

## EP110

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Legacy leaders, are you ready? I always have I've been raving about EMDR therapy, and everyone's What is that? I even asked my own therapist, Hey, can you come on? But then, ethics, obviously, I can't. The great news is I have a client who does EMDR therapy. I'm like, Jennifer, please talk to me about it.

Or talk to us about it. But I also know Jennifer does other modalities. But Jennifer is a therapist for Asian American women based in Los Angeles. And she uses tools like EMDR, DBT and others to help her clients. Jennifer sees her clients both in person and virtually and has an amazing team that

**Jennifer Oh:** she's growing.

Jennifer, welcome. Thank you so much. I'm excited to be here to talk about my favorite modality EMDR. So yeah. Yeah,

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I'd love our listeners to know more about you, how you got into therapy, what made you choose EMDR as one of your modalities, because I wanted to be a therapist, and then I started going to therapy in college because it was free, quote free, with our tuition.

And I was like, I am fucking crazy. I can't, if I'm crazy, how am I supposed to deal with other people? hats off to you for doing this work and I'm very grateful for my own therapist. So how did you get into it and made you decide I'm going to keep this because I know I'm crazy and everyone else's too.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah, that's crazy that you knew about it in college. I didn't even know therapy existed to be honest. I think I was in a college student trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I knew that I wanted to do something related to helping professions. I 1st, started out being a nurse, and I found out about bedside nursing, which is just sitting with the patients and talking about maybe some of the health issues that they might be going through.

And so I was like, oh, I really am curious about this. I think the biggest point for me was, I went on a mission trip with my church and I had the opportunity to speak with very young children who were living in very low income areas, very high. Conflict areas and 1 of them just shared with me their whole life story.

A lot of trauma in it and she was only 7 and I remember thinking this girl had. I feel like she experienced so much more than me and I was 20. and so I was really drawn to. The story that she was telling and I remember sitting there thinking, I think this is exactly what I want to do. And so I started researching, started talking to professors and they basically told me this is, what a therapy or therapist does.

I said, great, sign me up. I switched my major and since then, I am on the road and every day I am still enjoying. I still have so much passion for it and I'm really glad to be in this position, walking with people.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah, and especially since post 2020, I don't need to explain everything that has happened in this decade of everything that we have gone through and going back to my story, like I, I did talk therapy, right?

Cognitive behavioral, and I don't think a lot of people realize this. There's a lot of tools, modalities of what you could do in therapy to heal. So I would be talking And I know it got to a point, maybe in my mid twenties, I'm done talking about this. Like I need this stuff to be gone or healed.

And my therapist at the time said, you should look into EMDR therapy. I'm like, wait, what is that? it's like a mind body connection. It really heals trauma. And as you shared, but I don't do it. You should go find another therapist to do it. So I would love for you to share. what is EMDR therapy and how is it different from others?

Why did you even choose to, cause you have to be certified too. Like on top of grad school, like when you learn these different modalities, you have to take time and spend money to do these certifications.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes. Yeah. I actually first heard about EMDR in grad school when I was doing a project on the impact of trauma.

From generation to generation, and everybody knows CBT. There's a lot of even trauma. And what's CBT,

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** by the way, because some people might not know this. there might be some listeners who I've been considering therapy, but I don't know about it. Yeah, CBT and then EMDR and all the alphabets

**Jennifer Oh:** of therapy.

So CBT stands for cognitive behavioral therapy, and it really focuses on using cognitive restructuring, meaning. What can we do to change the way that we are thinking about ourselves, but a lot of challenging negative beliefs, identifying the relationship between these thoughts with feelings and behavior.

it is considered the gold standard oftentimes in therapy used, and it's been adapted to all different type of models. And CBT is also. You could use it in trauma but I, for me, when I was starting to do my project, I'm like, everyone knows CBD. Is there something else that people can do to help trauma?

And I found research on EMDR and EMDR stands for eye movement, reprocessing, desensitization. It's such a long word but that focuses on more of your somatic. Your body and also accessing the memories. And so that modality was essentially discovered by. Francine Shapiro, she mainly used it on veterans who were experiencing very traumatic memories, flashbacks, and it was doing really well.

So I remember utilizing that and I said, this is what I want to do when I graduate. And after I got licensed, that's something that I had to get trained in. But, yeah, EMDR is really different. It uses bilateral eye movements and it helps you to go back to maybe some of the memories and help reprocess them.

Whereas talk therapy like CBT, you just talk about the event over and over again, maybe some of the thoughts that come up and you challenge it. And so it's different because EMDR. It's less talking and it's more, yeah, focusing on allowing our brain to do its own thing.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I, I want to share even in my personal story because.

I was done. I'm like, I'm done talking about this. I know what thought process I need to change. And then, you get to points in your adult life where you get triggered and you have that same trauma response to when you're a child. And so, to give an idea, somebody explained this and you can validate or edit this, Jennifer, because you are the expert here, not me.

I am traumatized of life. and so someone explained to me, let's say traumatic. Event happens in your childhood. I always like giving the very simple example of this actually happened to me. My grandma had hot water in the cup, right? And she put it away. And my grandma told me when I was like three, don't touch it.

What do you do when you're a kid? I touched it. And then the water fell over and then I had like third degree burns, right? Oh, man. And she was like yelling at me, my other family members were yelling at me. And so what's interesting is when I get yelled at as an adult, like I freeze and I get into fight mode. And I would have to work and I would always not necessarily that, specific memory, but other memories similar to it in my childhood would have to process that. In CBT, just talking about it, but what happens with trauma, someone explained it like it's like a cut or a bruise in your brain.

So trauma gets stored there. So anything similar to a trigger point in adult life, but would go back to your passive, how you would feel. So I get that freeze and fight mode, but then how do you heal it? Like, how do you make sure when you get triggered in adulthood, you don't go back to that. And someone explained to me, EMDR, you go back that those memories and you're healing it like a stirring pot.

So that when you do get triggered in a similar situation, cause you can't control your future, you don't get into that mode again. And you could work through it. it's so fascinating because when I catch myself, I'm like, Oh, it's happening. Like real life story. I got into this happened like a week ago, me and my boyfriend got into a miscommunication and I felt like mode's so strong.

okay, what do I do to self regulate? I need to walk outside. I need to go speed walk and use this energy there. But I caught myself and I don't think I would have been able to do that if I didn't do the work for me and DR.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah, so you brought a lot of awareness to maybe the way that you are responding.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah, I had to do breathing exercises, like deep. I knew what tools I had to do for self regulation. I had to take myself out of the situation, like physically. And I share that because I, if I didn't do the work, I think I would have done fight mode. And also I want to use this podcast episode to apologize to all the men I used to date because I didn't know how to self regulate.

I was in

**Jennifer Oh:** my heart era. Yes.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I don't know if this helps anyone, anything you want to add to that, Jennifer, because I know a lot of our listeners love hearing stories that they understand, rather than just a thing.

**Jennifer Oh:** yeah. So I also like to use an example of imagine your brain being really unorganized, you have a room in your brain that feels messy in there, but EMDR just comes, closes the door, and then when you open it, everything is just organized, everything is just clean, but we don't really know what happened there.

Our brain just is. Our brain has the ability to heal itself, right? And so EMDR essentially accesses that natural part and it organizes for you. So trauma is like a raw form. It gets stuck because it's just the experience, the emotions that are there, but EMDR just helps to organize those fragmented parts a little bit.

I personally also have an experience when I was doing the EMDR therapy. Where you're the

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** client, right? Yes, where I was the client.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes, so the thing that I did was really silly, but I had a phobia, actually, of zombies. when I was younger, I would watch zombie movies all the time. And then in my twenties and my thirties, I just could not be anything zombie related.

Halloween was really freaky for me. I had to stay inside. I had to try to turn off the radio or even not even look outside. Cause I was scared of seeing ads, And it would cause this like emotional response. So when I did the EMDR, it actually, the therapist was eight. Able to help me track.

When did that start? What memory caused it? And it was actually when I was a nursing student, I had gone into an office and there were, cadavers there. And I think I was really shocked to see that. And my brain just decided in that moment, I'm unsafe. And so Every time I see something like that, it triggered a memory that I would, I didn't really know until I started doing EMDR myself and now I'm good.

I can watch, I can look at it and not feeling scared about it at all.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. that's interesting. that happened and then you're able to do that. I just, and I also want to share with folks. I'm not just doing this episode because I've undergone through EMDR when I have obviously my relationships with my own coaching clients, because they feel safe with me, they share very traumatic experiences and ethically for me, I can't support them if there are blocks, like I need to refer.

Then to therapists like Jennifer or someone else that might be a better fit just ethically for me as a coach and The response I usually get I tried therapy. I'm done talking about it Because so often I think people have the perception with therapy. You need understand. Why did I think that way? Why do I feel this way with EMDR?

You don't need to answer those questions. let's just heal this shit, man Like, I'm done, let's heal it. And so every single time I have actually referred my clients to work with an EMDR therapist. They're like, that changed my life in the, and they've undergone so much traumatic experiences, which I will not share because of confidentiality.

That's why I'm such a huge proponent of it. I'm, I know people will be curious, but what is EMDR, most effective with in terms of issues, conditions, or traumatic experiences?

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah. So ENDR is research heavily with trauma. So it could be a single incident trauma, which, Defines

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** trauma.

I know that we know what it is, but let's go back to basics. What is trauma?

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah, trauma is a emotional, psychological, or even sometimes physiological response to an event or an experience that overwhelms somebody's ability to cope. for some people, some incidents might not be considered trauma for some.

It could be considered a trauma. It just depends on their ability to cope with that moment. And if it feels really overwhelming then they could start to identify as trauma. And there are different types of trauma. There's, small, like acute traumas. These are single distressing events. So for example, like a car accident somebody could label that as trauma.

There's also chronic trauma or complex trauma is somebody who's experienced long periods of trauma. For their whole lives. And that looks like childhood experiences or maybe interpersonal relationships or bullying, something that lasts for more than. a few months that they're experiencing can be complex.

there's also vicarious trauma. it's when people hear about trauma, they just start to think that's their own. And then also there's intergenerational trauma where it, the trauma is passed down from generation to generation. And is most effective with trauma, single complex.

All of these, as well as anxiety, depression, phobias, grief, if anyone has any negative, strong core beliefs about themselves, EMDR is very helpful, or any somatic issues or chronic pain, and there's just more and more research about how we can start to adapt EMDR to some of these experiences, but those are the main research areas.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I'm sure you've heard this, I've heard this so many times from my clients or even friends when I talk about therapy. Help me answer the, but I haven't gone through something traumatic, like a car accident, being abused. So I don't need therapy, but then they're tense, but they acknowledge that there's some form of block, whether it's anxiety or something.

yeah. what's your response as a therapist? Yes. Yeah,

**Jennifer Oh:** I tried to explain that trauma isn't Just about what happened, it could just also be, how did your nervous system experience it though? If they're like, oh, no, I don't think I experienced trauma or some people might not even label. What is actual trauma?

Do not trauma. it is figuring out well, what are some behavioral things you're noticing? What are some things that you're noticing in your body? And then we trace it back and help explain maybe these are incidences why you are responding and reacting that way. And I think just psychoeducation around that helps.

Yeah,

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** because I had that idea before in my head, that judgment of I haven't gone through anything crazy or traumatic. And this is back when like therapy wasn't cool, where cause I started going to therapy when I was in college. My friends be like, what, why, what happened? What's wrong with you? and I'm like, nothing.

I just noticed I have things I need to work on. Like, people think extreme, like something horrible happened. But therapy is so helpful. When you are ready, when you acknowledge, because trust me, I want everybody to go to therapy, but that's not going to happen.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah, and I think that's where a lot of misconception happens with therapy.

It feels like you have to come with a problem. Of course, there is a problem that you want to address, but having That 45 to 50 minutes of just nonjudgmental space, actually, a lot of things can come out and people then start to talk and it's different from friends because we're not here to give you advice right away, or we're not here to.

Ooh, that part. We're not here to give any biased opinions. We're really creating a space for you to talk things through and naturally things come up. That we haven't really talked about, yeah. I

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** want to emphasize that, because I know it's I don't need to talk to someone, I can talk to my friend.

But you know what? You know what's helped me? I am a better friend, and partner, and daughter by hiring a therapist, because I'm dealing with all my shit there. As opposed to talking, because I would hear myself before in my 20s, I am talking about the same problem with my friend. She must be so annoyed of me.

And she was! Like, I could tell. Because then I would keep calling, and they would ignore. I'm like, huh, okay. It's me, not her. I should probably pay for a therapist to help me with it. I

**Jennifer Oh:** actually get a lot of inquiries through that way of, oh, I'm just really tired of talking to my friends about it.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And that you are a

**Jennifer Oh:** better

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** friend because of that, let me just tell you.

Yep, yep. So I'm sure people are curious because you talked about like bilateral stimulation, what is that? can you walk us through a typical EMDR session? What a client might expect during that process?

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes. bilateral stimulation is essentially moving your eyes back and forth, like left and right.

And essentially what that does is it's replicating what our brain already does during REM sleep. So I don't know if you know what happens when you're sleeping and your eyes are closed. Tell us what happens when we're

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** sleeping. I don't even think I know this. So I'm Educating myself in this interview.

Yes.

**Jennifer Oh:** When you, I don't know if you've ever seen somebody sleep, but their eyes are rapidly moving left and right.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** No, this is a, okay. Wow. Okay. Keep going. I'm learning.

**Jennifer Oh:** So our, essentially our brain decides, okay. It, during sleep, our brain reviews our day and it says, okay, what is important for us to eat and what is important to throw out?

Right and depending our brain just randomly chooses. Okay. What we eat for lunch. It's not important, but hey, this interaction that I have with this person is important. And so what ran cycle does is essentially the brain just naturally processes the memories and the emotion. And our brain does it.

And so bilateral, we're just stimulating, stimulating that in real life. And by moving our eyes left and right pretty rapidly, we're able to access the, emotion so that we could reprocess it together. Yeah, I'm amazed.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah, I know this podcast like is not on video, but like my jaw dropped. I was like, so this is what I heard.

Okay. Cause I know you might be walking or listening to it while doing chores or driving. So you're looking left and right. Cause that's what you're doing for EMDR. And so when you're sleeping, which makes sense. Cause when I've seen like my partner's sleeping, like his eyes, like that's crazy. Yeah. And so what I heard is it's basically processing what's happened in the day and it stores it like, okay, that was a happy emotion, sad emotion.

I'm thinking about inside out. Yes, exactly. And I appreciate that because I think what I'm hearing is. when something happens in the day, when you're like, Oh, I should have said this to that person that cut me off, or I said this rude thing, you just, you did it, but then it's not until a day later or a couple of days, Oh, that's how I really felt.

Like you didn't know how to identify that emotion, the moment, but then while you're sleeping, it's organizing it for you. Is that what I'm hearing?

**Jennifer Oh:** Exactly. Yes. Yeah. And what happens with trauma is our brain decided, Oh, this was really important. And then it stores it, but then it, we call it maladaptive.

And so it just stores there. And then anytime something happens in the present day, your brain references back to that memory and says, Oh, that happened. So that's happening right now. So we have to respond the same way right now, but like the example that you gave me, Elaine, you're not. You're not young anymore.

You're, you now know not to touch boiling water. And so how can we take your wisdom that you gained from years of life to that memory so that your brain could say, okay, you're not there anymore.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah, it's, it is an Olympics gymnastics. Let me tell you, I think a perfect example, cause we're both in LA is the fires that just happened.

And everyone was in trauma response, right? Our partners, our parents, like responding to the, I had to be like, okay, wait, hold on. Let me calm down. I don't need to act like oldest daughter right now and be controlling and tell everyone what to do. Let me deal with my own. Like it was just, I felt like that was a great social experiment of trauma responses.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah, that was a collective trauma. We all experienced and people responded completely different. Some people went into full volunteer mode, right? Of I need to help out and do something. Some people just stayed home and isolated. So we are able to see actually how people respond and. as a therapist, you should be curious, how, why did you respond that way?

Yeah. And having that conversation.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. Okay. I'm still in awe. I'm like, Oh, that makes sense. And and then what you do as an EMDR therapist, while it happens, you're doing the similar bilateral simulation, but you're going back to past memories and feeling that, and you're okay, we're going to organize this.

So then when you have a similar situation in present or adult, you don't have to go into that response.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes, I know a lot of people get confused or I don't know if you felt this way, but a lot of people feel that EMDR, they confuse it with hypnosis. So they, when they see the eye movements going back and forth, they're like, are, is this hypnosis?

And EMDR is not hypnosis. Yeah. Can you share the difference and why it's not? Yes. Hypnosis is you are in a trance. state that you are trying to access the unconscious part and what the hypnosis would do is it would make statements of, you don't do this. They do a lot more behavioral changes or behavioral. I guess statement, whereas you are in the present moment. It's like having dual monitors. You're able to access the past. While you're awake and then also be in the present moment looking at the eye movements going back and forth So the main difference is that you are not in a trance like state and that you're not going to be doing anything that you Have no idea about you're very actively participating when you are doing EMDR

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yes, and also so my therapist told me this Cause it's, tiring after like you're exhausted.

Can you explain why it's exhausted? And she explained it that it's like a spoon and a melting pot. And you've just moved your brain. Like you just cleansed out your brain. Cause it's not just the session. It's after the session too, where you're healing and that's powerful. Can you describe the posts between sessions?

What's happening to your brain?

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes, so after, when we are doing the EMDR, we're essentially accessing the most difficult part of that memory. And so we are asking our clients to go back to the moment where it felt really overwhelming and and so by activating multiple parts of the brain, it's like running a marathon in our brain.

We're working really hard to reprocess. It's moving really fast. So you do feel really drained during EMDR as well. Some people, their emotions get really big during that time and it might feel really scary. But after that, your brain just is continuing to reprocess throughout the day as well. And so it is almost releasing a lot of that energy and so you might feel very exhausted. Doing memory work,

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I'm curious you could validate or not, but it feels like, when an iPhone gets a new upgrade and so they have to shut off, like they have to literally turn off to get the new upgrade is that's what's happening. Like why it's so tiring. It's like your brain's getting an upgrade from what just happened.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes. It's maybe not like completely turning off, but we are the bylaw hired eventually is accessing like the right and the left part of the brain. We're like. Utilizing our whole brain to do this. So imagine just focusing intently on something for an hour straight. Naturally, your, brain is just going to feel really tired.

Just like when you're working, doing really deep focus work for an hour, you are so drained afterwards.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. Okay. Y'all, if you don't even know this, I do this to benefit. All of you to learn about EMDR, but I'm actually benefiting learning this. Thank you. I didn't even expect it. I was like, wow, this makes complete sense.

Cause I think it is important. It's I think EMDR, I feel has gotten popular in what the past five years. When do you think, I just want to say I was in it before it was cool. 10 years ago. Just want to tell all of you. Okay.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes. I think it's starting to get big cause I think I heard Prince Harry did it or something and he talked about it and then that also opened a new door.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah,

**Jennifer Oh:** anyways,

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I didn't follow a trend. I followed the I'm done with my shit. You're the OG. no. okay. Okay. Just if you all really want to get to know me personally, Ooh, you guys are getting to know me. I was dating someone and I was just like, Oh, this keeps happening. What the hell is happening?

It's not them. It's me. No, really. It was like, it's like, different person's name. Same type of, situation, right? And I'm also not blaming the individual. I completely acknowledge what I had to work with. I'm like, there is something going on with me. And that's what pushed me.

I'm like, there's, I keep repeating the same patterns. What's happening here.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah. That's a very good way of being aware and knowing when I need help is when I see the same patterns over and over again. And no matter what I do, it's not changing. Yeah,

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I was just like, I'm, it's like what we were talking earlier.



Like I'm talking, I'm done talking about this to my friends. I'm doing the same shit over and over again. And I know like cognitive ways. So something deeper needs to happen. And I like giving the iceberg analogy. So I'm curious if you feel the same way of the, 20 percent we acknowledge, but really it's a deep 80 percent and that's what you need to heal.

Is there anything you want to add to that, Jennifer?

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah, I think a lot of the times our brain is always trying to protect us, and maybe that also looks not even remembering some memories, not even recognizing our behaviors, because it's look, we got to survive right now, and thinking about these things are not really helping us, so it decides to throw it away, and sometimes we don't even know, but ENDR essentially unlocks that 80%, and sometimes memories come up that you've never even thought about.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I appreciate you saying that sometimes trauma or trigger point will block it and I say that because I had, I'm going to make it really broad because It's, this is another person, not me, but I had another loved one. It's we would share some experiences when we were younger and they told me, I don't remember that.

I'm like, Oh, I remember every detail. How did you, and I say that because I think there's always assumptions. Like, how do you not remember this moment or this experience? But our brains, to your point, we're all individuals and we store it a different way. Yes.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah, and your brain decided to choose what was the best thing for that person and that looked like maybe let's just hide this away.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Okay, my control freaks are upset. Why can we not control where it's going to be stored and fix that in a self aware way? I know you're laughing at me, but it's true. You know this. You work with clients all the time. Like, why? Explain that to us in a science explanation.

**Jennifer Oh:** wait, rephrase that question.

Why can't we control the way that our brain?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. I was like, Hey, why can't, I say this? It's an okay. I know we're laughing about, but do you know what I mean? Am I making sense in my question? Yeah. It's Hey, negative experience from when I was five. can we not take this so seriously in our adult self?

Yes. So I think

**Jennifer Oh:** that comes because we, See how memories are stored in, technology, right? We're like, oh, yes, I could probably save it in this file or this folder. But our brain, they don't do that. We don't have control over it. It's, very complex. It's very dynamic and it's constantly changing.

We're making new neural pathways all the time. And so it is hard. To decide where to hold it, but we know generally where things are stored in our brain. for example our prefrontal cortex, the front part of our brain. Essentially retrieve those memories and helps. Interpret some of those memories or the amygdala stores are emotional responses that are fear.

So there are parts of the brain that are. that are stored, but it is hard for me to be like, okay, this memory, I'm going to store it here. Our brain just decides on its own.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah, just watch Inside Out too. I think that's what I'm hearing. Inside Out. I love that movie. Yes. I love both movies.

Anxiety is my favorite Disney princess. She gets me. And then I think what I loved, okay, this is a pitch not to just do EMDR to watch Inside Out, but like when they talked about joy, I appreciate them showing both the light and shadow side of emotions. Yeah. So they talked about joy being Delulu. I was like, oh my god, I get delusional.

Yes. Yes. That movie does such a great job of explaining things. Oh, they,  
they

**Jennifer Oh:** hired their best for that. Oh, for sure. For sure. Yeah. It's crazy because those are all emotions too. So when you think about them touching the crystal ball, it's not just the memory of Riley, like winning something.

There's emotions also impacted in that memory, right? Of sadness and joy. And Just like that too, our brain decides to store emotions related to that. our brain just does a lot of things.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** You know what? Inside Out is actually a great example to what you explained. it gets those crystal balls of memories and you just don't know why.

It's just stored in whatever emotions.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah, joy, is the one that's trying to control, right? Yes.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Toxic positivity, everyone. Toxic positivity. And there's also a good side of anxiety, right? Like we talked about the fires. if you unfortunately, if you live, if you see a fire, you go run. Like that anxiety of running for your safety.

That is a good anxiety. Doesn't feel good, but that saves

**Jennifer Oh:** you. Exactly. Exactly. I, really liked how they describe each function of those emotions. Again, they're not bad or good. They're just neutral things. They're just trying to teach us and try to communicate with us what's happening. And then, what they want to do.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah, actually, this was not in the questions I asked you, but yeah, can you explain emotions? Because I think I used to have the assumption. Oh, my emotion is telling me this, Is exactly how everyone else should feel and how I should go towards, I, I have to apologize to all my old friends and exes because I acknowledge that, but I'm healed, still working on it.

Healed. All of you. Yes. Yes.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yeah. Emotions are very complex. we have like general emotions. Like we see an inside out. Everyone has joy. Everyone has sadness. Everyone has anxiety and there are specific functions to each. Emotion, right? Anxiety primarily focuses on fear and sadness. And so there's environmental things that can speak to that emotion.

And depending on what the emotion wants us to do, we then filter out, does it make sense for me to respond this way or not? And that is also part of emotional regulation. And

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** what is emotional regulation? Not everybody knows that. What is that? It's the

**Jennifer Oh:** ability to contain and react appropriately. Yeah.

Situation simply. And to what Jennifer said, it was like the situation where I shared, where I got into an argument. I was like, wait, hold on. I'm upset. Let me take deep breathing. Let me be in a calm place. Like just knowing and honestly, breath. It's such a powerful way to do self regulation. I was doing research where normally we breathe 12 to 15 breaths a minute.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And then when we're in a state of panic or anxiety or unregulated, it's 30 breaths a minute. So when we catch ourselves being unregulated or triggered, you could consciously tell yourself, okay, breathe in three, hold, breathe out. And that actually helps regulate your emotions. I'm not saying this cause I'm from LA, but I'm saying this cause I did the research.

Anything else you want to share with that, Jennifer, since you're the therapist here, not me, I needed to be healed.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes, breathing just it directly affects our nervous system. And by doing very low and deep breathing, it activates a parasympathetic nervous system, which allows our brain to say, okay, we could start to rest and we can start digesting our food when it's like moving really fast.

You get into that fight or flight mode. So deep breathing definitely allows you to access a part of the nervous system to help calm down, and help relax. And so it is so important, but I know it's such a common thing that therapists say now, so a lot of people are just turned off by it, but I think mindfulness as well as breathing is extremely helpful.

Paul, I appreciate you

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** giving the science behind it. So going back to when I went to UC Irvine, I didn't just graduate. I didn't just get my bachelor's in psychology. I got my bachelor's in cognitive sciences. Oh, and if you don't know what cognitive sciences, it's the study of the brain. So I am nerding out right now, Jennifer, as you're talking.

Oh

**Jennifer Oh:** my gosh, this is so your

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** alley then.

**Jennifer Oh:** I wish, I had

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** a professor like you though, to explain him like, Oh my gosh, wow. But mind you also I'm older now and I've gone through stuff and I went through my own healing that it makes more sense now as opposed to when I was in my young college years.

So I know EMDR is not the only modality that you use in your practice. What other modalities do you provide and why did you choose them on top of EMDR?

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes, so I also do DBT, which stands for dialectical behavioral therapy. It's another form of CBT, but it primarily focuses on mindfulness and behavioral, therapy. I really like to partner DBT and EMDR together

because before you do any trauma work, you want to make sure that you have a lot of positive resources, right? Good coping skills, because we are now opening this vault and we're letting things out. We need the ability to be able to cope with some of those things.

And DBT does a really great job of teaching skills on how to regulate your emotions, how to, react during distressing events and then practice mindfulness awareness of where and why these things come up. So I like to use as a before and during. phase or trauma work, but it is primarily focused for those with behavioral issues.

substance use or, self harm, things like that.

Yeah, so I really like mixing those two together.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. Okay. So I know that I really, I'm not saying this to just make you feel good, Jennifer. I know that everyone's probably fascinated with EMDR, fascinated more importantly with you. So if people are interested in working with you and or one of your team members, how can they reach you or find you?

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes, so my practice is called Strong Roots Therapy. My website is [buildstrongroots.com](http://buildstrongroots.com). You can definitely fill out a consultation form through the website with me or another therapist. We again provide services in person and virtual all over California, in person in Pasadena particularly. So you can definitely go on the website, read through if you feel like we might be a good fit.

Yeah, we can definitely have a free 15 minute call to see and then go forward from there.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And just know Jennifer's getting busy. That's why she has to hire other therapists. So you're probably going to want to have to schedule that sooner rather than later, especially after this interview. I'm not, this is probably one of my favorite interviews of the year.

**Jennifer Oh:** Oh,

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** because I'm nerdy and there's so much things wrong with me. I'm just kidding. This was really fun. Yes. No, I really enjoyed learning and understanding it because I think so often when people think therapy, it's like this visceral, what is it, how I don't get it.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes, I'd love to talk about it because there still needs to be a lot of education around it.

And it's not easy work. There's a lot of parts to this. And so I'm really glad I was able to talk about it and maybe shed some light. Yeah. Yeah.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And I know you had experience working with me where you're, you've been a coaching client. Can you share your experience where I was the coach and any tips or advice for anyone interested in working with me?

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes. Oh my gosh. When I first thought out Elaine, I was so overwhelmed. I had no idea what to do. And I have done a lot of coaching. I've done like a six month or year coaching with other people. And I couldn't really find exactly what I really wanted. And I. I think I ran into your profile, actually. I like sent a Facebook post out somewhere and I said, I'm looking for a business coach.

And somebody actually

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** happened. Okay.

**Jennifer Oh:** Somebody referred you. And I remember reading through your website and I was like, I really this person's aura, this vibe and what you were doing. And so I decided to reach out and I think it was really helpful because you offered very small group.

as the one on ones, I found a lot of value in the one on ones. I personally, because of my schedule is really hard for me to attend the office hours but they were all super informative. I think it was helpful for me to have somebody else. Organize my thoughts for me. You're basically my therapist as well in a way.

And then having the accountability encouraging me. I think I, there were a lot of things that I felt really scared about. But you helped me to challenge those and yeah, now I'm at a place where I feel very aligned with my values and my business and that is okay too. I think I came in with a certain vision, but.

And through working with you, I was able to change it and find something that actually makes sense for me.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. before we hit record, we were talking about what trips are we going, are you going to? I think so often people think Oh, how much did you make? And, how big is your team?

But it's we just talked about Oh yeah, these are the trips I'm going to. And then even embracing yeah, this is how I want my team to look like. let's make this simple. Exactly.

**Jennifer Oh:** Exactly. And I think the biggest point, too, is it doesn't have to be perfect. We talked about how it's okay, it being imperfect and that's part of life.

I also really liked having access to you. If I had any questions and you were just there readily available to answer and then encourage. So it did feel like a coach next to me just telling me I could do it. Yeah, it was super valuable to me. So thank

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** you. I'm excited for you. I'm excited that this podcast is coming out.

I've been wanting to do this just in general, like EMDR. So then when you became a client, I'm like, oh my gosh, I can't wait for her to talk about this. Jennifer, actually, I do want to ask you if people are like, I know I need help, but I'm not sure if it should be a therapist or coach. What advice would you have?

I'll, share my advice. To be like transparent with all the clients, like my experience being a coach and my personal experience being a client for both a coach and therapist, I find that hands down, if I had to choose one over the other, therapy is more important than coaching because you can't hit your goals unless you haven't healed things.

And you'll know if you need therapy, if you've noticed a consistent block or repetition, and then coaching helps in terms of okay, here are my goals, but I don't know how to get there, but I have, I will also say my best clients actually work simultaneously with me and a therapist, because I always share this quote, every new level, there's a new devil.

You want to reach that goal of whatever it is in your career or business, like there tends to be a block and a therapist helps simultaneously anything you want to add to that. Because I think it's important. People are always like, I want help, but I'm not sure which one.

**Jennifer Oh:** Yes, I know. I completely, agree with you.

I think you, ideally, you do want to do both at the same time. But therapy just also helps you to process maybe are there any blocking beliefs or negative beliefs that might stop you from reaching goals, right? Yes, agreed. And so I think it is helpful, but ideally, yeah, doing it together is the best because you can work on, the emotional aspect of it and then the coaching helps you to now implement it and make this life that you want.

And so I think both are great.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. Jennifer, get ready. I feel like your calendar is going to get busy. Sorry. Oh man. I will have to reach out to you again. No, but this has been a fantastic interview. I would recommend if you're listening to it, oh my gosh, this was great. I learned so much. And if one or two friends, loved ones who are curious about therapy, definitely send it to them, especially for those that think therapy is very visceral or I don't know what's going to happen.

cause this just provided a lot of the science behind it, which you did so well in explaining in my little college bachelors in cognitive sciences girl is so happy right now.

**Jennifer Oh:** No, thank you so much for giving me the space and asking very, good questions. And yeah, for those who feel like talk therapy, you're done or feels like, I don't know what else.

EMDR definitely helps to tap into the body portion as well.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And if you fell in love with Jennifer, go to her. She didn't pitch herself there. So I'm going to do that. I'm gonna go tag your mama on it. Oh my gosh. You do it better than me. Thank you. Thank you.