

276: Becoming an Empowered Empath (with Wendy De Rosa)



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Jen Riday

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You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 276. We're talking about becoming an empowered empath. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday. This podcast is for women who want to feel more vibrant, happy, aligned, and alive. You'll gain the emotional, physical, and spiritual tools you need to get your sparkle back and ensure that depression, anxiety, and struggle don't rule your life. Welcome to the Vibrant Happy Women Podcast.

Hello there my friends. Welcome back. I am so very excited about today's episode. Do you know the saying, 'when the student is ready the teacher will appear'? That happens sometimes when I am talking to a podcast guest. And that happened on this episode. So to give you a little background. Ever since my kids went back to school I expected to feel amazing and I would have all this free time and be productive. My body had other thoughts. I entered into an utter and complete state of exhaustion and practical non-functioning.

And it took me a visit with a coach and a couple of friends before I realized my body feels safe. Now it's going to process the past year which included three hospital visits, deep suicidal ideation by one of my kids, being with my six kids a whole lot plus my spouse. You get the drill. We've all had things. And as my coach friend said, "When people go through a natural disaster they don't just bounce back." The research is clear. Why are we all thinking we need to get back to our pre pandemic selves when in fact we probably need to integrate, and heal, and find a new norm?

So if that's you I'm going to talk about that in my next episode after this in more depth. But today this was an excellent teaser, a big eye-opener about number one, what it means to be an empath. A lot of us think being an empath is something that hinders us because it makes us so sensitive. But

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as Wendy De Rosa, my guest today is going to introduce and she has released a book on this topic.

There is such a thing as being an empowered empath. Standing strong in the source of your inner radiance, your ability to feel and have clairsentience, or clairvoyance, or deep intuitive ability, we can do that with power. And what would that look like, instead of seeing being an empath as a disability, seeing it as an ability, not just an ability but something that makes the world better? Helps your family to heal, helps you to process a post pandemic life. That's what we're talking about today. My mind was blown. I won't say more, we'll let Wendy's wisdom speak for itself.

Jen: Hey everyone, I am talking to Wendy De Rosa today. She's the author of *Becoming an Empowered Empath*. She's the founder of The School of Intuitive Studies and has been helping people develop intuition and experience personal transformation for over two decades. Wendy is a popular faculty member at The Shift Network and has filmed two programs from Mindvalley Spiritual Growth channel. She lives in Longmont, Colorado
Welcome, Wendy.

Wendy: Thank you so much for having me.

Jen: So wow, we know the word empath and it's huge, and people talk about it. And we know it means sensitive to some extent. But that's the tip of the iceberg. So let's dive in and hear what is an empath?

Wendy: So an empath is someone who feels the energy of others through their sentient body. And sometimes that's the intimate relationships, people close in our lives. Sometimes it's the collective. Sometimes it's energy in the faith walking into a room and feeling a vibe, for example, in the space.

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So they feel it through their sentient body, through their senses they'll feel it. And then sometimes have responses to the energy.

Jen: So sentient means the sensory body, so the five senses. And when you say feel it through the senses, do you mean – what sense do you mean exactly, because that's tricky, right?

Wendy: So to be clear, it's actually the felt sense of the body. So it's not all the senses. It's through the felt sense which has a lot to do with our lower body, which is what I talk about quite a bit in the book. It's the feeling sense specifically, whereas we have other senses, particularly other clair senses like seeing, hearing and knowing that are different than empathic intuition.

Jen: So when you say lower body we're talking about what?

Wendy: So one of the big connections that I've made in empathic work and I talk about a lot in the book is that the empathic sense is a form of our intuition. And we have other aspects of our intuition as well. But they're very related to the chakra system. And so it's bridging empath with chakras and very specifically the empathic sense in the body relates to the first three chakras in the body which are basically waistline down. And that's where we hold so much of our history emotionally, energetically.

It's also where we feel underneath the table so to speak. It's we feel the subtle of what's going on in the world around us. And that is the empathic sense.

Jen: It makes me think of the phrase 'gut instinct'.

Wendy: Exactly.

Jen: The guts are down there.

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Wendy: Yeah, exactly.

Jen: Well, I don't want to make this all about me but man, I'm curious as we're ending the pandemic. Are we really? Whatever, we're transitioning. And we've had a year of uncertainty. And I feel like we have another year of uncertainty ahead because now what does a post pandemic world look like? And I have been talking to a lot of women who are experiencing a deep physical exhaustion that they seem to describe kind of in that waist down area. And I'd be curious, what are your thoughts about how empaths in particular are experiencing these uncertainties and changes?

Wendy: Yeah, absolutely. I mean there's two parts that I want to mention is, the pandemic year simply on a nervous system level we've been in fight, flight and in survival mode. Over fight, flight, freeze and any other nervous system response it certainly affects our adrenals. And when we come out of it the system crashes. I mean the fatigue is a way to repair from our nervous system being so accelerated in a protective sort of fear based, or perceived fear based place. And so it was very active last year just by existing.

What's interesting in the energy body which so relates to empath is that the energetic system underlies the nervous system. So we don't always learn about it in school. We learn about the nervous system or all the other systems, circulatory, and skeletal, and muscular. But there actually is underneath all of that is an energetic anatomy.

And with everything that's been going on in the world between last year and this year is what happens is in the energetic system we carry history. Some of that is intergenerational, some of that is lineage, some of it is our own personal experiences. There's a lot of history held in our energetic body, going back throughout time, hundreds of years.

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And so a lot of what got stirred in the collective last year, it was the pandemic, it was civil rights, it was healthcare, it was climate change, it was politics, it was truth. What is truth? It was cognitive dissonance. I mean we could go down a really long list of everything we were experiencing last year. And there were various, if not everything, at least a handful that touched people individually, loss, grief. I mean again it's a long list.

But when we have been experiencing this upheaval of all the issues that essentially have been suppressed, and come to the surface, we are essentially living in an upheaved system of trauma. And so what that does in the collective is it triggers our own personal traumas that we might be holding onto in our energy body from centuries, I mean a really long time ago. And so here's our body not just managing what's going on in the world but also processing history of what we're holding.

And any time we're processing our own personal known or unknown to us and we're managing the collective, the potential for transference energetically, meaning we're absorbing energy or we can't hold a boundary. Where we're just downright fatigued from it, it's just so much more porous and permeable to empath's specifically to be holding their own and trying to live in the world that's essentially experiencing trauma in the moment. It is exhausting.

Jen: Wow. That is profound. So a funny thing, my kids, I think I'm going to record a separate podcast episode about this but everyone can hear it twice. My kids went back to school on April 13th. And I have six and we had a rough year, three surgeries, a son with suicidal ideation, so personal traumas plus the collective. And I thought I'm going to get back to life. And my body, I feel like the lower body regions we're talking about, it would have none of it, just utter and complete exhaustion.

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So it took me talking to a coach friend and having her remind me, “Hey, we just experienced a collective trauma.” There’s research of what societies do when they’ve gone through a natural disaster for example. And there’s a recovery time. Nobody should be bouncing back. It’s funny what you say about the churning up of ancestral stuff.

My mom and grandmother and great-grandmother have just been on my mind and on my mind. And I feel like there’s something I need to release for them. And that sounds different than what a lot of people might have heard. But you were validating that for me, so thank you, that’s fascinating.

Wendy: Yeah. And what’s also interesting too about what you’re saying is we can’t feel on a deeper level when we’re in survival mode. When we’re in crises as of last year, our body isn’t going to heal. It’s going to stay in survival mode to exist. But afterwards in the recovery process and post recovery all of a sudden like you’re saying, the ancestry come forward or deep pieces that are now it’s time for us to see this, to look at this, to acknowledge this.

Our deeper pieces for healing start to surface when we feel safe enough, when our nervous system is ready for it. But it doesn’t happen in crises, we just have to manage, meet what we need in crises.

Jen: Wow. So maybe instead of getting back to whatever the new normal is, maybe we need a year to process and heal after that. Wow, a crazy thought.

Wendy: Yeah, I think so. Lots of rest, I mean that’s what the nervous system needs, more rest than going for it full on.

Jen: I believe you. It’s like my body won’t do what I want it to do. It’s so tired. Yeah, for sure. Have you experienced anything similar? I mean

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you've done this work longer than most of us. Do you still have things that come forward and things that are churned up that you still need to heal?

Wendy: Absolutely. I was actually teaching a class yesterday and was saying to them, "Here I am 26 years into being an intuitive healer and I'm still working on my root chakra and my second chakra." Some of the deeper older history in the body and a part of it is because we need our wounds to a degree until we don't anymore, until we've strengthened, until we've matured, until we've evolved to a place where, okay, I'm stepping into a new way.

I'm becoming a new truer version of myself. And as I do I no longer need to be living in low self-worth, or disconnection from myself, or I feel I can handle these codependency, empowering myself from old codependent patterns or anxiety. These deeper pieces start to surface for us to see and heal. And I certainly have been through my own version of pieces that have surfaced for me to see and heal even though I feel like I've worked on it a 100 times.

Jen: Yeah. Well, as I always say to my students, our brain will give it to us when we are ready and safe like you said. And that we would expect to just bounce back and head right into the roaring 20s after this is probably unrealistic, at least for those of us who consider ourselves empaths, right?

Wendy: Yeah, absolutely.

Jen: So empaths stand kind of as unique, some people call us overly sensitive, you know all the things. So I guess speak a little to how a pandemic and a post pandemic experience would be different for an empath and how there probably are some people that don't handle it or experience it like us.

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Wendy: Yeah. So the first thing I actually want to do is just give a little bit of a framework around this concept of empath and what's happening in their body that would help with this question which is that – so a lot of times the word 'empath' gets lumped in with I'm an empath therefore I take on the energy of others. But actually the empath is someone who feels the energy of others, particularly emotional energy, the vibration of emotional energy. But we have this boundary around our body called our auric field.

And when energy crosses that boundary and comes into our physical body or close into our energy system that's called overly empathic, or overly sensitive. It essentially means the energy crossed the field and is in my body. So there's two different pieces here. There's the empath and there's overly empathic. Overly empathic happens when – the best way I can say it is when there isn't enough radiance in the center of our being because we are depleted, because it wasn't modeled for us, because we haven't found our deeper self, because there are wounds inside our body to heal.

And it's why I relate so much the empathic work to the chakras is because in the energetic anatomy we have this powerful central channel in our body that fuels life force to our entire systems in our body, but to the chakra system. And the chakra system is where we hold our power. And that supports our existence in the world. But if we are depleted we're not getting enough life force, we're not deeply grounded into the earth.

I talk about the grounding cord in the book and how important it is to connect to the vital life force energy to source our bodies and to provide vibrancy, to provide trust, to build a strong sense of self and soul food. So that we are living who we're here to live on this Earth. When we're cut off from that that is where we don't have enough power, or presence, or vibrancy in our body to maintain energetic boundaries from the inside out. Instead we're soul depleted. We're managing our internal experience.

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We might have vacancies or wounds in our body that need to be processed and everything's triggering us from the outside in. When we're disconnected from source ultimately whether that's through the crown of our head through faith or whether it's through the earth, through our sense of trust, and stability, and grounding. So the empathic experience of people becoming triggered this past year and having the increase of oversensitivity.

And I often say with the book, it really helps everybody whether somebody identifies as an empath or whether they're just having overly empathic experiences. I mean you almost can't live in the world today without feeling something. And so there's so much here about the empath learning that it's our work to nurture ourselves. It's our work to heal the history we're holding in our body because when we move that energy, when we clear it there's actually our power in the chakras that can radiate.

And that our inner boundaries comes from our sense of presence, and expansion, and power inside ourselves. And when we access that we're also serving in the world, we're showing up purposefully in the world. So that purpose and boundaries really coincide through our empowered process. And that's what so much again the book is about how to get there.

Jen: Wow, so energetic boundaries and probably physical too.

Wendy: Energetic boundaries.

Jen: Yeah. I mean it's the age old question, how do we become more radiant? I want radiance. Is there an easy answer?

Wendy: Well, yes and no. I mean I would say that the easy answer are energetic tools and practices like grounding ourself into the earth, showering light through the central channel, sitting with the presence of our

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deepest light, our love. We can't get in there through the mind. So these are deep meditative tools. We have to go in through guided meditation or we have to go in through meditation. That's the shorter process.

The longer process ultimately is exploring particularly in the lower chakras why we're holding onto blocks. Why are we coexisting with powerlessness, or victimhood, or fear, or lack, or suppressed feminine? That's in the patriarchal system that we live in that we have historically lived with a suppressed second chakra which is feminine energy, no matter a person's gender. I mean when we start to really tune into healing our wounds around the second chakra, and how much we're holding there, it's like power opens up in that area, it's creation energy. We start to flourish and reconnect to vibrancy.

So there's a short process and a longer process. And again the book really takes us through breaking down the longer process in a way that's a little more digestible.

Jen: Cool. So everyone, she's talking about her book *Becoming an Empowered Empath*. I have ordered it and I cannot wait to read it. So what's the outline of the book? So we can get excited to read it.

Wendy: Yeah. So the book is about understanding first of all, for empaths to understand their energetic anatomy and what's happening in the chakra system specifically as to why over-absorption is happening. And what we can do to heal those particular wounds in the lower chakras specifically to embody and create more empowerment in our system. It also talks about how there is upper body intuition and lower body intuition. So people who are psychics, mediums are upper body intuitive. So they might be clairvoyant, clairaudient.

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But empathic intuition is more related to clairsentients and there's also claircognizance which is the knowing sense. They are more lower body intuition. And so some people will have more than one version of clair happening in their system. And so they might feel extra sensitive in the world and call themselves empaths, that they might have multiple clairs going on.

And it's important to differentiate upper body intuition from lower body intuition. And how it's all working in the body because it makes it less overwhelming for someone to understand that their aspects of intuition are not all empathic. And how to work with upper body and lower body. So that's really crucial and important information. Each chapter comes with a guided meditation to take you through the deeper experience of the teachings. So I teach cognitively and then take people through the deeper journey.

Jen: I love that because like you kind of said at the beginning, being an empowered empath sounds great. And it's not the normal way we talk about it. We almost talk about being an empath as if it's a disability that makes life hard and painful. Tell me, you know, I think I've known a couple of empowered empaths but I'd love to hear about a few you've known through your work. If you could tell us, what does that look like to live that kind of life?

Wendy: Yeah. Well, I mean the first person that comes to mind is Oprah is an empowered empath. And she feels, she has empathy, she gets it. Empaths have in their power have the ability to have deep vulnerable intimate connected conversations. They are not afraid to go there. They're not afraid to let somebody be in their experience without taking it on. They're literally able to stay in themselves and nurture themselves in their bodies. And be able to stay present and grounded in themselves at the same time allow someone to be in their own experience.

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But she's one that comes to mind and it's that type of individual. I think also what we're observing is there has been even patriarchal templates for leadership are changing. Things like keep things non-transparent or we're not going to, you know, we're going to shove things under the rug. We're not going to deal with this. We're not going to talk about equality or control and greed and you name it.

And the new way of leadership is involving empathy. That power of we really have to listen. We need to be vulnerable. We need to be true. We need to be real, authentic. Those are all aspects of empathic leadership.

Jen: Yeah. Wow. I can't imagine but I can kind of begin to guess how amazing the world would be if we could all start to listen to that. And so for those who aren't sure if they're an empath, I'm guessing we all have the ability, some of us have just tuned into it more than others. How can we develop that empath, that clair you were talking about, some of it? Or maybe we can't. I don't know.

Wendy: First of all the empathic sense, the clairsentient sense is the first sense that develops in the womb. So we all have it, that's how we feel what's going on, we feel vibration. And then we're born into an experience of life that is full of conditioning. Some of our conditioning that many of us marinated in as children were things like children are meant to be seen, not heard. And it's not okay to feel your feelings. And we get punished if there's anger or abandoned if there's grief. I mean we have a lot of conditioning around our emotions specifically.

So we've learned to fear our own feelings which also means we lose our capacity with our own emotions and how to be with them, which for empaths mean we lose our capacity to be with other people and their emotions, and their feelings. We lose ourselves in relation to their energy.

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So one of the ways that we can work with this is first, starting to give ourselves permission to feel exactly how we feel.

And to watch the shaming inside ourselves because shaming shows up like, I'm sorry I'm crying right now. Or there must be something wrong with me because I feel, you know, I don't feel good. Or I have a negative feeling therefore I must be bad or wrong. That's an indication that during childhood we were shamed for having a feeling that we had when feelings are a natural human emotion.

And so part of that reprogramming for ourselves is tuning in to our inner child and letting that part of us kick, scream, yell and have the tantrum we need to have when we're upset. Or hug ourselves or crawl under a blanket and just let ourselves be held in our own fatigue, our own grief, our own upset, whatever it may be without wronging ourselves for it. And that teaches us that to have a relationship to our own emotions, and that it's human and okay to have them.

And what happens out of that is we build more stamina and presence to stay with ourselves as other people have their emotions. And that's where we start to develop that resilience and boundaries.

Jen: That's deep. I want to talk about inner child work. But first I want to mention when there isn't enough radiance in the center of our being, or we have wounds to heal we can become overly empathic. And in the past little while I heard someone mention that being an empath and I think they meant being overly empathic, often happens when people have a big T trauma they haven't healed from. I just wondered if you might speak to that a little bit.

Wendy: That's exactly right. I mean that's exactly what I'm saying with the history in the body. It's that history includes traumas and sometimes it's our

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traumas, sometimes it's our parents' traumas. And when we have a wound in our first, second or third chakras, which is typically where particular wounds will reside in the body. It can be anywhere but those are big power centers for our own unprocessed wounds. When we have a wound in that area, trauma, and we haven't dealt with it, it certainly takes a lot of our energy to maintain that wound.

We have a lot of protection mechanisms and coping mechanisms to protect it. You know what else it does is it wears our adrenals down. To hold on to our history in this way our body has to work 10 times harder to maintain a wound than it does to maintain flow or freedom. And so yes, it is the traumas. Once we start processing and healing traumas we start to really get it deep down in our system that we are not our trauma, that we have a self. And that trauma has taken over, it's taking up occupancy in the space of our body but it's not who we are. We find who we are by processing the trauma.

Jen: Wow. So what does that look like to go back and do that inner child work, really nitty gritty, the specifics of what that might be like? And I'll share an example. What advice would you give me? I have recently come more deeply to terms with the fact that my entire life I have taken care of everyone else. When I was born my father was an alcoholic, my mom was young. I had a little brother almost instantaneously. The story goes I just pretty much raised both of my younger brothers.

And what I'm noticing as the pandemic has come through, what's churning up for me is my inner child just is PO'd, angry, mad. When is someone going to take care of me is the thought process. So as an example. Everyone listening will have something different, I get that. What does inner child work look like for some situation like that?

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Wendy: Yeah. And I just want to add too in transparency. And I do talk about this in my book is I'm the oldest girl of eight children. And I have a very relatable story to yours in that I also came into responsibility at a very young age. And a lot of my value and worth depended on me taking care of people. And so I get that. And our inner children do have the right to be pissed about this because I'm going to say a perfect world, which there is, you know, we can wipe that word clean also because nothing's really perfect.

But our inner children would have had an adult figure that would have said, "Honey, that's not your responsibility. That's my responsibility." But when we didn't get that messaging to our children, our inner child, our young self, that part of us assumes the responsibility and takes it on and that becomes our job and who we're here to be. Absolutely a 100% the inner child has the right to express her anger, his or her anger about that.

So one of the ways I work with it is I imagine that my inner child goes into a room. And this is her room and in her room, and I visualize it often in my lower body, my second chakra area which is in the pelvis. Because that is the power center for processed and unprocessed emotions. We have a lot of unprocessed emotions that we stuff down there. And so I'll envision the room there. And it's her room and she gets to decorate it any way that she wants. And she gets to do whatever she wants in that room.

And so she goes into that room and if she's angry and needs to throw a tantrum I let her kick, and scream, and yell, and punch, and kick in that room. And she gets to tire herself out, do whatever she wants. She gets to jump, do somersaults, cartwheels, paint something, dance, whatever she wants to do in that room, that that part of my consciousness didn't get to do back then. I let her have it there.

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And so that's my form of re-parenting myself, by telling that part of me that she no longer needs to hold on to the suppressed anger that she has. She actually gets to feel it and do whatever she wants. And as she processes it in that way, she gets to move past it and not hold it.

Jen: So your adult self kind of is going back to the child self, that's still in your psyche. This might sound strange everyone, but it's still there. There's a part of you that didn't age and is still five years old. So you're saying your adult self is giving her the room, the space, the ability to feel, and think, and experience what she probably should have all those years ago?

Wendy: That's right, yeah, it's our arrested development, it's that there are parts of us that evolve and go forward. And there are parts of us that stay stuck. And those are the parts that we need to go back and call forward and give those parts of us what they need.

Jen: So that's interesting. That matches well with this churning up of my ancestral, my maternal line, that I have this hunch that the problem is passing generation to generation because nobody got to be a child. The responsibilities were pressed on them so young just like they were on me. And I don't even really hold a grudge against any of them. But if it's possible and I think it is, to kind of stop the pattern and do a little healing on their behalf then I'm willing to do it and take that space.

Wendy: Absolutely. What I'd say to that is it's possible it is stirring because there is a statement for you to make, and not just words. But a deeply felt commitment to yourself that says, "I get it. And this was passed on and it's stopping with me. And I'm going to stop it. Maybe I don't know how to just yet but I'm going to let it go. I'm going to change. I'm going to shift", whatever it might, you know, maybe you get insights onto what that can look like. But you literally can say, "I'm going to stop it for us, for the women in my generation. We are not going forward any more with this."

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Jen: Full body chills. Waves of chills, so you just hit the nail on the head and yeah, I have had a phrase swimming in my mind, the buck stops here. I mean it's cliché but it's just in my head. So I think you're right. Wow, powerful stuff you're doing. I cannot wait to read your book, Wendy.

Wendy: Great.

Jen: Any last thoughts or any intuitive sense of something else our audience might need to hear today?

Wendy: I think the main thing I want to just leave people with is the awareness that I get it, being an empath can feel like a curse. And I do believe empaths are leading the way in a massive consciousness evolution because there is immense wisdom that lives in the deep self, the soul of the body. And as we turn to that, as people turn to their intuition and their insights, and what their soul is asking of us, and the body sensations, and all the ways our intuition works in our body.

As we turn to that, we're starting to expand and make more conscious grounded, holistic life choices for ourselves and for the world. And that is, it's like we're one drop in a bucket of many, many empaths, as we do that work and empower in numbers. We are shifting consciousness. We are healing the planet and bringing ourselves more into alignment with truth. That's what I would say. And so keep doing that work. Keep listening to your intuition.

Jen: Well said. And for those who want to connect to you and have even more which I think many will, where should they go?

Wendy: I have two websites. There's wendyderosa.com and there's schoolofintuitivestudies.com. That's my school for training healers and

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intuitives. Either place you'll find programs, and upcoming events, and my books.

Jen: Right, thank you. I feel so honored that you're on the show and feels like a meant to be connection, so thank you very much for being here.

Wendy: You're so welcome Jen, thank you for having me.

Alright my sweet friends, do you have some healing work to do? Do you need to let go of expectation to bounce back to your pre pandemic self or your new version and give yourself space to rest, to heal from the collective trauma that we all experienced over the past year and a half? Do you need to give yourself space to honor your feelings, to honor your energy? I encourage you to do that. Gone are the days of being overly busy, running ourselves ragged into the ground. I think the pandemic ended that. I'd like to say it did.

And let's let a new legacy begin to form, a legacy we pass on to our kids and a legacy in which we honor how we feel energetically, emotionally, whatever's going on in our bodies and to understand emotion isn't just something in our head. It's tied intimately and completely to our physical body, to our energy body, to all of these systems that Wendy talked about in the body. And the more we pay attention to what's going on there I think the better we can heal.

So grab a journal, you can't do this wrong, grab a journal and just write what comes to mind. I call this a brain download. See what ends up on that page. Maybe you like my inner child, maybe your inner child is mad, and tired, and frustrated. My inner child has been wanting to kick and scream for a while now. And I'm going to give her the space to do that. And I can't

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wait to see what comes of it. Maybe this entire podcast, maybe everything I do will shift because of it. I'm sure it will in some way or another.

What will change in your life as you give yourself that space? How will your parenting change? How would your parenting change if you kind of went back and met the needs of your little girl self, even though your parents might not have done that perfectly and that's okay, it's just a pattern that they learned from their parents. The buck can stop with you, the buck stops here.

You can go back and give your young self what she needs and say, "Hey, sweetie, no one's paying attention to you but I see you. You're amazing. Oh wow, look how smart you were, no one else noticed but I see it." Give her what she needs. I love this deep work. Thank you for being here and listening. Hold that space for yourself, whatever version of yourself needs that work and keep moving forward gently. Thank you so much for listening and I'll see you again next time. Till then take care.

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