

Season 2, Episode 16: Emergent Strategy Podcast “Yin Timing with Lindsay Fauntleroy”

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Lindsay: (00:00:00): It creates this possibility that if we can actively purposefully re-engage with the world through a different lens, then we can actually shape change. And that feels really good to me.

(00:00:16) Theme Music (“Wolves” - Hurray for the Riff Raff)

Mia: (00:00:36): Hello, and welcome to the Emergent Strategy podcast, hosted where the Emergent Strategy Ideation Institute. We are collective of facilitators, mediators trainers, and curious human beings, interested in how we get and right relationship with change today. Today, I'll be guiding our interview. I'm Mia ESII's program maven, healer-in-residence, and emergent strategy is the way we generate and reshape complex systems and patterns with relatively simple interactions. And I am so fortunate because today our special guest is Lindsay Fauntleroy. Lindsay is the founder of The spirit SEED and the author of *In Our Element: Using the Five Elements as Soul Medicine to Unleash Your PERSONAL POWER*. She is a licensed acupuncturist and instructor for the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, as well as a facilitator of the Flower Essence Society's Global Practitioner Certification Program. Lindsay's approach to soul medicine emerges from over 15 years of clinical practice, doctoral studies of Indigenous and African Diasporic psychology, and her commitment to community wellness. Her line of five element flower, essence remedies, "The Elementals," are available nationally and internationally. And let me tell y'all, they the truth, the yummy, they taste good, and they do what they spose to do! <laugh> That being said, I am excited because I am a huge fan of--you know, deep, deep life appreciator of Lindsay. And I'm so, so glad that you agreed to be on this podcast and have this conversation with me today. So, welcome, welcome, welcome.

Lindsay: Thank you, Mia. I'm so excited to be here and so grateful that we have this time and space together.

Mia: Well, so we love to just start of course, with how are you, how are you right now? How are you today?

Lindsay: In this moment, I feel really, really good. I feel--you know, it's--I've just been sitting in this space of gratitude and making gratitude an active practice. And so just, you know, waking up in the morning, holding my head, doing my prayers. Thank you, thank you, thank you. And that has been really transforming the way that I move throughout the rest of my day, from the time I put my feet on the ground to the time I get back in that bed. So.

Mia: Aww--

Lindsay: I'm feeling really good.

Mia: --that's so beautiful. I love that. I love hearing that as your practice. I also really, really feel deeply, like, a proselytizer or a big component of, like, gratitude is, you know, such an important way to move through life and feels so important, particularly in moments when I feel like despair could easily take over.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Mia: You know, and I think--

Lindsay: And uncertainty.

Mia: Yeah. You know, and I think we are living in deeply uncertain times, where there can be also a tremendous amount of despair. And so, just that space of, like, holding on to what, and just appreciating what is happening and what feels available and present is, you know, such a, such a beautiful act.

Lindsay: [\(00:03:56\)](#):It's been really helpful.

Mia: I wanna first just ask you this question about if you see yourself as an emergent strategist. So, you know, we see fractals, interdependence, and creating more suppossibilities as showing up in your work. You know, everything from, you know, if I think about the layers of how you engage soul medicine from the place of, like--and the different methodologies of, like, what's available, what's present in any one moment? And then how you can intervene and interact and shift that. Um, and then what the implications are for those, like, small or sometimes huge shifts in the world and in your being and your presence, but then also how that ripples out. It feels, like, really wonderful expression of fractals. I see that in the way that you have connected people through trainings, and the ways that you teach about this work is also deeply a way that makes us more available <laugh> to each other and more available to ourselves. [\(00:05:00\)](#):And so, therefore really promoting interdependence from this place of being in right relationship with themselves and others. And so, I should also say just, kind of, right relationship in general, and then creating more possibilities. So much feels possible when we are in our element. And so I just wanna know, you know, does that feel like--do you accept the premise of being an emergent strategy--emergent strategist? Or, how does that, how does that sit on you? How does that feel with you?

Lindsay: It feels good because when I was reading *Emergent Strategy*, I felt like, this is my tribe. These are my people. This is giving language to kind of an intuitive movement, an intuitive feeling of how to move in the world, how to bring this work forward. It's so rooted in ancestral knowings, but it's not a static knowing, right? It's, it's rooted in the past, but it is emerging, evolving, changing, shifting. So, when I was reading Octavia Butler, I was like, oh, this is, this is my whole life right here. And so, then <laugh> finding *Emergent Strategy* really reinforced and gave language to so much of what I've been feeling and experiencing in my practice. There's an analogy in the book about, you know, how flocks of birds are kind of each responding to a call and a movement together. And I feel like I'm part of that flock. When I read the book, when I interact with practitioners like yourself, it's like, you know, we're not always directly having the conversation, but we're moving in such a coherent way together that it's just, it feels really miraculous sometimes actually I think is the best word for it. Yay. Oh, that's so beautiful. Well, so, I mean, Lindsay, we, you know, we said your bio, but I really would love to-- <both laugh>

I really, you know, would love folks to get a sense of, you know, who you are, you know, the--some of the work you do.

Mia: (00:07:02): And what kind of led you to writing this book, *In Our Element*?

Lindsay: Well, the book itself comes out of years of clinical practice, but also years of training and teaching how to work with flower essences, how to bring this medicine into our wellness practices, whether we see ourselves as clinical practitioners, wellness, practitioners, community activists, spiritual leaders, there's so many touch points of where we can be using the wisdom of the ancients, our ancestral wisdom in practical, tangible ways to facilitate healing for ourselves and for our communities. And so, I had been saying for a long time, even before discovering Chinese medicine and African spiritual systems, that nature is my religion. And when I, about 20 years ago, I was learning about Daoism and Shintoism and East Asian medicines. And so, I went to Barnes and Noble and I was looking for books on Daoism. And so many of the books were--no offense to anybody--but they were very clinical and very dry--dry. And I felt, like, well, my relationship with the natural world is very alive and vibrant and sensual and humorous and whimsical. And I just really couldn't find a book that was talking about nature in that way. And so, I think I wanted to write the book that helps us to experience nature in its magic and its possibility.

Mia: Oh, yay. Oh, I love it. I have to say, having, you know, gotten a chance to read some of the early copy, <squeals> so excited--

Lindsay: Thank you so much.

Mia: --for others to get a chance. <both laugh> I feel it's so personable, it's so--. You know, like, there's the way in which you weave your own experiences with nature, the lessons learned, the way you've developed relationship. And then, you know, what you are going through as a person feels to me, like, it's just, I'm like, ah, thank you. (00:09:16) Thank you for bringing yourself, your experience to explaining what feels like really, really important concepts that often are not always easy to grasp, and definitely not a part of, I think, a kinda normal lexicon in our--<laugh>. And you know, if, I dunno, depending on wherever your attention is, and most of our attention ain't there, so <laugh> on this soul medicine.

Lindsay: I think that's the thing, is that it's so, you know, I, I love the idea of shifting complex systems through simple actions because it doesn't have to be this esoteric, complicated way of understanding the world. It-it can be, right? So, not to diminish the years and lifelong study that goes into really mastering this stuff, but it's also really accessible. It's, you know, looking out of your window and seeing these processes unfold in real time, in every moment. And that's really what I love about this medicine is that it is right here in front of us, just waiting for us to see it and honor it and dance in it.

(00:10:28) Music Break: "KiN" instrumental plays

Mia: (00:10:51): Mm. Well, I don't wanna cut to the chase, but I do, I mean, there's a part of me that's like, what is soul medicine? <laugh> I want you to just say, what is soul medicine in and of itself? And then, you know, I got, I got other questions, but let's just start there.

Lindsay: I think of soul medicine as any medicine, any practice, any way of being in relationship that touches the parts of our self that reside between our spirit and our body.

Mia: Mm.

Lindsay: So, we all have different orientations towards the spiritual world. We come from different religions, we practice different things. So your--. Our religion is our religion, our spirituality is our spirituality. In this Western cultural context, we know a whole lot about the physical body. We know a whole lot about our heart rate and what diets to do and all of those things. Soul medicine is about what do we need to feel most alive, most connected, most authentic, most inspired. (00:11:56) And so, soul medicine is anything that touches that, whether it's acupuncture, which of course is a bias of mine; whether it's flower essences, which is another bias of mine. But it's also, you know, laughing with a good friend, it's taking time to reflect, it's finding joy. So, all of those things are parts of soul medicine.

Mia: Oh, beautiful. Thank you for that. And that feels really resonant. It actually also brings me really quickly to, I love how you said, you know, acupuncture's a bias that we share. And you introduced me, I think, through a friend of yours, this concept of Blacupuncturist. So, you know, whenever--

Lindsay: Blacupuncturist!

Mia: --so whenever I, you know, meet another one or I'm sharing, I'm like, you know, the Blacupuncturists of the world--thank you, Lindsay. (00:12:51) So, you know, there's that, <laugh>.

Lindsay: There's that, it's a thing.

Mia: It's a thing, it's a thing. It's an important thing. You know, it is important, you know, I, I think, you know, representation, isn't everything, but it matters, right? Seeing yourself reflected inside of a healing modality, and knowing that the people who are caring for you, you know, can at least, you know, see you fully <laugh>, you know?

Lindsay: Yeah. I mean, I think that even in my earliest, when I first began my practice, I was very intentional about using Black and Brown faces on the website and, you know, and it wasn't--. Someone called me one day, they called the practice and they said, well, do you treat white people? And I was really thrown off by that. I was like, well, yes, of course. And they were like, oh, I wasn't sure from your website. (00:13:47) And I--. It just was a moment of a-ha for me, because I think so much of alternative medicine and complimentary medicine has a very white face. And I think a lot of people look at it, and we don't see ourselves. And so we don't think it's for us. And the irony of that is that so many of these healing practices descend from black and brown lineages.

Mia: Okay.

Lindsay: So it's--. That representation is real. That's real.

Mia: And you know, so I love that. I, I mean, you know, I'm, I'mma leave my comments, I'mma leave my comments in my head about all that it took to not see yourself, you know, one's

self reflected in a place where there's also Black and Brown folks reflected. But that being said, <laugh> I--.

Lindsay: And predominantly Black and Brown, I think that was the real real piece. (00:14:38) Cause I think that mainstream is used to seeing--. I don't wanna say token, but rep--. They're used to seeing representation.

Mia: Mm-hmm.

Lindsay: We're still, even now after, you know, I'm 20--almost 20 years in, we're still not used to seeing Black and Brown in spaces that are majority--

Mia: Yeah.

Lindsay: As a majority, but still open.

Mia: Yeah.

Lindsay: I think that's the, that's the piece that I'm really curious about now is--.

Mia: I feel that.

Lindsay: It's still a thing.

Mia: It is still a thing. I mean, may it not be still a thing 20 years from now, but it's still a thing. And, and in fact, I love it through the book that you have these beautiful images of, you know, feels, like, very specifically Black women, to me <laugh> in these, you know, yoga poses and being able to share, like, with the meridians and--. I just, it's quite amazing to have those reflections in your work. (00:15:39) So that again, there's a place of resonance, and even, I think, healing in being able to connect that. So, for that alone folks, for that alone, but we'll get into more of, like, why you should get this book. <laugh>

Lindsay: That was one of my--. When I was sitting with the illustrator to design the images, I've just had so many experiences in acupuncture school, which maybe you might resonate with this where usually the images of the meridians are on Asian men or white women, which is, it's an interesting thing in and of itself. But we also know that the meridians are not static themselves. They move and shift according to your body's physiology. And so I remember looking at meridians and you know, I'm an oversized Black woman and being like, well, that meridian does not look like that on me. <laugh>. And so, as I was designing the, the images, it was really important to reflect and, and wanting to have a book where I could see myself and see my peers and see, you know, the world through my eyes was a big part of designing the imagery for the book.

Mia: (00:16:50): Mm. Well, thank you for it. Thank you for that. Well, so I wanna come back to something that you said, which is, like that many of these healing practices do come from Indigenous lineages that are Black and Brown. And in fact, you draw a connection between the shamanic and early traditions of Chinese medicine to Nubia.

Lindsay: Mm-hmm.

Mia: And you've studied the Indigenous healing arts of China and Kemet, and I'm kind of interested in what drew you to these paths and their connections. Like, you talked a little bit about being, you know, just geeky in bookstores early on and being drawn. But I would love to hear, I mean, I think this is actually one of the first times I had read any connection between Chinese medicine to Nubia, and, and so I was just like, ooh, you know, one how'd you unearth that? (00:17:43) And two, you know, what drew you to these paths and their particular connections?

Lindsay: It's a, it's a interesting question because I think my path with this medicine really illustrates this concept of like, do it first, understand it later, right? When you, you know--. So I didn't really set out as an acupuncturist to, like, prove or document this relationship between Africa and East Asia and the medicine. I really came to them both experientially. You know, I feel like my life just brought me to them. So, the way that I came to acupuncture is through my own journey to fertility. In my early twenties, I was diagnosed with premature--what they called then, they don't call it now--premature ovarian failure, which essentially meant that I couldn't have children except through donor--IVF and donor egg. And that wasn't really an option for me at the time for economic reasons, a lot of reasons. And that's what brought me to acupuncture, and as life would have it, my mother-in-law at the time was a Black acupuncturist, the OG Blacupuncturist--

Mia: Okay.

Lindsay: <laugh> --who studied with Mutulu Shakur at the Harlem Institute of Acupuncture. And so, I started getting acupuncture and really fell in love with the medicine. Coincidentally in air quotes, I was also studying with the Ausar Auset Society that was at the house in Brooklyn. And as part of that community, we were learning about the five elements through the study of Qigong and through meditation, to learn how to activate these forces in our lives as a, as a conduit for healing. So I was in these worlds simultaneously not really understanding the connection. Like I knew that Ausar Auset, he--Rau Un Nefer Amen talked a bit about the connection between the Indus Valley and Indus Kush and all those things. (00:19:52) But, you know, when I hear history, it kind of really goes over my head. I don't remember dates. I don't remember facts. I don't remember none of that. <laugh>

Mia: I get you.

Lindsay: And so, I had started developing--. You know, years later, I had gone through my process with acupuncture. I had--had been in the work with flower essences and just really deepening my relationship with African spirituality and African culture. And over time, I started developing a curriculum for students around the five elements and how to use them in their lives for academic success and all those sorts of things. And one of my colleagues asked me--you know, I'm teaching mostly Black students in Brooklyn, and one of my colleagues was like, can't you share an African framework? <laugh>. And that really brought me back into the books to--. You know, just in terms of cultural competency, it brought me back into the books to study more about the connections and not necessarily a linear connection. (00:20:57) I think it really goes back to what we were talking about before about this emergent and emergent culture.

Mia: Mm-hmm.

Lindsay: And how ideas, insights, inspiration appear spontaneously and simultaneously in different places. There is a lot of research around the migration patterns of African people from the roots in Nubia throughout the rest of the world. We tend to think about that sharing of culture primarily through the African slave trade, but there's so much out there about how African people were traveling and sharing their culture, their knowledge, their wisdom, globally through the Americas, through Asia. A lot of the correspondences can mostly be seen through looking at spiritual artifacts, in terms of burial rights and things like that. And language patterns become the strongest route to a lot of culture that has, you know, since been destroyed. (00:21:58) So I've really looked at that again, the dates and the history and all of that really escapes me, but I really live in the story of history of, you know, how, and just envisioning, you know, how ideas traveled from one place to another. Really imagining my ancestors in dialogue and, and just feeling into what that might have been like. And I, I feel like that tells me more. But there are definitely resources. So, some of the books that have really supported and kind of shown up right when I needed them to, to kind of understand that--those connections: one of them is *Our African Unconscious*, which just reprinted in, I believe 20/2, at the end of the year. That one has a huge overview of migration patterns, as well as the roots of Western psychology in, in Africa, which is pretty fascinating stuff. (00:22:56) And, you know, I'm such a nerd, <laugh> so I really live into this stuff. And then two other books that showed up for me were *The Ancient Blacks of China* and *The Ancient Black Civilizations of Asia*, which were written by Dr. Clyde Winters. And they really supported that, that personal research of, wait, how do these things connect? But then, you know, another, again, the story of it--. I remember the first time I received an Ifá reading. This was going back to maybe the late nineties, early two thousands. None of this stuff was even a blip on my radar of life. I was just, you know, going about my business and in the reading, the Babaaláwo talked about my relationship with Oshun, and he said--and it's funny because it's on, like, a little tape recorder. I don't even think these exist anymore--but he said that I might be drawn to East Asian medicine because Oshun governs acupuncture and now--

Mia: What?

Lindsay: Right. Right. (00:24:00) You cannot make this stuff up. So, when I think about that now--you know, when I heard it then, it didn't mean much. When I think about that now and what my life looks like now, it just fills me with this sense of, like, wonder and curiosity, of like, well, well, how does Oshun know about acu--. Like, it just--it's mind boggling. So I could spend, like, 30 minutes just sitting in the imagination and the, the inquiry of that, the relationship between these systems that seem like they're maybe not related, but clearly they are.

Mia: Mm-hmm. I love, I love--. One, we might have to have you on just for that conversation slash you know, I'm with it, you know. I really wanna have that conversation, and--. But also, you know, I love also just resonance, like you said, sitting in the story, having these moments. (00:24:55) And I'm like, I, I being remember being in acupuncture school so often being like, man, there are some critical parts of this story that are not being told.

Lindsay: Ashé.

Mia: I can feel it in me. I know that there are connections, and I, you know, just wasn't as diligent as you to find the sources, but <laugh> thank you for sharing what you have found. And now, we got some space to, like, keep going deeper. So, I love that. Thank you for that.

Lindsay: I hope it opens a door because there's so much out there that I, you know, I haven't had time to explore, you know, it's, there's just so much it's, it's life--lifetimes of learning this stuff.

Mia: Mm-hmm <affirmative>

Lindsay: And so, I've got the rest of this one, probably the next few to keep, to keep learning and discovering it.

(00:25:42) Music Break - "Jupiter's Dance" plays. Lyrics: "I'm a keeper of the moon and you'll never be home. Revelations come in two, blowing smoke rings in the dark. I held on to only you."

Mia: (00:26:07) I love that. I, what a beautiful little, you know, North Star or, like, little signpost of like, hey, this lifetime, next life--this is where we can keep deepening. That feels very, very hopeful and exciting to me. Well, so, I do wanna hear a little bit more, because you've shared now in terms of, like, some of your curiosities, your learnings, and even your spiritual practices. And here, we also wanna hear a little bit about, like, your--the important parts of your political lineage. Because I do think that, you know, you just said, you, you know, your mother-in-law happened to be, you know, taught by Mutulu Shakur. You know, like for me, you know, what brought me into acupuncture certainly was the legacy of the Black Panthers and Mutulu Shakur and this, you know, capacity to help heal our community in order to make way for our capacity to grow and to build and fully be in our power. (00:27:06) So I'd love to hear from you, if you could just share some of the important parts of your political lineage.

Lindsay: Well, I think my relationship with seeing myself as a Black woman in this world probably began in second grade because my second grade teacher--. I will never forget. I don't remember a lot of things about elementary school, but I remember this moment clear as day. I remember my second grade teacher telling the class that children with blue eyes are special. And I remember <laugh> not questioning that just it's: Okay, that's--it is what it is, you know? And it wasn't until that--until I shared it with my mom, casually, not complaining, just being like, well, you know, that's because children with blue eyes are special, and my mom lost it. <laugh> What? where did you get that from? Wh--? And so, you know, as the story goes, I don't know what she said or what she did, but I do know that I got a very nice apology from said second grade teacher.

Mia: (00:28:12): <laugh> Good. Yay, mama.

Lindsay: Yay, Mama.

Mia: I'm, like, all children are special. What you talking about? What you talking about, teacher lady?

Lindsay: It was--. You know, but I grew up in, I grew up in South Jersey, a little bit in suburbia and, you know, I, I think that inequity and injustice and those things are--become part of your life in ways that you don't necessarily know how to process when you're younger. And so, yeah, when I was older, when I was out of college, I, I got connected with one of my first teachers. I consider one of my first teachers whose name is Brother D. Brother D is the name--his name in the streets. <laugh>

Mia: We love Brother D. We love Brother, Brother D.

Lindsay: Brother D. And he, I was part of an organization called African National Science. And that was my first introduction to--. I wouldn't say it was my first introduction, but it was my first deepening into what it means to be a colonized people and all of the ways that that shows up in our mind and our heart and our spirits. (00:29:25) And that was--. My work with African National Science is what inspired me to go to grad school the first time, cuz I was really interested in materialism and individualism specifically and how they affect people of color, how they keep people of color from being able to organize. You know, it was basically going into it like, well, what's wrong with us? Why can't we get it together? And then it's like, oh, materialism and individualism are--have got you out of your actual right mind. And so, I would say that that process was the beginning of what's still emerging around my understandings of who I am in the world, what that means, what to do about it and how injustice affects communities and what we can do about it together.

Mia: Oh, that's--. I love this question. I love the question of how are we gonna get it together?(00:30:26)And, and the recognition that we are deeply embedded in a system that is intended for us not to, and--

Lindsay: Right.

Mia: Go ahead.

Lindsay: But then the other side of that, though, I think the beauty in that is that to me, it creates possibility.

Mia. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> Right? It creates this possibility that if we can actively, purposefully re-engage with the world through a different lens, then we can actually shape change. And that feels really good to me.

Mia: I love that. <laugh> Thank you. Thank you for sharing. And I think that's absolutely right. I think when we recognize these systems and we can change them and then we can be in different practices that shape and recreate different systems. And so, I mean, to me, that kind of brings us into the heart of your book, right. Which is about us kind of changing, um, how we're showing up using the power of the elements. (00:31:29) So, I'd love for you, if you wouldn't mind, just sharing, kind of, what are the five elements according to Chinese medicine philosophy? Jjust so we're all on the same page and then, you know, kind of, if you wouldn't mind including inside of that, you know, their key questions or metaphors, kind of urgings, and I wanna honor that you wrote a whole book about this, and as a person who has been a student of you, know that we could take, you know, multiple hours on each one. So I'm just asking for <both laugh>, I'm just asking for, you know, the little snippet, the, like, thing that gets us in--

Lindsay: The greatest hits.

Mia: You know, I do not wanna do injustice to what we know is, kind of, can also in and of itself be a lifetime or study.

Lindsay: Ashé. And I--I'll also add the disclaimer that in talking about the elements, there are many, many systems of elements that, you know, there's-- So, this is just one system, and that system is, uh, the five elements are water, would fire earth and metal. [00:32:36](#) And I think, because I'm a visual person, the easiest way to envision the five elements is in an embodied way. So, if we could imagine as we go through the--each, each element that each is a stage of organic life. So, if we can see ourselves as a plant for a minute. I think that's the easiest way for me to explain what these forces are up to.

So, we'll start with the water element, which corresponds to the seed. The metaphor is a seed. So, we can imagine that we are seeds planted deep, deep, deep, deep, deep in the earth, where there's darkness, where there is innate unleashed potential. And so, the water element teaches us, how do we navigate darkness? How do we rest in the unknown? How do we go into the, the innermost beings of ourselves and this metaphor that even the acorn already has encoded within it, the mighty oak tree. [00:33:44](#) And so, the water element teaches us, how do we tap into that blueprint for our destiny and live into that blueprint, understand that blueprint? How do we understand all of the things that have come before us that allow us to be the seed that deep, deep, deep in the earth.

Then, we come to the wood element. So if we now imagine that that--that seed has cracked beneath the earth and starts pushing up against the flow of gravity to peak out from beneath the earth and to begin to look for the sun. And that is the metaphor of becoming. How do I-- My favorite quote is: a, a flower doesn't ask for the share of, of the sun. It just grows instinctively toward the light. And that's one of the things that I learned from my mentor and talk about in the book, this innate capacity to evolve and to reach for the light and to fulfill our highest destiny. [00:34:37](#) That's the wood element. So the wood element deals with, how do we step into our innate talent and gifts? How do we respond when we are blocked from realizing our full potential? Which means that it is intimately related to social justice and social justice movement. And how do we know with authenticity who and what we are becoming and share that?

So now, we have this seed that has become a sprout, that now blossoms into a flower, the flower is the metaphor for the fire element. So, the fire element and the flower itself in life, it attracts things. You know, we think about fire--flowers in the summer when they're blossoming and everything is busy, busy, busy, busy: the birds and the bees and all of those things. So, the fire element within us deals with our relationships and how we relate to the world, and how we shine out into the world, how the essence of who and what we are is, is shared with the world world and how we attract our tribe. [00:35:40](#): So the, the fire element is that flower aspect of our being.

And then after we go into the heights of summer and the fire element, the next stage of organic life is the fruit. Things start descending and becoming weighted with substance. And so the fruit is about nourishment. How do we give and receive nourishment? How do we see ourselves as a interconnected whole with humanity, but also with the earth

itself? And how do we nurture that? How do we bring forward that connection to the earth and the processes of earth.

And then last but not least, we have, you know, the fruit falls from the tree, it lands on the dirt, it starts to decompose, and that's the metal element, the composting of our experience. We could also call it death. We could also call it transformation. We could also call it transition. It's that moment of release, where the form dissolves, but the essence remains. And that essence becomes a new seed that starts to cycle over again.

(00:36:46) Music Break - "nightqueen" plays. "You know, they call me the night queen, 'cause I live in the dark. And I don't let nobody near me, and not betray my heart.

Mia: (00:37:29): Thank you for that. That is so beautiful. I love the connections to this organic life that we can then start to really get a sense of these elements; that is super helpful. I love how you teach and explain this. And I wanted people to have the benefit <laugh> of your teaching in this way. So, thank you for that. And in general, I--. Yes, I'm just gonna take a moment because, as you're explaining the, kind of, embodied experience of moving through all those components, those, all those elements, both, like, how they land, what their urgings are, what they're teaching and guiding us around and how they act upon us, I was kind of, you know, just feeling that. And so, as a part of this, like, ooh, all right, <laugh>. I'm gonna let the listeners have that moment too. So, so yeah. So, I think inside of that, so, I, I love, you know--. So, from the elements you do also spend a good amount of time, like, I love in the book, you know, you share these components of, you know, more in depth, what is each element's forces and some of the questions that we can ask ourselves inside of this, some of the practices we can be in, in order to really nurture and to support and figure out if we're in alignment with this element, or if something in our life is out of alignment. And, and that an element can help us move through, and you give incredible playlist, I love it, that kind of help evoke, <laugh> evoke, you know, what, how this element sounds and can feel inside of us. One of my fav--I'm like, man, Lindsay's got the, like, fire playlist. Anyway, so. <both laugh>, I'm like, yes, y'all. Yes. <both laugh>.

Lindsay: I, I just want the world to know that I spent way too much time trying to figure out what exact songs. Like, this song, no! (00:39:31): It's not this song, it's this song. Music is such a big part of my life. <laugh> Everything else can be wrong, but that music's gotta be right. <laugh>

Mia: I mean, and it is. I really, I really, you know, that was time well spent. <laugh> You know, you also ground us in yin and yang and qi, right? So, like, really the kind of core of this--the core of Chinese medicine, really helping to, like, know that we have these elements, but they're based off of these underlying forces. And I want you to dive in a little bit here--. I wanna dive in a little bit here, and spend some time on yin and yang in particular, because you--I, I really just appreciate what you talk about in the book around yin and yang. I had to have some space to, kind of, come back to the offerings here. And there's a particular, you know, you share the differences of yin and yang, and you make this one comment about, you know, like, the soul being connected to yin and spirit, yang. (00:40:42):

And, and I was like, oh, what's the difference between soul and spirit? So <laugh>, you know, <laugh>, in that, like, what's the difference here? But, you know, so also, if you wouldn't mind just sharing, kind of, a brief, like, okay, this is your, the understanding that, you know, has been transmitted to us of yin and yang, and then, even that difference between soul and spirit.

Lindsay: Sure. Well, to speak first about yin and yang, I think that, you know, when you asked a bit ago about the connection between African and East Asian philosophy, and I think the concept of yin and yang is one of the places where you can see a real strong resonance between worldviews. And so, with yin and yang being opposite sides of a polarity and a continuum: yang being the most ephemeral the most out-facing the most active and activated side, and the yin being the more contracted the introverted, the receptive, are some of the ways that we think about yin and--yin and yang. (00:41:51) And when we look at African cosmogony, we have this same concept when we look at African divination systems, like Odu Ifá, we see these alternating patterns of light and dark, represented by single and, and double lines that we also see in East Asian medicine, the BaGua and the I Ching system. And so that understanding of yin and yang as these two opposite forces, these opposing aspects of all reality, right--you can't have a-a coin with one side. When we're thinking about soul and spirit, the way that I organize it in my mind, and the way that it has been taught to me and shared with me--not an absolute, but as an invitation, is that I see soul and spirit as stop points on a continuum between spirit and matter. And so, I imagine that--so, spirit is referring to the most ephemeral, the most yang part of our being, the higher consciousness, if you will. I'm, I'm not crazy about the higher as a adjective, but the, the aspect of our consciousness that is most connected to the dao, or the big picture, the greater design. (00:43:11) And then we have the body, that is very individualized in spirit and matter, bound by time and space. And I envision the soul as the intermediary between the two. So I envision the soul as being the aspect that is our emotions, is our thoughts, is our longings, is our healing, as touching those places in between the-the spirit and the body. And different systems will organize the spirit and the soul in different ways. Sometimes they're used interchangeably, but that's how I think about it in my work and in my practice, is that we have this spirit that is indestructible and eternal, and then we have our body that will eventually compost and be recycled as part of the earth. And then we have our soul, that is trying to figure out what it means to be this unlimited source of energy in this limited, time and space bound body.

Mia: (00:44:14): Hmm. That's so helpful to know that, that kind of this soul's quest, or you know, kind of sit with this as soul's quest. And I think so many of us can really relate to the place of, you know, understanding our purpose and our efforts and our intentions and, you know, the navigation that the soul allows us to the urgings, the, you know, I--. So, I really appreciate that explanation. And, and I'm like, oh, thank you for that. <laugh>. And, so with that, you know, you also talk about--. So, given this time-limited experience that we have, that we're trying in this moment to, we're just, you know, moving through and navigating; you write about yin timing as connected to destiny, as requiring trust, surrender, and even endurance, you know, and I think about, uh, the soul or--and my body in these moments. Sometimes being like, ooh, ooh, are we done here? (00:45:20): Okay. No, we not done? Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Here we go. Yes, yes, yes. We can do this. Anyway, so, I was kinda sitting with that like, wow, this is a really

deep notion of: one, yin timing as connected to destiny. So, really wanting to hold that and have you, kind of, share a little bit about what you mean when you say that. And then, given that it's connected to destiny, given that we can't really rush yin timing <laugh>, and that it is about, kind of, living through the lessons of this life, you know, how we know the difference between endurance and suffering or resignation, you know, when we are in a place of trust and surrender versus resignation and suffering, I think is really where I wanna be. So I don't know if that's too many questions in one, but let me know if that feels, if you can move there or if I should break it up.

Lindsay: I feel like the question I heard you ask was what do I mean, when I say the yin is connected to destiny? And timing, divine timing. And then also, how do we know when it's right to wait or when to push forward? (00:46:39): Or when is it--

Mia: Mm-hmm

Lindsay: --resilience versus surrender versus resignation.

Mia: That's right. Mm-hmm.

Lindsay: Okay. So the first, about the yin being about timing--divine timing in fact, is that, you know, the yin is, you know, as we're talking about the body, it's, it's bound to time and space, meaning things can only happen at a particular time. And I remember this story about this, this door that a community couldn't open--I'm, I'm really, this is not the actual story, but this is my remembering of it. <laugh>. And so, everyone was trying to open this door, and they were using all of their force and might to open the door. No one could open the door. They were doing spells to open the door. They were doing all of the things that they could do to open this door. The door would not open. And then, a child walked up, walked up and just opened the door and walked through. (00:47:33): And everyone was like, well, how did you know? How did you open the door? And they were like, I just waited until it was unlocked. So, I think that is the story or the understanding of yin as divine timing is that, you know, we are interconnected as a whole, we would call it the universal dao. But we can only really see our piece of it from where we sit. And so, destiny is connected to the bigger picture, the bigger dao. And so, yin timing is about knowing when the door is unlocked, basically, and, and knowing when it's the right time to be active and the right time to be still, if you try to be active when you're supposed to be still, it doesn't work out. If you try to be still, when you're supposed to be active, it doesn't usually work out, which I think leads to the second question that you asked, around well, how do we know which is which? (00:48:25) You know, and I, I wish there was a formula for this. I have found that in my life, I usually only know in retrospect, being like, oh, <laugh>, I was not supposed to say that or do that. I was supposed to be still <laugh>. But I do think that when we are connected to intuition, when we're connected to spirit, in whichever ways that we choose to be connected to spirit; I think when we are paying attention and curious about synchronicity and coincidence and meaningful coincidence, that we get cues and clues as to what we're supposed to be doing at any given time. And then, you know, when we look back throughout culture and Indigenous and diasporic psychologies, which I often come back to, that there were tools that ancient peoples used to determine what the right timing of something was; whether that was divination, whether that was astrology, that there were actual technologies that were used to get insight into the part of the big picture that we can't

see in our individual ego, in our individual mind. (00:49:40) And so, in whatever ways that resonates with folks, whatever ways folks are cultivating relationship with intuition, paying attention to synchronicity, being in the right place at the right time; I think we get little breadcrumbs. But I, I will admit that I often don't know. And I, I think that's a beautiful place sometimes to say that I, you know, I don't know, in this moment, whether I should surrender or I should fight. I will say that more often than not, we know it by how it feels.

Mia: Mm-hmm,

Lindsay: You know, that we can get that internal feeling of, you know, that, that seed that's trying to crack and blossom, but there's still ice on the ground, right? It's just not the right time. We're not saying you can't blossom. We're not saying you can't reach for the sun. It's just, you have to wait for the right timing. (00:50:32) And I think that working with the elements is a way to intuit some of that, knowing that we might not be able--we might not be able to consciously know or communicate, but we can, we can feel it, we can intuit it, we can embody it. We can move from it, without necessarily being able to give it words sometimes.

Mia: Mm. Mm-hmm. I love that. I love that on so many levels, that it's making me think about two things in particular. One that you talked about--. One, just that, like, earlier you were talking about how you, you know, don't necessarily make meaning in the moment, right. That like you are able to make meaning later, which we talk a lot about in somatics as well. So, like, being, being--having the experience and then making meaning later is often, like, doing and then making meaning. And then, the space for integration--that having gone through a thing, you are able to, of course, have different understandings to that thing, and ways of integrating what you've been through. (00:51:50) And over time, that integration hopefully, you know, continues. So, I really--. It makes me think then about something else that you share in the book that I really, I was like, okay, I need people to hear this <laugh> because this feels so apt for a moment that we're in, and--. Or, I feel like, that I'm constantly in, of, like, how am I integrating these life lessons? Am I integrating? Am I actually learning from this stuff? I'm like, what am I doing? Or, you know, I feel like I'm--I feel like I got it. And then, next moment, I'm like, I clearly did not get--. Maybe I didn't get it cause, ooh child, did I do that again? Oh, hold up. <laugh> You know, all the different ways that, that comes.

Lindsay: Mm-hmm.

Mia: So. <laugh>

Lindsay: Yep. I've been, yes. <laugh>.

Mia: (00:52:42): So, you write about, and I don't even know if I'm gonna get these, I don't know if I'm gonna say it right, but coniunctio and nigredo--

Lindsay: Yes.

Mia: And the integration of spiritual lessons.

Lindsay: Mm-hmm.

Mia: So, I'm wondering if you would mind defining those concepts for the audience. And then if you wouldn't mind sharing a story that you have in the book about the cycle, the cycle of integrating spiritual lessons.

Lindsay: Sure. So coniunctio and nigredo, I believe, depth psychology. I learned these concepts through my mentor--one of my mentors, Lorie Deshar who is an Alchemist and a psychologist. And she writes about these concepts quite a bit in her book called *The Alchemy of Inner Work*. But the coniunctio relates to the highs, right? So if we think about yin and yang, it all comes back to yin and yang, right? (00:53:33) <laugh> So, we can think about the coniunctio as the high, right? It's the insight, it's the awareness. It's the a-ha moment, it's that eureka, it's that like, oh, I got it, I know something, I feel something, I get it, right? The coniunctio is that moment where you're like, oh, I get it. And then the nigredo is the yin, it's the, do you really get it? It's, well, how do you bring this forward on earth? And so, it's honoring that there are two sides--or more than two sides, but that there's this polarity of spirit and matter that we are both all the time. So, every insight, every coniunctio, every a-ha, has to be integrated into your lived experience. And so, this fluctuation of highs and integration and highs and integration is how we actually transform. It's how we actually become, it's how we actually become, right?(00:54:32) And so, one of the examples that I share in the book-- Well, first I can share a few examples. <laugh>

Mia: I was about to say, you share whatever, when you want, you can share whatever--

Lindsay: I got--

Mia: I hope everybody is about to, like, go and get this book and understand that it's gonna help them in their transformation process. So you, you know, whatever you wanna share, please <Lindsay laughs> but yes.

Lindsay: So, I think even starting with the--when I was learning about coniunctio and negrido, I was part of a, a healing training, practitioner training, where we would, like, essentially go to the mountains four times a year to experience every season in nature. And we would, you know, be kind of locked away from the worries of the world. We had this room that had, like, all windows around it. So you could just see nature unfolding. (00:55:21) And we would have these really deep spiritual insights. And I would feel like, yes, you know, I've got it. And then, I would go home, and it would be like, my real life. I'd be arguing with my partner or my daughter, or the dishes would be dirty, or, you know, dot dot dot dot dot, and so, they would warn us, you know, before leaving the workshop, it's like: you're going to experience, you're having a coniunctio now, you're having your spiritual high and now you gotta go back and make it land, and make it stick. And so, it reminds me of like, when you first fall in love, and there's, like, this euphoria and this, this, like, this person is wonderful. This relationship is wonderful. I love everything about it. I am love. And then something happens and you have your first argument and it's like, are you really love? (00:56:10) How are you loving in this moment, too? Right. And so, what we look at in African mindset is this idea of the reconciliation of polarities that light and dark exists together all the time. We can't have one without the other. And so, as I was in the process of writing this book, I went through an initiation into the Ifá tradition. And we had a ceremony which is called a Shefa. And I, you know, as part of that, it was three days of ritual and prayer and

meditation, and, you know, being isolated in my home to really receive the messages that were, were coming for me. And it was such a high; it was such a, a spiritual high, like, I felt like I could--. It was as if someone had decoded the matrix for me, like I could see my life and understand everything, all of it. (00:57:10) Literally, the following weekend, I found out that the person that I had been seeing for the past two years was living this whole other life. And so, all of that inside and all that clarity that I, that I thought that I had immediately sent me into this spiral of, like, who am I, why am I, why didn't I see this coming? Why am I always rejected? You know? And it just brought up so many triggers of my own darkness and they were back to back. It was literally one weekend and then the next weekend. And so that's the coniunctio and negrido. It's like, okay, you are in this experience that is affirming your destiny to the extent that you're allowed to see it in this moment. And then, in the next moment, you're being called to ask yourself what matters, and are you gonna stay on purpose? (00:58:06) Are you gonna stay on task in spite of how your heart is feeling right now? And how is this all part of the picture and not against you, but for you, and-and all of those things. So it it's that, that high and then that crash, you know, that is part of the integration.

Mia: Mm, ah, mm-hmm. Oh, it's so helpful. It's so helpful. I feel you, I feel that. Thank you for sharing. Thank you both for sharing generously of your story now, and I think in the book, as this kind of companion through these moments of integration, these moments of like, how do I get through these, the high moments, and then how do I sustain the learnings or the epiphanies of these, like, you know, a-has? So, I really just appreciate you sharing that and that framework.

Lindsay: When I teach a class called the nine stages of soul healing, we talk about the difference between seeing healing as, like, a linear progression from worse to better, to a spiral progression of good, better, not so great. (00:59:21) <laugh> You know, and so in that process, we learn just like in nature that, you know, death and dissolution is part of the process. It's part of the process of life that we go backwards. We go retrograde sometimes. We have to look back to see forward. All of those pieces are part of the journey. So we start to look at these nigredo moments and these moments of relapse <laugh> as, as part of the process, as part of the journey, as necessary parts of, of healing.

Mia: Mm-hmm. It feels so important to hear. And I know for me right now, in this moment, but in general to have that as a part of the, like, an underlying thread, whenever going through some of the hardest: it's like, okay, I know this is, whew. I know it's necessary for my growth. I know it's necessary for my integration. (01:00:17) Boy, you don't feel good. I'm not feeling-- I'm not appreciating you really, but <laugh>. And I feel like, you know, if anything, we probably are having a collective experience of that, right? Moving through these multiple pandemics, in all the different ways that we're having to navigate. I think that there's some real lessons that feel, you know, we're having these moments of like, oh, we think we found a way through, oh, wait--wait. Did we, did we figure out how to bring some of those understandings forward? Oh, wait, no, wait, have we? Okay. So, anyway, I just appreciate that.

Lindsay: I think that's a great example because I think, for me, it really illustrates that--not just the, the cyclical nature of growth, but, you know, we're, if we're trying to create something new, if we're trying to create a new paradigm or a new way of being in

relationship with the world and in relationship with each other, there's gonna be some false starts. (01:01:15): There's gonna be some, like, oh, we got it. Oh, wait. Nope, we, we didn't get it because we're, you know, that doesn't work. Let's integrate something new. Oh, we try it. Oh, Nope. That doesn't work either. Oh, this works. Let's keep doing more of that. Okay. You know, it's that, that organic process of, whatever's coming is going to be completely different from whatever existed before, but it's also gonna have within it, everything that existed before. <laugh> That takes some time.

Mia: Never a failure. <Lindsay laughs> It's never a failure, it's always a lesson.

Lindsay: It's always part of it. It's always part of it.

Mia: I, I think this book is chock full of practices. Like, a lot of it are, like, you know, helpful practices to help support our alignment in, in an element. And so, given that, and I think emergent strategy is all about practice. What are we practicing right now? (01:02:11) Right, to, you know, to build and to be in right relationship. And so, I'd love to hear a little bit of what are you practicing? You shared something of your morning ritual, and this gratitude practice. But yeah, so what are you practicing, and is emergent strategy showing up in your practices?

Lindsay: Yes. So, I am in this moment, and you--you'll see me as we've been talking, taking, taking these little sips of water, but always, I'm working with flower essences and trying to learn from nature as much as possible as a devote of Ifá, as a devote of life, really looking to nature to be a guide. And I think that that is showing up also in my practice of teaching and really trying to align. One of the things that stands out for me as I think about teaching--in emergent strategy, they talk about the conversation in the room that only the people in this moment can have and, and, and trusting that. (01:03:15) And I think that I really try to bring that to the spirit seed as a program, this idea of, like, we're not moving through this content in a way that is predetermined, like you have to take these things. It's really like trusting that inner call and trusting that wonder and whimsy and trusting that everyone who's taking that class or in your breakout room or in your breakout group, is exactly who's supposed to be there. That there's something there to look for. So that is, that is one of the things that is definitely showing up for me, working with flower essences, taking a breath has been really an intentional practice for the last month in particular of feeling so much uncertainty and just, you know, take a breath, take a breath, take a breath.

Mia: Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Lindsay: And then also I would say, music. Music is my medicine, you know, so I'm really practicing what I preach in terms of bringing music as a force to help me shift qi: move things, get it moving, slow it down, cry if I need to, dance if I need to, all of those are part of my, my practice, my personal practices right now. (01:04:26)

Mia: Mm-hmm. Thank you. And so, I also would love to hear what's emerging for you? You're talked about a little bit about spirit seed, but like so, what experiment? What's the experiment for you? The next experiment for you right now?

Lindsay: I would say a huge experiment right now is, is working on my PhD. <laugh> I'm laughing. Oh my goodness. It is, it is one of the many things in my life where I do it first and ask

questions later. So I'm in it, but my curiosity is really around how do we really learn from these ancient ways of, of, of being, and then integrate that into clinical practice? Right? So we know that there are some traditions, again, big up to acupuncture that maintain some of the practices and worldviews, and then there's modern psychology. (01:05:25) There are wellness practices that are, have been kind of separated and divorced from their, their lineages. So, I'm really curious about how do we bring this forward? How do we make it accessible to communities and how does it shape and change what's possible for our futures? I'm really living in that world right now of exploration and study and experimentation. And that's where I'm landing.

Mia: What a beautiful question and experiment to be in. Thank you for being in it. You know, we often talk so much about how, you know, important so many of our roles are for us to be in a new way, right? To be in a new way with each other that we need, we need our organizers, we need our healers, we need our folks doing different questions and experiments to help guide this transformation of our society. And so, I just thank you for the questions that you're in and the experiments that you're in to help be a part of that transformation. (01:06:29):

Lindsay: Mm-hmm.

Mia: I just want to appreciate you Lindsay, for your sharing your miraculous time and your precious energy with us. And I also wanna make sure folks need to know how to get to you, you know, how--where to find the book, that you can say a little bit about that before we fully close.

Lindsay: Sure, absolutely. Thank you for the invitation. You can find me on thespiritseed.org is where you can stay updated about all of the classes. It's where you can find the book, it's where you can find the flower essences. You can also find the book at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, as well as through the publisher, Llewellyn. So please, if you do pick it up, I'd love to hear how you're living in your element, how it's showing up for you. What it's moving.

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