



Internal Family Systems: Reparenting Ourselves and Calming Our Nervous Systems

Gabriela Blanco

Interviewed by Dr. Laura Markham

Dr. Laura Markham (00:04):

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(00:10):

Hi there. I'm Dr. Laura Markham, founder of Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids, and organizer of this online summit, Nurturing Hearts, Nurturing Minds: The Neuroscience of Peaceful Parenting.

(00:23):

Today we're talking with Gabriela Blanco about using Internal Family Systems to re-parent ourselves and to calm our nervous systems. Gabriela Blanco is the founder of Healing Parents, which supports parents so that they can show up for their families and themselves with confidence that calms, care that empowers, and love that is truly felt. Gabriela's Healing Parents approach acknowledges that parenting involves some of our deepest feelings that we will ever have, and calls on us to pick up where our own parents left off and bring healing to ourselves as we do the important work of parenting.

(01:03):

Gabriela, welcome to the summit.

Gabriela Blanco ([01:06](#)):

Thank you, Laura. It's really good to be with you.

Dr. Laura Markham ([01:09](#)):

Well, I really wanted to talk to you because I know you use Internal Family Systems to help parents heal themselves, maybe even re-parent themselves. So can you tell us a little bit about what Internal Family Systems is?

Gabriela Blanco ([01:29](#)):

Sure. Yeah. So the way I like to understand Internal Family Systems is that it's a lens. So if it is a therapeutic approach, you can work with IFS therapists to do IFS therapy, but the model itself, the way I have found it to be most helpful for parents is when we take it on as a lens.

([01:50](#)):

And so when we put on the IFS lens, we can see ourselves, we can see our partners, we can see our children as these very diverse people with what in IFS they call psychological multiplicity. So the idea that I know I am sitting here with you and I can see you, and I just know that inside there's all these different parts of you that could tell me so many different stories of what you've been through in your life and what you really like and what you don't like, and there are parts of you that might really love doing summits and having these interviews, and maybe parts of you that there's something they don't like about it. And that we're always allowed to have mixed feelings about things, and that doesn't make us a bad person just because sometimes those feelings are not great or we don't think they're going to be accepted. So that's the general idea that we have all these different parts of us. And another way of understanding them is that they're different little personalities that we have.

Dr. Laura Markham ([03:00](#)):

Mm-hmm. So every one of us has this rich inner world of... We could think of it as sub-personalities or parts. I know that they're often referred to as parts. So how could those parts, speaking from the point of view of a parent, where the people who are listening are busy, they're doing the hardest work in the world, they're bringing everything that has brought them to this moment, into this moment with their child, and sometimes parents, we all get triggered. And so what do the parts have to do with that?

Gabriela Blanco ([03:40](#)):

Right. Yeah. So yes, all parents at some point experience this transition from looking at their child and saying, "I could never feel anything but utter awe and delight," and suddenly the rage or the frustration or the helplessness comes in. And when nobody has told you that that makes sense and that there are going to be parts of you that don't like parenting and don't like your child, that can be very overwhelming. So we don't only feel bad because our parts are getting upset or getting triggered, but then we have other parts that start to... We feel bad about ourselves for even feeling that.

(04:20):

And so what helps us about from Internal Family Systems is that we can then understand, "Oh, this means that certain parts of me are feeling either scared." Usually there is a fear that this is going to hurt. Sometimes something happening in our present is reminding the parts of us of something painful from our past, and they're there with the motto... There's a certain kind of part that we have, which is a protector part that has this motto of never again.

(05:01):

So maybe your two-year-old is coming towards you with their tiny little fist, but that might remind these parts of you of when you were unable to protect yourself from another fist. And so they'll just take over and they'll just get really big.

(05:21):

And so I mentioned that there's one set of parts called protectors, and they have basically... Whatever we have experienced in our lives, they have figured out what really hurts about being in the world and what is going to make us feel very bad and scared and alone. And because so many of us didn't get help when we were feeling bad or scared when we were little, then our parts had to figure out these ways of being or of reacting to circumstances so that we wouldn't feel that horrible sense of aloneness or shame or fear, pain.

(06:07):

And so this team of protectors is working either proactively, and in IFS those are called the managers, to help us... I have a protector. I grew up as a daughter of immigrants in a very white upper class area, and so I had a part of me that learned to survive in that environment. I knew that it feels really awful to feel different or to feel less than. And so it really wasn't until I was older that I could help that part of me to understand I don't have to do that. But when you're little, nobody helps you to understand that, or most of us didn't get that.

(06:44):

So that's one example of the many kinds of managers that we can have that say, "Okay, this is how the world works and this is how I'm going to keep us from feeling different or alone or caught off guard, which can be very painful."

(06:59):

And then the other part of that protector's team are the firefighters. And these tend to have really big responses to help us shut off any sort of painful feelings. So a lot of times that's going to look like having a little drink or having a little smoke or scrolling for a little while on your phone or having a really yummy snack. My go-to is coffee. So these parts are like, "Uh-oh, this does not feel good and this is going to feel really bad, actually, or it suddenly felt really bad too fast, so we need this. We need to do this thing to not go back to that scary place."

Dr. Laura Markham (07:39):

So the firefighters are trying to, you might say numb, to try to soothe the fear or the hurt or the loneliness, and the managers are trying to organize things so that you don't feel it, and the protectors are doing the same thing. Is there some part that might be lashing out at my two-year-old because my two-year-old I feel is about to hurt me? Who is lashing out?

Gabriela Blanco (08:07):

Yeah. So what happens is that team I just mentioned, which the managers and the firefighters, they're the team of protectors, but what are they protecting us from? They're protecting us from this other team of exiled parts. And the protector parts have tried to push those exiles away. And those are often the very young and tender parts of us that were surprised by the sudden look of disapproval or disgust on a parent's face when we just wanted their love and we realized, "Oh, I'm not okay with them anymore." These moments that are too painful that all parents experience. So before any parents hear this and say, "Oh no, I ruined my kid because I gave them a dirty look," it's not that severe, but a lot of us got a lot of that, or we didn't get help. Our parents didn't repair those moments, so we need to make sense of them on our own.

(09:01):

So we've got these vulnerable parts that remember the fear perhaps of having been hit or having seen that, or maybe having been yelled at. And anytime the protectors feel like that pain will surface again, they go into action. And so perhaps if you suddenly do a big scream, like a toddler is coming... I don't know how many parents have experienced the sensation of when you say, "Just stop," and it feels so good. You

feel really bad after, but in the moment, being able to just get it out, it just feels so good and like you're safe again.

Dr. Laura Markham ([09:50](#)):

Yes.

Gabriela Blanco ([09:52](#)):

And so you're doing there what you really needed someone to do for you back then, and you're not choosing to do it. It doesn't feel like you're choosing to do it, but rather these automatic responses that you've taken on are coming out. And a lot of times what we've done is set up our lives in such a way that these parts of us don't get set off. We know what types of environments to avoid or... Yeah. And so then you can't do that with kids. So they've come to be like, oh, all those things that you've been trying to run away from or use these old strategies with, those strategies aren't going to work here.

Dr. Laura Markham ([10:36](#)):

So all of us, presumably, have had times in childhood where we couldn't make sense of something in a healthy way or that we didn't have support to work through something. And there was some little part of us that was hurt, scared, alone. I call it stuffing those feelings in the emotional backpack. But Richard Schwartz and the IFS people, the Internal Family Systems people would say there's a part of us that holds those feelings, and we shun it, we keep it away from us so we don't have to feel the feelings. So the protectors are really protecting us from those parts of ourself.

([11:19](#)):

And you just said that we find ways in life to avoid those parts of those parts surfacing. We avoid anything that might surface them, and if they start to come up, we numb it with our little addictions of the screen or the little drink or shopping or whatever it is. But children have a way of triggering because they're little people, partly, and they echo our little people inside. So they have a way of triggering our exiled parts to come up. Is that correct?

Gabriela Blanco ([11:53](#)):

Yes. And that was so beautifully put of how our little people inside suddenly remember.

Dr. Laura Markham ([12:00](#)):

Yeah.

Gabriela Blanco ([12:02](#)):

And not only the pain, but the hope and the delight. Because in protecting ourselves throughout our lives from these difficult experiences, as you know, we also then are protecting ourselves from joy, from that extra level of delight and joy in letting ourselves really feel life. And then they come and we say, "Wow, I suddenly feel so many things," and I know I certainly would never go back to an existence before what my daughter came to remind me of this aliveness that we have in us, and that has this flip side then of also, okay, and now we are invited to reckon with everything that kind of just got stagnant at some point. A lot of things in adolescence, a lot of things even in the younger years, and this is the time where we can revisit that.

Dr. Laura Markham ([13:01](#)):

Well, it's a gift that our children give us, actually, this opportunity to reclaim these exiled parts of ourselves, but not an easy thing to do.

Gabriela Blanco ([13:12](#)):

Exactly.

Dr. Laura Markham ([13:13](#)):

So I know that anyone listening can find a therapist who works with IFS and work with them, but are there ways that parents can begin to do this work themselves?

Gabriela Blanco ([13:27](#)):

Yeah. Definitely. I mean, this is the thing about IFS that's so beautiful is that when you put on the glasses and you can see yourself through this lens and see your child through this lens, there's one piece of it that's really important for re-parenting ourselves through IFS, which is understanding that all of those parts of us are inherently good, and we come into the world with these parts. They're there. They're not born out of trauma or out of wounding. They're just there. But then they have to kind of give up their roles that maybe are kind of flowing and they feel good, everyone has a place here, we are a team, they suddenly have to take on these burdens like, "Oh, my job is just to protect us from ever feeling embarrassed. So I'm always going to be scanning environments to make sure I don't mess things up." Or, "My job is to make sure that we never feel that scared again, so I'm always scanning for this and for that." And so they're actually doing a job they don't want to do, but they're inherently good.

([14:39](#)):

And what they need is to know, because a lot of parts have forgotten this, and most parents, most of us forget this, is that there is something within us that can hold all of the parts and help all of the parts to heal. And in IFS, that's what is referred to as the Self with a capital S. And so I don't know enough about your past and your story to know how many managers you have that help you in a certain way and what your particular firefighters are like, or when your exiles had to have these painful experiences and take on these burdens of shame or pain or extreme fear. But what I do know is that you and I share this quality, which is referred to as the Self with a capital S in IFS, and this is something that everyone has within them, and we can see it as the wise inner parent.

(15:47):

And so if you can imagine Self being maybe like the sky, and then the parts are maybe the clouds and the rain and all these different elements, and sometimes there might be storms and sometimes there might be clear weather, but what never goes away is the sky. And so Self is always there.

(16:11):

Now, when we are little, we really need help from our parents to be able to rest in our self-energy, and that comes from a parent being able to be connected to their own self-energy to be aware of their self-energy. So what does this look like? When I know that I am inherently... Because these are some of the qualities of the self, I am inherently compassionate. No one needs to teach me how to be a compassionate mama. I am inherently compassionate. I am inherently good. I'm inherently clear and confident and calm and caring. These are just things that I have within and that I know you have within. And perhaps because of my life experiences, I have these manager parts, these protector parts that had to get so big. It's like they eclipse. If it's the sun, it's like the roles that they have to take on eclipse, that sun. And I can almost forget as a child that I have all of these qualities within because children can't... It's not their job to self-regulate. It is not their job to remember their goodness. They need us to be continuously mirroring that for them.

(17:37):

And so when we understand that, "Yeah, oh, I have this really petty part that sometimes feels jealous that my child has such a good life and I didn't," or, "Oh, I have this really embarrassing firefighter that does this thing I don't want anyone to know that's how I soothe," from the lens of yourself you can say, "Of course, that's what you learned to do. Of course, sometimes you feel that way."

(18:09):

Yeah. And so when we can just make that shift, I feel like that's where something really powerful happens. And when we allow ourselves to start witnessing all of our parts, and even in those moments with our children, when we're really triggered, something really set us off, this lens can help us to say things like, "I'm sorry I can't help you with your feelings right now. A part of me is just really, really frustrated." They can even see us tending to the part. And so, yeah, that can take some practice.

(18:56):

You don't necessarily need to do IFS therapy to start practicing these things, but when you can do that, you're not only finding a helpful strategy for you, you might lay on the floor and say, "When I just lay on my back like this on the floor, it really helps me to listen to my frustrated parts, or it really helps me to do this." So you're just giving them these little bits in the moment. And sometimes the part takes over, the part takes over and tells the kid off or says something really hurtful, but it's a great language to later come back and say, "I'm so sorry that happened. This part of me just got so big and really wanted to help me because it was scared and it really didn't realize what was going on. And I am trying to help that part of me so that that part knows that everything is safe now." It's such a good framework for that.

(19:56):

And it also can be a helpful one too for saying to your child when they're feeling bad after they were really loud and angry and did something and they say, "I'm sorry," you can say, "Oh, can I say something to your angry part? Yeah. Okay. Can you tell your angry part that I love her so much and I'm so sorry that she felt so scared or that she had to get so big and that that's okay, and that I'm here for her, that I love her, and I know she was just trying to help you."

Dr. Laura Markham (20:36):

And she's safe.

Gabriela Blanco (20:37):

Yeah. And she's safe. Yeah.

Dr. Laura Markham (20:40):

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So the research behind self-compassion, there's an enormous amount of research, which in fact, elsewhere in the summit, we talk with Kristin Neff, the leading researcher on self-compassion in the world, and what you just described fits right into this, which is that when we're able to say, "Of course you felt that way," when we're able to allow ourselves all of the feelings, when we're able to love

ourselves through them, the research shows that we do better, where it's a healthier response. The idea of putting those exiled parts or the protector parts, shunning them, just the idea of shaming and blaming ourselves for anything is not helpful.

Gabriela Blanco ([21:30](#)):

It's not. Yeah, it's not effective.

Dr. Laura Markham ([21:33](#)):

Yeah.

Gabriela Blanco ([21:33](#)):

Yeah. And actually... Oh.

Dr. Laura Markham ([21:36](#)):

No, no, go ahead.

Gabriela Blanco ([21:36](#)):

Okay.

Dr. Laura Markham ([21:37](#)):

I want to hear what you can say, and I can hold onto to my question.

Gabriela Blanco ([21:39](#)):

Okay. Well, know Kristin Neff is... I had read her book and I had started following her, and I was completely sold on self-compassion. It had very much transformed the way I had seen myself. And I learned about IFS afterwards, and I said, "This is it. This is such a helpful way to be able to practice self-compassion and relate to yourself in a just deeply compassionate way."

Dr. Laura Markham ([22:13](#)):

Yeah.

Gabriela Blanco ([22:13](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. Laura Markham ([22:14](#)):

I think it gives us a way to appreciate the parts of ourselves that we often don't appreciate. That part of yourself that does something you don't like... So I'm thinking

about myself, the part of myself that works so hard and that I feel oppressed by at times from working so hard, that when I began to engage with that part of myself and saw that it was trying to protect me from anything ever going wrong, you said, "How many managers do you have?" Just trying to manage it. And once I could see that part of myself as trying to take care of me, it changed the entire dynamic.

(22:55):

So I think that even the part of us that yells at our child, we can see us trying to protect us. And even sometimes trying to protect our child. And we can appreciate that without wanting that behavior to happen. And only when we appreciate and engage with that part of ourselves do we find a way for the behavior not to happen, right? Is that true?

Gabriela Blanco (23:21):

And this is why it's such an amazing lens for parents, because you know what you just said, how true is that about kids?

Dr. Laura Markham (23:30):

Yes.

Gabriela Blanco (23:31):

And so it's so great that if you're going to learn wonderful parenting tools, most of those you're going to be able to use with your parts. And if you have found ways to help your parts to feel safe enough to rest, and to not only rest from trying to protect you so hard, but finding even different ways to help you that serve your current values more, then you're more able to get to your child's parts as well and to really connect with them. So it just all becomes kind of like the same thing, the same idea of meeting ourselves at the level of our humanness and our messiness, but also our wonderfulness. And it's, yep, that's just the way it all is. It's all of us in all of our parts and showing up here with our stories and all the stories that our parts have to tell. And so often all they need is to just be listened to.

(24:37):

And so when you get to learn the story... Just this morning I got very angry with my daughter and I was like, "Oh, there it is." And I know it. It's that story of the parts that are like, I feel so wronged, I feel so unappreciated, I feel so unseen and taken for granted. And I'm like, "Oh, I've worked with that one. I know where that one's coming from." And so you can turn to that part and say, "Yeah, I know that's hard. It's so hard to feel that way."

Dr. Laura Markham ([25:13](#)):

Instead of just saying, "Well, that's just what parenting's like," or, "It's the child's fault," the blaming of the child or the shutting down of the feeling. Instead, we can embrace whatever that part is with that expression, and then that part does get seen. We all need to feel seen.

Gabriela Blanco ([25:33](#)):

Yeah. And I also believe that every time we bring that awareness to that part, even if you're like, "Still? awareness," but yeah, every time we bring the awareness to that part, we remove some of the emotional charge. We remove some of the burden that it's feeling to protect us. And so even though it may seem like, "What? Again?" it's like, well, here's what you can be sure of, if it's happening a lot, it's old and it needs to be heard a lot of times, and it needs to be heard and known that it has space to try different things.

([26:11](#)):

But just like a child, if a child's doing something that's not serving them, it won't really help if in the moment we say, "Don't do that. That's not good. That's not right." However, we know that if we listen, if we allow ourselves to just be with them, and maybe we'll bring a limit, but we really want to listen to whatever's underneath the behavior, that at some point we may be able to help them with of things that they can do instead or how they can actually feel better in those moments that led up to that behavior. What was the fear? What was the story? So it's the same with our parts in the moment.

([26:59](#)):

Another part of me wants to just say, "Tell the controlling part of me to just calm down," or, let's just listen for now, and then we can revisit, we can circle back. My love for you, my presence is infinite, so let's get through this one as best we can, and then we can come back. We can circle back.

Dr. Laura Markham ([27:22](#)):

Well, this is like the self. The infinity of the self, the infinite love of the self is so resourceful. And so when a child is... You said we can come up with ideas for them, we can. And also they can come up with ideas for themselves, but not until they can settle the nervous system, the feeling of threat, the protectors and the managers and the firefighters are coming out because the nervous system is dysregulated. There's a feeling of threat. So the defenses come up. So if we can settle that, as you're saying,

the listening, the acknowledgement, the seen, then the child has their own inner wisdom, the self that can resurface. Yes?

Gabriela Blanco ([28:10](#)):

Right. Yep. Yeah, I agree. I mean, sometimes our life experience is going to be helpful and things like that.

Dr. Laura Markham ([28:16](#)):

Absolutely.

Gabriela Blanco ([28:16](#)):

But yeah, we want them to be in that space where they feel empowered and that wisdom. Yeah.

Dr. Laura Markham ([28:23](#)):

So what are some signs that a parent may want to do some work re-parenting themselves?

Gabriela Blanco ([28:31](#)):

Well, I mean, that's what we're called to do. I think if you're a human parent and you ever feel bad about yourself as a parent, and this ever feels hard, it's an invitation to start saying instead of, "Why do I do this?" Say, "Okay, a part of me does this, and a part of me really doesn't like that I do that." And so I think all of us can benefit from this. That's different from saying IFS is the only way, and that's all you need. But rather, I think all of us can benefit from just understanding it's okay to be all these different things at the same time, and in fact, it's a beautiful thing.

Dr. Laura Markham ([29:16](#)):

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. And do you think that this work can be done... that a parent could begin journaling about it? What is a good way, a practical next step for someone who's inspired by our conversation and says, "Oh, yeah, I want to talk to that part of me that does X"? How does that conversation happen?

Gabriela Blanco ([29:39](#)):

Right. Well, I will be offering a PDF where there's some exercises at the end for people who are attending here. So something like that can be a good start. You can find prompts online and things like that, and you can journal with them, or you can just sit and kind of meditate with it, just follow the prompts to get curious about a part of

yourself. But a question that you can just, in any situation ask yourself can be, "What do you need?" If a part of you [inaudible 00:30:11] just turn towards, what do you want me to know?

(30:14):

Because I think sometimes the question, "What do I need right now?" can feel threatening. Like, "Wait, how am I supposed to figure out what I need?" But when you can ask the part of you, "Okay, what do you want me to know? What do you need from me?"

(30:27):

And another way that I think is really helpful to bring care to our parts is to let ourselves be listened to by a safe, good listener who really knows how to just listen. And so even if we don't realize that we're doing parts work, just in letting ourselves share and offload all the different parts that need to be heard will get their chance to be heard. So it's finding a listener who knows how to listen from self would be a way of understanding that instead of their parts wanting to come in and maybe figure it out for you or give you some advice, but that can be incredibly helpful as well without having to formally do IFS therapy.

Dr. Laura Markham (31:16):

Right. Right.

Gabriela Blanco (31:16):

Yeah.

Dr. Laura Markham (31:18):

And do you see this as a way to heal intergenerational cycles of, well, even of trauma?

Gabriela Blanco (31:27):

Yes. Within IFS, they have this idea of what they call legacy burdens. So these are things that we take on not only from previous generations in our families, but also the cultures that we have grown up in and everything that people that came before us had to experience because of the society they've grown up in.

(31:51):

So as you know, American society, there's a lot. There's a lot there. And so IFS is helpful because you can turn towards those parts and help them to be the first one to release that burden because they're able to name it and see it. You don't

necessarily have to go back and learn the story of the ancestors, but in willing to do the work with the parts of us, and this is the kind of thing that you do more in an IFS therapy space, but that part can really release the burden, which is the belief or those emotions or that automatic belief of, "If I feel this threat, I need to do this," and they kind of replace that with a different story. And so then you kind of become the first in that long line to release that burden or to just see it. Maybe your child will be the one to really release it, but you were the first to turn towards it with love and see it and start that healing.

Dr. Laura Markham ([33:03](#)):

I love that idea that you take the first step. My daughter has a poem she wrote long ago, The Third Generation of Daughters Will Be Free. And I thought, yes, exactly. We each do the part that we can do, and we're taking that step forward and we go as far as we can take it. But even seeing the burden, even naming what we see, what we've experienced, articulating the story, even... I think the story is a really interesting question because hearts hold parts of our story, and that's part of what we're healing. And yet, we don't want to get re-traumatized, lose ourselves in the story. We want to be able to hear those stories. Do you have any thoughts about this, about how the healing just happens?

Gabriela Blanco ([34:00](#)):

Yeah. Well, that's a wonderful thing about IFS is that the approach to turning towards our parts is always very curious and very respectful, just like we want to be with our kids. And so that's why we start with these kind of open-ended questions, like what do you want me to know? What are you afraid of? What do you need from me? And so usually what will happen is that the parts of you that you start with first and that are kind of more ready to talk are the protectors. So you're not going to rush to an exile. And this is what sometimes people think inner child work is all about, is that you go to that part of you that was so wounded right away and you heal it and you parent it. And what's nice about the way IFS is set up is that if there is a protector part of you that really doesn't want you to turn to the exile, you wait. You wait.

Dr. Laura Markham ([34:56](#)):

It's protecting. Yeah.

Gabriela Blanco ([34:56](#)):

Yeah. Until that protector part feels safe enough in relationship with you and trusts you. And so you're not, in turning towards your parts, if you notice you have any sort

of agenda, then you turn towards the agenda part of yourself and you say, "Oh yeah, what are you wanting to do? What are you up to?" in a loving way. "I get it. I get it. You just want us to get to the bottom of this healing thing, don't you, right?" We are feeling really bad about ourselves. I'm feeling like a bad mom. I've been yelling a lot. So let's just get to... Where? Where's that exile that's at the bottom of all this?

(35:38):

And then from the place of self-energy, you can turn towards that part of you with the agenda and the urgency and say, "Would you be willing to just wait a minute while I come back to this angry part? Would you be willing to experiment with the idea that I can help the angry part?" And that is what's really going to help everyone to feel better and to be able to rest. So yeah, it's infinite. There's so many beautiful ways that IFS is caring and careful.

Dr. Laura Markham (36:22):

I love that it's about creating safety because all of our understanding of the nervous system is when we are in a state of well-being, our heart is open, we want to connect with people, we're curious, we're playful, we can learn, we can grow. And when we're in a state of threat, there are lots of ways of responding to that. We can run, we can fight, we can play dead, we can do [inaudible 00:36:53] but all of those are defenses that because of the fear. And if we can just create safety, we can shift back into that place where growth is possible. That's what you just described, working with yourself, the different parts of yourself to say, "Could we wait on this and just listen to this part of us? Could we hear what this part of us wants us to know, what this part of us is afraid of?" I'm hearing a very wise parent here, but it's really the wise self, the larger self that's able to do this.

Gabriela Blanco (37:30):

Exactly. Exactly. And I think people have different languages that work for them. I took my deep dive into the nervous system stuff. I thought, "Okay, now I get it. Oh, I love how this really makes sense." But then I realized that nervous system ease wasn't going to be my language.

(37:51):

And so when I discovered internal family, parts of me, and your parts can even have names, that they'll tell you, "This is what I want you to call me." Well, that can sound very odd. But to me that just made more sense for how I was going to really feel doing this work. I prefer to say, "I want to hear the story, I want to just be with," but that doesn't mean that we get stuck in the mind. Rather we listen, we notice where the

parts of us live in our bodies. We can bring our hand to that part of our lower back or to when you focus your attention on a part, you say, "Okay, I'm right here with you. It's a tightness in my chest." And that's where you start bringing that care to that part.

Dr. Laura Markham ([38:42](#)):

I love that. Thank you.

Gabriela Blanco ([38:45](#)):

Thank you.

Dr. Laura Markham ([38:47](#)):

You mentioned that you have a PDF that gives folks tools that they can just begin to experiment with these ideas, these IFS ideas. Is that right?

Gabriela Blanco ([38:58](#)):

Yes.

Dr. Laura Markham ([39:00](#)):

Can you tell us what that is?

Gabriela Blanco ([39:00](#)):

Sure. Yeah. So it's a PDF called Parts Work and Parenting, and it has a little breakdown of how the model works. And then at the end, there's just a few prompts that you can think about or write about to... If you print it out, you can write there on the workbook, just starting to get curious about how your parts are showing up.

Dr. Laura Markham ([39:24](#)):

Beautiful.

Gabriela Blanco ([39:25](#)):

Yeah.

Dr. Laura Markham ([39:27](#)):

Well, and your website and other information will be below our interview here for people who want to find you online.

Gabriela Blanco ([39:34](#)):

Okay. Yeah. Thank you.

Dr. Laura Markham ([39:36](#)):

Well, thank you for today. It's been terrific to talk to you about this work and how this can serve our parenting and at a deeper level, our humanness. So thank you.

Gabriela Blanco ([39:53](#)):

Yeah. Thank you, Laura.