When Motherhood Takes an Unexpected Path: A Soulful Conversation on Infertility & Adoption Transcript

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Introduction to the show and guest

Hey friends, I'm your host Dr. Elizabeth Samantha, the intuitive psychiatrist, and you are listening to Stepping Into Soul Power. Friends, what if infertility wasn't just a medical challenge, but an opportunity to get it deeper, to pursue something about yourself that has been asking to be explored.

What if it's a spiritual initiation? Our next guest is a mom, she's an author, an energy healer, intuitive counselor, and fertility adoption coach at One Way or a Mother.

For more than two decades, she's helped hundreds of women go through this sacred process of navigating their own fertility and adoption journey. Jennie Lynn Gilbert, welcome to the show.

My gosh, thank you. What a nice intro. I'm happy to be here. Well, we are so glad to have you here. I don't know anyone else that has your unique skill sets.

You have such a unique blend of psychology, spirituality, energy work. What led you down this path? How did you get here? I think some of it was in the cards for me.

Adoption kind of found me, There was a position after graduate school and someone was leaving. A position and I entered it. And that was the beginning of learning in adoption.

It's one of those things where you start to take this path. Somebody had recommended, I was interested. I had just gone through my yoga training and they said, Oh, You know, there's someone looking for some fertility yoga teachers.

So I got a job there. It's kind of like things have, you know just kept flowing in a certain direction. towards me or for me, and so that's how it began.

And I've always been a student, student of anything interesting. So, oh, somebody's offering a Reiki class, I'm in, you know. I want to learn about this special interest, diving in over there.

And then it became a personal journey, which I think we'll get to today.

Jennie Lynn Gilbertu2019s path into adoption and fertility work

And so that's, it's also not just professional, but a person journey as well in the end. Maybe let's go there. Tell us about that journey. What was your path?

Well, I met my husband late in life. I was 38. We were dancing, swing dancing. You know, it just, we were just having so much fun and he asked me for a date.

And I said, yes. I already knew, okay, I'm 38. This might not be an easy path if I want to have children. and I did. On our second date, i asked him if he was interested in children and i know that was like a big no-no in that time when my friends and I were dating, you're not supposed to do that.

Maybe the fourth date or some, there was some rule around that and i broke it because I thought I'm 38, I better get to this right away. And he said, i'd like a family too.

I said well, do you have any interest in adoption? Because that might be what we need to. Sure enough, that is, in

the end, how we became parents was through domestic adoption.

But we went through, you know, fertility treatments, egg donation. We had a failed adoption, which means we were planning on adopting, they were actually a boy and girl twins.

Um, and the birth father at the last minute came in and said, he lived in Michigan. I would like to see the children every weekend. That's a custody thing.

This isn't adoption. So I said thank God I had a background in adoption because I knew the answer was I'm sorry, we can't do that. We can commit to that level of openness.

so we've also experienced that kind of loss of adoption too, along the way. And, but now we have our 11 year old and we adopted her at a couple of days old.

And I'm so glad I asked that question. Of him and he wasn't really super excited when he first heard adoption. So that's a whole other thing that can be challenging sometimes one partner.

in the relationship is not as excited as the other around anything. It could be surrogacy, egg donation, adoption. And he said, I just don't know anybody that in his family or his friend circle that had been adopted or had adopted.

So it was very different for him. I said well, you've got somebody who worked for 10 years at an adoption agency. So that's kind of our journey to our daughter.

Wow. It is just so many ups and downs and I'm sure many lessons. As you were navigating that process, what did you find to be particularly helpful to you?

I think there were a lot of things. One of the things I did was I created welcome mat in the bedroom that was going to be the nursery. So, and I'm talking almost metaphorically, I didn't actually have a welcome, but you could do that.

I started preparing the room and i would go in that room, And I tried to connect with her or him. i had a feeling it was her. And i And in that room, there was just all this delicious energy.

And I was saying, you know, whoever's supposed to come through to me, this is gonna be your bedroom. I want you to see it. and want us to start to interact now.

That's a spiritual practice I teach my clients as well. in preparing, and maybe it's a guest bedroom or it somebody's office.

Personal fertility journey and adoption experience

It doesn't have to be like all made up and ready for a baby. Put a stuffy in there. Doesn't it have be all painted and fancy, but start to, as you have talked about intention, set the intention that this is the room where you two are gonna really bond and develop the beginnings of your relationship.

So start it before you're in physical form with each other, if that makes sense. That's really that, that is really powerful. So setting the intention and then it sounds like taking a line to action really, because I, when I think about kids, I'd think of my, about my own journey too.

It definitely takes a community to raise a child. How did you get about navigating that conversation with friends, with other family members? around adoption, like we're going to be adopting this child and kind of how, what did that look like?

Yes. Yeah, it was, I think, not as surprising on my side of the family, because we actually have cousins who came to our family through adoption. So it's kind of like, for my site, is like oh yeah, okay, like Aunt Natalie did.

It'll be similar. For Jeff's side, my husband's, side this was more of a type of education process, you know, to explain how this is going to go. But honestly, most importantly, how can you guys support us?

Yes. How can you best support us? And we made a little error and then corrected that error. So we had included everybody in our excitement about these boy and girl twins and we got the two car seats and the whole family was excited and ready.

And then we. Had to say, no, this isn't. the right match for us. We can't uphold that promise to see the birth father every weekend. I'm sorry. Um, we, need to back out and find maybe a family in Michigan.

That could do that more easily. And I remember the tears of, especially my mother-in-law, my, I call my bonus mom, stepmom and my My mother, three mom figures, and everybody's crying.

And my husband and I had to support them. We said, aha, next time we don't tell them until surrenders are signed. So when our daughter came to us, we did wait.

until we had a more official stance that this is most likely. It's not a hundred percent. There's a little bit more of a process to go, but it's pretty clear that, this was going to become our child when the birth mom signs.

And when that happened, that's when we called and everybody was in a celebratory, you know, everyone was celebrating. But we learned like, keep it close.

until we know a little bit more. Kind of like if you're pregnant, you might not say it the first time you find out you are pregnant. You kind of keep it maybe between your partner and yourself or a few close friends.

Yes. It's a similar thing. Keep it close and then you can expand and have, and everybody was coming to visit and can I hold and you know, can bring you things and all that wonderful fun support.

That's beautiful. So being very mindful about who you tell, when you can get your decision. Exactly. And it seems like there are losses that might be a part of the fertility journey.

And I wonder if you could speak to that. Specifically, what are the lessons with loss? Yeah, that's a great question. This is a roller coaster that people are entering on.

There are ups and downs and I often was trying as the coach to help women to create more of a merry-go-round experience. It goes up and down a little bit, but it's pretty neutral and not get too excited.

If you're picked an adoption or you got a positive pregnancy, let's just say, look at what happened. Where might this go instead of, Oh my gosh, you know, it's time for fireworks.

Not yet. Like, Let's take this easy. So that's one thing I think that helps is kind of creating some sort of neutrality and the same thing, not getting so attached to the negative.

Oh no, another failed IVF or a miscarriage or no one's picking us. It's taking forever for someone to pick me in adoption. You know, that you're just kind of taking it day by day.

Spiritual practices for preparing for a child

So that's, one thought I have. But the other thought. that I have had along the way in helping so many women. And I don't know, I've been really lucky.

I help like the most incredible clients. We have fun together, we're laughing, you know we are working together. Sometimes, honestly for years, this isn't like that.

It's not usually something that happens right away. i am holding someone's hand for quite a while often. In that, i've

thought about the fact that I think that the children that are coming through now are really powerful emissaries of light.

They are here to do some big work and we have to be prepared for those big souls that're coming though. I've got one for sure. Very strong willed, I know what I'm doing, get out of my way.

I feel I had to kind of go through boot camp. Those ups and downs prepared me personally and I am hoping I'm preparing my clients for some of these really power changers that are coming through.

So we have to be prepared and sometimes it's not a really easy path because parenting isn't going to really be easy, but that's because they're here to kick some butt.

You know, I love that the way that you framed that, that it's a little bit of boot camp, right? Like you, you know you get a bit a taste up front, like hey, parenting isn't easy, so the process prior to isn' easy.

So it helps you kind of build up your resilience. That's it. Oh, most therapists out there, right, are not into energy work. They're not really talking about spirituality.

I mean, so you use unique skill. You're talking intuition. And so tell me about like the role that these things play in a woman's fertility journey. Like, why do you them?

And like, how are they actually helpful? Okay. So, uh, I've got Reiki background, a Reikki background. So I'm often sending NRG while I am working with the client.

I have a little teddy bear I use as like a model body. And I putting, if somebody's saying I had a headache, sending them while we're coaching. If they're in person, right behind me I got a massage table they can lay down, and I can actually do hands on.

Or on the floor, I have one of those Thai massage mats so they can lie down comfortably on a floor. So that's one way I'm working. I am also incorporating some of the work that Suzanne Giesemann has worked with mediumship.

That kind of was my hobby during the pandemic was I did a deep dive into learning medium ship. And I thought I was going to go that way. and I thought I was going on a new path, but I pulled back in.

People were still finding me. I had shut down my website and I was like, I'm trying something different. And doing something new, but these people found me right at the last minute and they snuck under the wire.

Yeah. Of course I couldn't refuse. So I am working with these women while I learning mediumship and started to incorporate some of the things I. Was learning from Suzanne, like the bless me method.

if you're familiar with that. So I would do that method before I get on the Zoom call or in-person appointment. And what I was doing was asking, are there ancestors?

Are there spiritual guides? Is there archangels? A guardian angel? Anybody up there?

Navigating family support and sharing adoption news

And out there. that is here to support this woman in motherhood, please step forward and use my voice box. Use my heart. Help me communicate to them that they're not alone and how I can best help them in healing this deep sorrow that their experiencing.

And the stories that have come through The support, both of us, me just sitting there holding the space and the person receiving and their ancestors support is like mind blowing.

I wish I could do this every minute of my day because it's so powerful. Putting that into my coaching practice that I

already had has just somehow amplified the healing process that much more.

Can you give us a story of something that really spoke to you using that method? Okay. I wrote it down and I'm not going to read it, but I want to have notes because as a woman, I am going through menopause.

So I get a little brain fog and want tell this story just the right way because it is so powerful. What I normally do is I would do the bless me before, as I just said.

And then I pick a card, some sort of angel or goddess card. And that card often guides us in the session. So with this one particular story I'm thinking about is, and I also do a little bit, have you heard of IFS, Internal Family Systems, Richard Schwartz's work?

Y'all, I'm a psychiatrist. You know I love the therapy. And he's doing so many things I can say about IFS, but huge fan of IFs. I think it's great. Great, great, Great.

It's powerful for me as a receiver and as one giving it. So, it is a little spin on that. Created it. I've never been the greatest rule follower myself so You know breaking breaking traditions and and doing it my own way and That's my creative expression in this world.

That is my way of being an artist if you will I take a little bit of this and that and then make something and so in This I'm using IFS these parts of it where we're closing our eyes and I'm having them go inside and find a part of their body that might be kind of tingling or in pain or speaking to them, right?

Well, in this case, this woman said she felt like a headband pressure right around here, just around the circumference of her head. And what I have them do is pull it out, so I said, okay, let's look at this.

What is that that you're seeing? And she said that, It was, it was actually tightness around the whole head. All of a sudden she sees all her ancestors.

Now her background is Polish. And so she says to me, I'm seeing everybody in like traditional Polish costumes and they're singing and their dancing. She said, there's like a hundred of them.

It's an army of my ancestors with me. And they're celebrating her and they want her to know she is not alone and she's not feeling alone. Like tears are coming down her face because she sees all of them.

So what's kind of cool is I'm not the one seeing this. She is. This is a collaboration. I am not The Guru. I am NOT the One seeing the vision.

Loss, resilience, and the role of children as u201cemissaries of lightu201d

Sometimes I AM. Sometimes they are, sometimes we're sharing with each other. It's collaborative, it's very feminine. We are making a story together. I am not, there's no hierarchy here.

And so as she's sharing her vision with me, I'm feeling it too. I am getting a sense and weirdly I also happen to be Polish. So that's just fun. You know, so we shared this little thing in common.

And she said all of a sudden, she says that I feel this activation. She said something is occurring and there's a lot of excitement around it. And she said, they are so grateful that they start handing her pink and yellow roses.

And, she says, now this is really meaningful to her. Because, and I asked her to, I should have said this up front for permission to share this. Um, because we both were like, what just happened here?

And. She said please share the story to help other women, please. This story about the roses interesting because there's one grandmother who loved roses and she's on the other side.

And there is a niece in this lifetime who she has actually helped. How shall I say that part of the story I want to keep more private and sacred, but let's just say she lived with her for a little bit.

So she's been highly involved in this niece's life and her middle name is Rose. So, she is getting these connections, right? And I also ask, what's the message here?

The message she got was, put your family first and all will work out. She had her partner, her life partner. Her husband. And so, all of a sudden, I guess they break out into a Polish lullaby.

Well, forget it. She just lost it at this point, right? She's so touched. And this is kind of the ending of our session, but I still, I have a little more research to do after I get off the phone with her.

So I bless her with a golden light. I thank all these people for coming forward. This woman has been on her journey for like two years and she's doing, we were actually doing something new.

We had never worked with anybody on a foster care to adoption journey. I have worked with people around domestic adoption, but I had never, you know, this was new and I was upfront.

I said, we're doing this together. But I thought it was going to be a lot faster than two years to tell you the truth. Well, there's a lotta kids in the system.

She's probably gonna get a baby tomorrow. Well, that is not what happened. This was two years and she was in deep helplessness, hopelessness around this.

Definitely felt alone. Then here's this army of ancestors that come forward saying, you are not alone, in fact, we're celebrating with you. So what I do after the phone call is I look up, what's a traditional looking outfit?

you know, Polish tradition. They have wreaths of roses around their heads, like a headband. And, you now, these red and white, beautiful colors in their dress.

my client, you know, the picture, look at this. Is this what you were describing? Because this is what I found online. Can you believe this? And anyway, that just kind of blew my mind.

And she got a call a week later and she is parenting that little girl now.

Energy work, Reiki, and mediumship in fertility coaching

Wow. Oh, so powerful because I know you, you said so many things, but I think you're right that many times our fertility journey can feel so lonely because we don't talk about the law.

Like it can be very lonely when you have a loss, whether it's a miscarriage or, um, many, things can happen, right. Or an adoption doesn't go through.

We don, we, don' talk. Or we may not have the support and sometimes we think only support is just the physical people are around us, but there are people like our ancestors could be cheering us on.

And many times we don't think about that. We forgo that That's right. We're just looking what's in front of us, what something physical that we can touch or somebody.

And there's just like, I feel them right now. I get goosebumps when I'm being greeted by some spirits. So they're with us right because we're talking about all of this powerful information.

Yeah, we are so not alone. It might freak out an introvert a little bit. You're like, Hey, that's a lot of people here. I'm not sure I'd like this many people.

Oh, yes. Yes. And so I wonder if you also talked about a couple of different feelings and you had mentioned, I just think about the word hopeless, you know, or people who are feeling broken by this this journey because it can be a really tough society has a lot of things to say about women and kids when to have kids, when not to Yeah, and so that feeling of hopelessness, I've heard that over and over again, is there a practice, something that they could do, that could take with them today, like if they are in that space?

Yeah. You know, one of the things that, this is around people that are actually here, physical humans. I work with them too. And what I often suggest is that you find three to five people in your life and you kind of have a sit down with that and say, listen, I'm going through this really hard thing right now with, you know, my body and I could use your support and here's how I need you to support me and get really specific.

As far as maybe you're somebody who really loves getting cards or postcards in the mail of like, I'm with you. I see you, or you could just email a card.

Are you the kind of person that when you feeling really down, you need to be alone? Or are you somebody, who's like can you please come over and just sit with me and watch a movie?

Just get some pizza and be with. How do you grieve? Be aware. of how do you normally take care of yourself when the hard stuff happens? Because this is just hard.

There are going to be days that it's just harder. And so let's prepare for it upfront, find those people, have them ready, and tell them, if you see attacks come through, I want you to think 911. I need you now, right away.

This might be a couple years of I-need-you-now. But that's what I love about having three to five people is somebody maybe is in the middle of giving a presentation or podcast interview, right?

They're not available, but friends too might be able to, you know, help in that moment. And I don't necessarily think that if, if the person does have a life partner, that that is part of the circle.

They've usually already involved and they're going through their own feelings and their These are people outside of your immediate experience. So contacting them, letting them know, and then actually following through when you are feeling in that funk to reach out.

Ancestor-guided session story and healing through connection

Yeah. And that's the tough thing is sometimes asking for help is hard. And that's what we talk about. How important it is because parenting is so hard, right?

And you're going to need help with that too. This is great practice. Let's get, let's start building those skills now because you are going need it maybe even more with the baby or with children in the future.

So we talked about building these muscles up front. And we also do a little IFS with that too. Where's that message living in the body? Who, how old is that?

How can we help heal that messages? I got to do this myself. I've got do do all alone. Nobody understands. Help them understand. Right? And if you don't have anybody, it is possible.

You could have maybe people that are great at other parts of your life, but not so great, at supporting you with your fertility. Then, you know, I've supplied my clients with what I call a mentoring mama.

And that's someone, yes, someone who's been through something similar. So let's say, for example, i've had some pretty young clients have to explore egg donation.

That's a hard thing to kind of come to grips with, you know, like, they're like me? I'm like in my 30s. How could I, why do I need an egg donation? Well, maybe talking to another 30 something would be helpful for that woman.

Yeah. And this is such a specific thing going on in their life. But having one other person that they could talk to has been life changing. And so I love to connect people.

I think that is just so healing, both on the other side and on this side. Love that. You just brought a new concept, just a mentoring mama. is so important that you have someone in your corner who's been through it because I mean there is no teacher like live in that experience.

That's right. And talking to someone that's lived it. and they know the acronyms because you know that can be such a pain in the neck. You have to explain you I don't want to have to explain that.

And you know what? Somebody once said to me, one of my clients thought it was so interesting. She said, all my friends were around me when I had a miscarriage.

They knew what to do with that, they did not know how to help me through the failed IVF. But she said it felt just as painful. Well, you who else would know that?

Someone who had failed the IVS. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I think it speaks to the importance of connection throughout the journey, just how powerful that is.

And usually women. Yep. Yup. Yeah, and I can imagine how this journey would transform, if you are in a relationship, how that, like how going through this through a journey.

It's true. And you know what's cute? I've had some of my clients, in this case, husbands, say, when is that support group? How many days away is it? Because they saw how helpful it was when the woman was getting support.

She was able to be, I don't know, a happier person. Yes. she had the other females around her, then she could keep working or she, you know, maybe she has other children at home.

I've worked with people who already had children, they want more children. Most of the time this is their first child they're trying for. That's such a struggle to get it kicked off and going.

Practical support, mentoring mamas, and closing thoughts

And then once it does, often they don't have trouble for that second one. It's not always the case, but it is a lot of times. So I help a lots of women in that first that first pregnancy or that adoption.

But yeah, the marriage can take a toll. It can be really hard in any kind of partnership. Yeah, that can a struggle. Honestly, I felt that when the women had each other or they had me as a support for somebody in their life, as another female, their marriage was better.

And the support matters. It really, really does. And as a psychiatrist, a lot of times I work with a of women in pregnancy or postpartum. Usually that's the first thing that I recommend.

Like, hey, we have a talk. That's what needs to, We got to really think about this. What does your network look like? What's your community look? And where can you get support?

That's exactly it. So healing. And I know that women are going to want to connect with you. Can you tell us how can we connect? Well, right now I'm on LinkedIn.

If you go to Jennie Lynn Gilbert, LCSW, that should get you to my contact information is listed on there. It's a way that you can reach me. But that's the easiest way.

All right. So check her out on LinkedIn. Jenny Lynn Gilbert, thank you. Thank you so much for being on the show. You are just filled with grace, love, It's such a beautiful thing to see someone with just so many great skills that can help women navigate a really difficult time in their lives.

Thank you. I'm so glad to have met you, I can't believe the work you do. Many blessings to you thank you for being on the show. If you haven't heard it yet today, I appreciate you.

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