates a little bit of space between the part and the you that's noticing it.

It also acknowledges that there's other parts in there that may have different perspectives or different feelings. And it can just start to kind of create a little bit more space to get curious and explore, you know, what's going on for you.

That might lead to just some more self-compassion, some insights. It's also, it's very disarming. Say you're in a conflict with someone and you want to tell them how you are feeling.

So your partner is really pissing you off, rather than saying like, I'm really angry at you. You could say, I have a part of, part, of me is really. I haven't part that feels very angry and that can just be received a lot more easily as well.

Absolutely. When we sort of incorporate parts language into just how we think about ourselves and communicate, it can, just that little shift can make a.

Yeah. A lot of space for curiosity. Thank you, how do people find out more about you and how to connect with you? Yeah, well, my website is a place to go that connects out to other things that I have going on.

But my web site is just my name, GenevieveCamp.com. So on there, there's information about dream circles that lead. And if you're curious to get on my mailing list or do a free 20-minute consult to see if I might be a good fit for some individual work, all of that is there on website.

Wonderful. And we'll put that on our notes page as well. Well, thank you again for joining us today. Yeah. Thank you so much for having me. Thanks to our listeners for tuning in to Energize and Revitalize with Dr.

Amy. If there are topics you would like to hear about, please send an email to radiantpodcasts2025 at gmail.com. Check out past episodes on Amethyst Wellness YouTube.

We're now featured on Apple podcasts and all your favorite platforms. please subscribe and leave a five-star review with a quick comment. It really helps us reach more listeners just like you.

I'll be back next Saturday morning at 7.30 with more expert insights and practical strategies to help you live your healthiest, most energized life. Until then, stay healthy and here's to your best life!