8. Getting Crafty with Lindsey Peers

Z: Hello everybody. And welcome back to the Am I Embarrassing You podcast. I'm your host, Zoe Wechsler, here with my mom, Dr. Amy.

A: Hello.

Z: Hello. We're back after a quick week break. And we are here today with our first guest of the year, our friend Lindsey Peers, who is the owner of The Craft Studio in New York, a child and adult art space on the Upper East Side, and now in Tribeca, with also pop-up seasonally in the Hamptons, and birthday parties in and out of the studios, as well as Zoom classes, Lindsey started working at the studio as a college freshman in 2003, and she bought the business when she was only 24. We have known Lindsey since 2003, since I was five. And we are so lucky to call her and her family, some of our dearest friends. Welcome to the podcast.

A: Welcome, Linds.

Z: Hi!

LP: Hi! Woo, what an amazing intro. Thank you, Zo. I'm so excited to be here. What an honor.

Z: Thank you.

A: We're so happy to have you. Just going to add a little bit to that, if that's okay.

Z: Please.

A: Lindsey's one of the warmest, most positive, and most beautiful, inside and out, people we know.

LP: Aww.

A: One of the many unique and amazing things about Lindsey is that she remembers every person's name the first time she meets them, and then knows their names' forever.

Z: Something you cannot do.

A: I am still baffled by this.

LP: You can't quiz me though. Watch, the one time we have a quiz and I'm like, "Oh no."

A: No, but like... 10... I think it was in high school. You're like, "How Zoe's friend from nursery school. So and so and so and so, and her mom and dad?" I was like, "They moved

out the city 10 years ago," but you know everyone's name. It's just one of the remarkable things about you, but there's so many would take up the entire podcast hour.

LP: Aww, that means so much to me. I think the world of you both. And it was such a pleasure to watch Zoe grow up into the amazing and smart and beautiful and kind, beautiful inside and out, young woman. And Amy, you have always been a huge role model for me. Talk about, not just mom goals, women goals, career goals, you just... I always idolized you. And from the time I was-

A: Linds.

LP: ... a young 20-something, I was like, "I want to be like Amy."

A: Oh my gosh. All right, you're embarrassing me.

Z: Am I embarrassing you? Well, I mean, I remember having my birthday party at The Craft Studio and going to my friends' parties. And everyone was like, who is that? To us, you were like a princess. You were a Disney princess. And you bought The Craft Studio and everyone was so excited. And people on our podcast, we have really great reception to episodes about women in business, women in finance, just women who take control, basically. So, can we start talking about your story with The Craft Studio and buying it at 24?

LP: Yeah. So, pretty early on in college I came here. Honestly, I went to Marymount Manhattan College and I loved it and had a great experience, but coming from a small town, I knew I just wanted to be in New York. So, it was less about the college, more about getting to New York City for a bigger and brighter place to have more opportunities. I just was enamored by it. I'd only come a couple times, and choosing to go to college in New York, I already had a few scholarships and I had student loans. So, pretty early on I was trying to find as many part-time jobs as possible. And I'll never forget somebody sliding me The Craft Studio business card. And I walked up the first time and I just fell in love with it. It was a snowstorm, only three kids showed up to the little boy's birthday party. But I interviewed and observed. And it just was magic to me.

LP: And I just fell in love with it. And I quickly started working there as much as I possibly could. And it never felt like work, because I truly was having fun. And I always was thinking, "There could be so much more. The birthday parties are great and you can come in and paint a plaster. But what about afterschool programs? What about bringing The Craft Studio to go? What about more workshops and programs?" So, one day, when I was 21, I graduated college in three years just so I could have less of a student loan burden. Literally, I think I had it on poster board, a whole pitch to Barbara, the owner. And I was modeling at the time and I was working, but I wanted something steady too.

LP: So I thought, "What if I pitched this afterschool and classes and workshop program to Barbara, the owner, maybe she'll go for it. And it'll be my steady thing." And she literally looked at me in the eye and said, "Do you want to buy the business?" And literally, I think after my jaw fell down and I was just like, "I don't have any money really. I don't have..." I don't know. How could this be? And she said, "I wanted to go to somebody who

cares about it, so we'll figure it out." And exactly. So I was 21 when that happened and I signed the contract. And then for three years I slowly worked a lot of it off. And she came up with a great plan for a young person to be able to do this. And it was amazing. And it was a great experience.

LP: And it was interesting because a lot of my friends at the time said "Oh, you work so much." I was basically working seven days a week through most of my 20s. And I just felt like it was going to be worth it. I was like, I can see that this is... I want to go out and have fun, but I just had this vision that it was the right path. So, yeah. So, it's been a long time. I'm 37 now. And I literally walked in on my first day when I was 18 years old, so.

Z: Wow. That's amazing.

A: That's amazing. So, how have you grown The Craft Studio over the years? What are your plans going forward?

LP: So, The Craft Studio's totally evolved. So, now we have two locations, which is exciting. And we do a ton of stuff that happens outside of studio, which is a big part of, kind of what I started to do early on when I became the owner. Pre-pandemic, we were going into stores like Bloomingdale's and Sacks once a quarter, doing events to bring foot traffic in. Before summer camp season, for example, they would say, "Can you think of a cool craft that will get parents in so the kids will shop for summer clothes for summer camp and you'll keep the kids occupied?" And we had a ton of clients and events like that. We do corporate parties for adults. We do a lot of afterschool programs, which that we go to the schools, which is amazing, and parties to go in people's homes and houses. And I remember doing that for you very early on.

A: Yep.

Z: I remember it, too.

LP: I have vivid memories of that. Oh my goodness.

A: I also remember saying to Zoe, "Guess who I got to come over for your sleepover?"

Z: Oh my god. I bet I was [inaudible 00:06:52].

LP: Oh my gosh.

A: I said, "Lindsey from The Craft Studio." And your whole mouth, you were like, "She's coming to my house? Can I show her my room?'.

LP: Oh my gosh.

A: It was like a celebrity was coming over.

LP: Aww, that is so-

A: You were a celebrity at our house.

Z: Yeah. To me, you were like Belle from Beauty and the Beast. I couldn't believe it.

LP: Aww, that's so sweet. Oh my goodness. I love Bella.

Z: I kind of remember you made pillows?

LP: Yeah, I feel like we did pillows. I remember the... did you have a messenger bag party, too, Zoe?

Z: Yes. Yes.

LP: Okay.

A: And also a pajama party. You made the pajamas another time.

LP: Yep.

Z: I remember gluing on all those gems. I was obsessed. And some of them fell off, because I probably wore it all around and whacked it on stuff. And I kept those tiny little gems in a little box, because I was like, "They're my jewels." They were so special.

LP: No, I still remember that feeling so well when you get the little gems and you're so excited about it. And you keep them. They're real treasure.

A: Were you always into arts and crafts?

LP: I'm going to be completely honest. I-

A: I would expect nothing less from you.

LP: Yes. I loved arts and crafts. Was it my end all be all? No. But I think that arts and crafts sort of, as I started working at The Craft Studio, I started to really fall in love with the sort of the childlike connection, and even when I do a sample, it sort just like therapy kind of.

Z: Totally.

LP: So I loved arts and crafts. Was I at the art studio every day growing up? No, but I always was with kids. Always camp counselor, assistant dance teacher. I loved being with kids. So, that was the thread that immediately-

A: That was the hook.

LP: That was the hook for me. Yeah.

Z: And you've got adult activities. What are some of the adult activities? I mean, I love painting a plaster, even though I'm technically a grown up.

LP: No, well, everybody loves to, I think, to let loose and paint the plaster. It's like a childhood thing and nostalgia for everyone. But there's so many different things we've done for adults. We one time did a chocolate house building competition for an American Express team building event where each department had to build the chocolate village using the pieces.

Z: That's cool.

LP: We do pumpkin carting events in the fall for adults. We'll do like a canvas with multi-media steps that they'll follow along with. We really can dream up a lot of different things. I love the fanny packs lately. They're my favorite right now. Because I love... I know you guys love a good fanny.

Z: I could use a new fanny pack. You're not [inaudible 00:09:31].

A: Oh, I was about to say, "I could make one." But instead, I'm going to say, "Zo, maybe you could make one for me."

LP: Sure. There you go.

A: I suck at our crafts, except I'm getting into pottery like on the wheel, but otherwise I'm not artsy craftsy.

Z: She's not.

LP: I was blown away by that, by the way.

A: It was fun.

LP: I also really enjoy puffy paint. Did either of you dabble in puffy paint? When I was in high school, it was all the rage to make puffy paint t-shirts. I feel like it's a very 80s, 90s nostalgia thing.

Z: Yes.

LP: So, that's really fun.

A: I love that.

Z: So you were doing parties to go way before the pandemic, but that must have been really helpful to already have that kind of infrastructure in the business.

LP: Yeah. So honestly, right before the pandemic, I was sort of about to research to locations for a third store, which thank goodness that was a pause. And then, we really were starting to get our kit line together that holiday season right before. So, that would've been 2019. We launched a couple kits, like a little cupcake clay box and a New York City skyline frame. And it did really well. So, we were starting to look into packaging and manufacturers and that knowledge helped me so much. Because as soon... I'll never forget

walking Elle, my older daughter, to ballet in early March of 2020, and a mom just said, "The schools are going to close." And I was like, "I'm in trouble." And I remember throwing Elle in Ballet Academy East, running downstairs to the studio and being like, "Guys, we're in trouble. We need to take inventory of every thing we've ordered for..." I mean, it was going to be spring break. I had spring break curriculum for two weeks and two studios of five kids every day doing five projects. I had-

Z: Oh My God.

LP: ... tons. We had tons of parties booked at that point, tons of party supplies. So I was like, "What do we have that could pivot into kits to ship to people?" And I just went into that mode of, "Okay. Let's get going."

A: And that's what you did?

LP: Yeah. In the beginning it was just, I think, a lifesaver to so many people. I have this photo, and of course in the beginning we knew nothing in early March, no one's wearing a mask, but people have gloves on, packing the kids, and we're handing them out the door to people, gloves on, no mask. It's so funny when we knew so little. But I think it helped a lot of people through.

LP: And then during the pandemic, every single weekday I did a craft of the day clip. And it was exhausting. And I'm so proud of it. When I look back on that, Luke, my son, was a newborn and I had a three year old and a five year old. But somehow we just did the craft video every day. And so many parents were like, "That little idea of something to do with house materials helped us so much." Maybe we did once a week, but that kind of helped me also stay creative. And I just felt like I was helping people. I don't know.

A: I watched them. I never did any of the crafts, but I was just happy to watch you. No, I'm not going to sit home and do crafts by myself-

Z: She's so bad at it.

A: But watching Lindsey, your face is just joyous, the kids are adorable.

Z: The kids are so cute.

LP: So nice.

A: Did you have to lay off any staff during that?

LP: So, pretty early on, somebody gave me the advice. They're like, "Find the New York State unemployment website and have everybody who is going to not work for a little bit do that." And we ended up retaining the team, anybody who was full-time. And then when we reopened, because we were closed for six months, it was crazy. And then anybody who wanted to come back, came back. A lot of people moved away. So, in a lot of ways it was sort of like starting from scratch. Pre-pandemic. I had 40-something people. And then it went down to like 6, which is crazy.

A: Oh my God.

LP: So, luckily, life circumstance, I feel like nobody's life was turned upside down, and directing them this way was the best way to go about it. And I was going to say too, that the people who stayed on, I mean, they were amazing. A lot of them volunteered to work for free. We put together this little Craft Studio show and people were like, "I'll do it for free." And they rallied and it was amazing. It was so inspiring. And Noreen packed all these kits. Brick Church, our nursery school, ordered a kit for every single child.

Z: Wow.

LP: And so the community really rallied around us, which was so nice to have that support.

Z: That's awesome.

A: That's amazing. I was just thinking when you mentioned the kids and talking about how you literally worked seven days a week for all those years, did you take real maternity leaves? How did you handle maternity leave each time, being a small business owner?

LP: So I didn't really take a maternity leave. I worked mostly... It sounds terrible, but honestly I think it kind of helped me, being a new mom, have something else to focus on. I worked and a lot of times when I was up with the kids in the middle of the night nursing them, I would be answering emails. So, I worked from home. I would pop in. On the weekends when Ian was here, I'd go in and pop in. So, I didn't really have a traditional maternity leave, but I definitely stayed home and worked from home more than I ever did before, which was a definite adjustment. I've gone from being in the studio all the time. And it was hard. And I sort of had some moments where I more... I was loving my little ones, but when you go from this place being a part of your life for so many years, it was definitely a transition.

LP: But I think the flip side of it is, being a business owner has given me so much flexibility. I work a lot and sometimes people will stop me on the street and it hurts my feelings sometimes. And I know people don't mean it, but they'll be like, "Wow, when are you ever at your studio?" And I'm like, "You're catching me in a moment when I'm with my kids. I'm at the studio all the time." And vise versa. If I'm at the studio, they'll say, "Oh, it must be so hard. Do you ever see your kids?"

Z: Well, that's mean.

LP: I know. It always makes me feel bad. I'm like, "I can't be-"

A: Oh, Lindsey. This happened to me too. I rarely leave an office during the day. Maybe five years ago, I was having lunch down the block for my office, with an old friend. I planned it in advance and I saw one of my patients at lunch. I said hi and she yelled across the restaurant, "Dr. Amy, they let you out of your office?" And I was like, "Mm, okay."

Z: You're like, "I let myself out. I planned it four months in advance."

A: It's like, "Don't judge me."

LP: Yeah, and even if you didn't plan it in advance, you're human. It's a hard thing. And I'm learning to let go. I used to care so much if somebody came in the studio and I wasn't there they'd think I was a terrible business owner, or if I am not at pickup or drop off one day. But I know that what other people think, I've learned, really doesn't matter. And I feel like I have a pretty good balance and I feel happy. And I think if there was ever a moment I felt stressed or that one side of the coin was too... I'd reevaluate. And that's sort of a beautiful thing about, I think getting older, is I'm sort of learning more about how to let things roll and feeling competent in myself and my choices.

Z: I love that. Number one, and number two is that I think people assume that even if you have a fabulous husband and marriage, that the mom still takes on the brunt of the work. And if you're at the studio and someone says, "Why aren't you with the kids?" Like, well, what about your husband? You split responsibility. So, people just assume that you would do have to do everything 100%. But, the beauty of having a partner, and especially someone like Ian, who's just so hands on with the kids, and we love him. He's so great.

LP: Aww, I'll tell him you said.

Z: And it's like they totally disregard the whole thing. Like the dads don't even help;

LP: Exactly. Exactly. You're so right. So many things you just said were so right. A, Ian is amazing. And I feel as if he is my gift in life, among other gifts. But we're very in sync. And we sort of actively try and make sure... there's times where we don't do as good of a job, but we are supportive of each other. And we tell the kids, "If one of us is at work..." And just this past weekend, when it was a snowstorm, I felt strongly, "If I'm open, I want to show my team I'm going to be there too on a day like this." So, I had to go to work and Elle was like, "Mom, it's a weekend, dah, dah, dah." And Ian, the narrative he says is, he says, "Elle, your mom works so hard. This is amazing. This is what she has to do. And she wants to be a good leader. And it's an amazing thing." And he supports me and I support him, just when Ian misses dinnertime once in a blue moon for a meeting. But I think you're right, Zoe, also, there's still so much pressure on the mom. And it's interesting, we've come so far, but it just falls, I think still on mom.

Z: Yeah, I think so too.

A: But how cool for your kids to grow up in The Craft Studio.

Z: I know. Do they come a lot after school?

LP: They come all the time. So, that's the thing. This weekend there was a snowstorm. Ian pulls them on the sled and brings them into the studio. And on the weekends, we'll visit Tribeca and we'll go to a restaurant down there, go ice skating down there, and we'll pop it and see the store. And I think it's really good for them. I think that I want them to see me working. And it's also fun. Elle leaves little notes for the staff under the register now. And they pretend to answer the phone and Luke tears stuff down, but... no, just Luke.

Doesn't tear stuff down, but he'll get there, but it's kind of magical. I love it. I always dreamt about having my own kids there. So, it's so fun.

Z: And I went to one of your daughter's birthday parties earlier this year in, I guess, it's not 2020, anymore... 2021 anymore.

LP: I know.

Z: In the fall.

LP: Yes.

Z: In the park.

LP: Yes.

Z: It was like the whole Craft Studio... it was an outdoor kind of party and it much fun. And all the kids were there and your whole family and it's really just nice. It's just amazing. Everything is so integrated. And your staff really is another part of your family. I mean, some people work for you, I know them when I was having birthday parties. So, it just shows you the community that [crosstalk 00:20:09].

A: And the kind of leader you are.

Z: For sure.

LP: Thank you. That means a lot. And it does feel so special when it's something for one of my kids and it's full circle. And my team is so good to them and treat them as family. And they come in and everyone... I don't know. They feel special and it's so wonderful.

Z: That's awesome.

LP: Yeah.

A: Yeah. That's way cooler than visiting a doctor's office.

Z: No, I was actually going to say that I remember, well, I was seven when you opened your private practice, or six. And I remember your first office and going there for the first time. And your first office was pretty dark and small, but nonetheless, super cool. And then your second office. And mow you're third. And growing up like that, I loved it. No, I loved visiting.

A: Oh, nice.

LP: Cool.

Z: I used to think that I was being so sneaky when I was younger and shorter. And I would sit in mom's desk chair and turn around. So when she would come in from being in an

exam, I would spin around and surprise her. And I was like, "It's going to work every time."

LP: I love that. I love that. I always thought that was so cool for you and your brother, that your mom just was this ultimate role model. I'll never forget also that press article that came out with the two of you when you were so young, Zoe. It was like-

Z: Oh, the Oprah Magazine.

LP: Oh my gosh. That was so beautiful. I loved that. It was so special.

Z: It's my favorite. We both have it framed in our rooms in New York.

LP: Aww, you should. It's so beautiful.

Z: I got to skip school. And I was the biggest rule follower. And I got to miss it day of school for a photo shoot. It was like the coolest thing ever.

LP: That's amazing. Oh my goodness.

Z: But I was also really shy. So the next day people were like, "Where were you?" I was like, "I was sick." I wasn't going to talk about it, because I was so shy.

LP: Oh my goodness.

Z: I was like, "I had a fever."

LP: "In bed all day. Nothing fabulous. Not at all."

Z: So fun.

A: What does the future of The Craft Studio look like?

LP: So, I'm so excited.

A: You could do everything. You can conquer the world with Craft Studios.

LP: Aww, I love that. So, I really feel ready to open a third store. And we've been playing around with areas. I really love the idea of Brooklyn. We've taken a few weekend jaunts out there to kind of explore and see. So, I think I feel Brooklyn, but I also really feel West Coast. I love California. I have a lot of friends there. Before I had the kids I spent a lot of time there visiting friends, and I'd go at least a couple times a year. And I know logistically it seems how would we do it? But in my mind, and in my gut, I feel like it would work. And I've learned to trust my gut. And usually it's right. It's interesting. I don't know. So, I don't know when that would happen, but I feel like maybe an LA Craft Studio.

Z: I think it would be a huge hit.

A: Me too.

Z: Especially, I know this is kind of a weird, but especially with the driving culture in Los Angeles, you can just drop off your kids and know and trust that they're doing something good and artistic, and also that they're safe. You know what I mean? It's easier, I feel like with [inaudible 00:23:25] culture, you can just drop them off and the birthday parties. And also because there are so many central kind of commercial areas where there are... like A plaza.

LP: Right. Exactly.

Z: We don't really have plazas here.

LP: Right. Right.

Z: But I see it. I see it.

A: Like the Brentwood Country Mart or something.

Z: Yeah, I see a Brentwood Craft Studio.

LP: Yes, I feel the same. I feel the same. So, I love that [crosstalk 00:23:49]-

A: But where wouldn't this work? I mean, as long as you have-

Z: That's a good question.

A: ... people, this is going to be successful.

Z: As long as there are children.

LP: I know. I feel as if it needs to tie to a big city, because my business, there's tons of little mom and pops art studios all over, and they're amazing and wonderful. And there's one, even a couple towns over from where I grew up, that people go to. But I think mine is more of a city-centric vibe. I don't know why. I just feel as if we need the bigger markets. So, yeah. So I don't know. Also in Chicago, I feel like it would do well.

Z: I was going to say that.

LP: Would you say so, Zo?

Z: I was going to say Chicago.

LP: Oh.

Z: I was going to say also with the city stuff, because you can do to-go parties and that kind of thing, is so much easier in a city. And so much more needed, I feel like. In the suburbs you have more space, so you're less likely to want to order something like that. But the craft you can do it in a studio apartment, literally.

LP: Right. Exactly. And I also think that your brand is a reflection of you. And I've really become a city girl. I love cities.

Z: You have.

LP: Yeah. I have. I love going home and visiting where Ian and I grew up in the same hometown and it's wonderful. And sometimes my girls are like, "We should live there," because it's just different and it's special. But I'm a city girl. I really am. I love the action. I also love that I'm in my neighborhood and I know... Ian always jokes around, he says, "You can't walk down the street without seeing five people." I love that. But I also love the anonymity of a city. I could go to a different neighborhood in no time and blend in if I don't want to. I think that's really appealing to me. Yeah.

A: Are you an Ian high school sweetheart?

LP: Good question. So, we are not, I guess not technically. Because we went on our first date... I don't even think I was allowed to date, really. I might have lied to my dad when I was a sophomore and he was a senior. He sent me an IM and it was happened to be on our birthday. And I didn't even know we had the same birthday. And so this really cute boy, who's two years older than me, and the soccer star is sending me an IM and somehow I was like, "Oh, it's my birthday." And he said, "That's so funny. Did you hear at school that it's my birthday?" And I said, "No, what? I don't get the joke. No, it's my birthday." So, first time we really interacted was on our mutual birthday.

A: Aww.

Z: That's so cute.

LP: He was a senior and going off to play soccer. So, we went on a couple dates and kind of that was that. And I finished high school. But he came home for a summer and we were camp counselors. And we had the best time. We worked together. It was like a dream. We were with the kids all day. And then we go to the lake and jet ski and party with our friends all evening. It was so fun. And he said, "You're going to New York for college. I'm going to Indiana. This is just for fun." And of course, I was totally head over heels in love with him. And I came to college and was heartbroken. I remember singing in my dorm room, Sheryl Crow, Picture, and throwing away his pictures and then being like, "No, no everybody find the pictures right now."

LP: And then it was kind of... I'm trying to think of how many years. It was right before or after I graduated. And I did only three years. And I happened to be in the West Village with... I had another boyfriend. And I looked across the street and I never was with in the West Village. I felt really cool. I was going to a party with my boyfriend at the time. And I look over and I'm like, "Is that Ian Peers? Oh my gosh, no. What?" And all of a sudden I hear, "Lindsey." And I go, "There could be a million Lindseys." And he goes, "Lindsey Johnson," which is my maiden name. And I was like, "Oh no, here we go again."

Z: Oh my God.

LP: And he was waiting table at the Soho House in grad school. Didn't even really know he was in New York and pretty soon the boyfriend was bye-bye. But yeah.

Z: Such a great story.

A: That's so cute.

Z: Oh my God.

LP: So funny. The Notebook also came out that summer. And I remember reading The Notebook, watching the movie, calling my mom crying, being like, "I don't know, the boyfriend's seems like a steadier bet." And really just comparing my life to The Notebook because that's what I did. I don't know.

Z: Was Ian like a playboy?

LP: He was the soccer star and a lot of girls liked him, but he wasn't really a playboy. I think at that time in his life he was like, "I don't on a girlfriend. I'm going to play soccer and go into a different city every..." he played Division 1, so different state every weekend. And it just wasn't the right time. And I think, I don't know. I told him the other night, for some reason when we like talked that first time, when I was 15 and he was 17, something sort of like felt that this was a bigger connection. Sounds cheesy. But I really feel like I [crosstalk 00:28:54].

Z: That's not cheesy.

A: That's not cheesy. No, that's back to your gut feeling, which is so important.

LP: Yeah. Yeah. I like that. There.

A: So cute.

Z: I love that.

A: And has Ian always been the kind of guy who's a feminist? Who thinks men and women are equal and should share parenting tests and all that stuff?

LP: Always.

A: He seems like that guy.

Z: He does.

LP: Yeah. He, from the get go, was always my equal. From the middle of the night, to everything really. He loves being a dad. He is so supportive of what I do. It's kind of interesting, because we've really never even had a conversation. It's just his nature and he's such a good dad. I feel he was meant to be a dad. The kids adore him. And he's such a good husband. It's just, again, I feel like it's my solid gift. I have my best friend

throughout life. When something happens major to us, we always talk about our gifts and for some reason I feel like he was one of my gifts. I don't know. Sounds cheesy. But.

A: No it doesn't. It just-

LP: Also, not that I don't feel... and that's a good thing too, is I'm very independent and I think that's why it works too. It's not like I need him to survive. It's just we have an amazing partnership and I don't know. Does that make sense?

Z: Totally.

A: Totally makes sense.

Z: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Z: So, we can switch gears a little bit. We're actually coming up with an episode we were brainstorming about this weekend about, we finished the show, Ted Lasso. I don't know if you've seen it, but it's so great.

LP: Love. Love.

Z: Loved. And they talk a lot about mental health in that show and they deal with [inaudible 00:30:39]. And it's really evolved and great. And we're going to talk more about that in an upcoming episode, but we talk about mental health and mental illness a lot on our show and we get a lot of questions about how to deal with the current rise in depression and people are feeling more isolated because of the pandemic and because of the stressors.

A: Right. And the rise in substance abuse. And I mean, all of that, it was high to begin with and now the pandemic has brought it-

LP: Of course, of course.

A: ... to an all-time high, unfortunately. And we know that you had a huge family tragedy about five years ago.

LP: Yeah .yeah. I know. I'm trying to remember how long ago.

A: We wonder if you'd be willing to...

LP: I sometimes forget that it's already been almost six years. Elle was one, and Elle's seven, so.

A: Wow. Would you mind talking to us about it?

LP: Oh, I love talking about it. I think it's so important. So yeah. So, my brother who... there's just my brother and I. And he was two years younger than me. And he was so handsome and smart and kind. The kindest person you'll ever meet. And just a quiet, calm presence.

He had a very intense, and I say that it was brief, but I think there was some signs earlier on, battle with mental health. And ultimately, he took his own life. And it just rocked my family. And it was a very difficult thing, but I love talking about it because I think it's so important. And often, I talk to Ian and my mom and even my dad about how, in the short time since Jay passed away, that we've had strides and mental health and it's so beautiful.

LP: And sometimes it can be a little bit painful because you're like, "Ugh, only if it was two years later maybe." But I know ultimately that Jay would be so happy that this was happening. Because I think a lot of what was hard for Jay was that he felt so different that he was struggling with... we really don't even know, because it was so fast and he wasn't... In the beginning, before things got really bad, he wasn't always forthcoming about what was going on. But I think there was some panic attacks. I think depression. And then I think Jay was always wanting to be perfect. And I think that's a lot of what our society is right now, which is so, so sad, because there is no perfect. And perfect is boring. That's what I say to the kids at The Craft Studio. Uniqueness is what makes us special.

LP: But I think that social media, when he got sick, and maybe it was going on a lot longer, but I think when he was really struggling, he thought that, "How can I have a life dealing with this? All these people have perfect lives. And I had to take time away from my job that I work so hard to be at." So, I think all those things kind of contributed to him thinking that that was the best choice for everyone. I think he also didn't want our family to suffer, which is so sad. So yeah, I'm always such an advocate for talking about it. And right before the pandemic, I really was starting to think about how we could have a foundation where we go into a school, with a professional, because I'm not a mental health professional, but we bring an art project that the kids could focus on while a mental health professional talks them about mental health and how what we see on social media isn't always true, and that sort of thing.

Z: That sounds amazing.

LP: And now I have to take a breath. Did I do okay, you guys?

Z: That was great.

LP: Listen, I talk so fast when I talk about that.

A: No, it was great.

Z: No, not at all. Yeah, no. It was perfect.

LP: Okay.

A: What did he do for a living?

LP: Okay. So he was so smart. He was an engineer. A mechanical engineer. And he worked for Michelin Tire for a little while. He worked for this company in Plattsburgh. Plattsburgh? Yeah. I always say that wrong. In Plattsburgh for a little bit, but his last job was at Pepperidge Farm. He was one of the head mechanical engineers at Pepperidge

Farms. And he was an amazing athlete, but he sort of never fit into, I think the stereotypical box. He wasn't a basketball player. He liked to mountain bike and jump his snowmobiles and-

Z: Oh, cool.

LP: Extreme, yeah. Do extreme sports. And I think that was hard for him when we were growing up. I think he was a kind kid. And sometimes kind kids, at least when we were growing up... I hope it's changed, for my own children and all the children. People tended to pick on somebody who's a little more soft spoken, who might not fight back. And he just was so gentle and kind. And he wasn't a basketball player. He wasn't a football player. He loved art. So, I think he might have struggled a little bit. And sometimes I feel guilty, because I had a great high school experience. And we had a great relationship and we're so supportive of each other, but I always think, "Oh, was I paying attention enough to see if he was struggling?" But yeah. So, I think that that kind of maybe planted the seed for some lifelong struggles for him.

Z: Yeah. So growing up, how did you talk about mental health in your family? I know it's kind of a new thing, honestly, to do that, but yeah.

LP: Yeah. I don't really remember talking about it a lot. And my parents are great. I had an amazing childhood. And I feel it's so hard for them, because they always second guess every parenting decision they've ever made. And I have to reiterate, especially my mom, like, "None of this is your fault." She was a great mom. And Jay always reiterated that. But as far as discussions about mental health, my mom is a health teacher, which is so interesting, which is sort of... She was so open about everything and we talked about whatever struggles we had. But I think when I was growing up there, wasn't really a huge focus on it, you know? I don't know. I mean, what do you think?

A: Well, in health class there was never a section on mental health. Did you ever have-

LP: I don't even remember it. No.

A: Yeah, now the kids have that.

LP: Yes. Yes.

Z: And I think it's great to know that your kids will grow up with like way more than even I had. And I had a lot in school.

LP: Absolutely. And I think to some extent, we all struggle with a little bit of a mental health issue at some point in our life. I think everybody feels anxiety or panic. And it's just so important to normalize those feelings, because we're human. And I also think about how sometimes, especially in the beginning, not now, but I would be so hesitant to tell people what happened to him, because I wouldn't want them to judge him for the way he passed away. But you have to remember, just like cancer is a sickness of the body, a mental illness is a sickness of your brain. Your most important, I'm going to say it's an organ, right, Amy? Don't-

A: Yes, yes.

LP: ... make fun of me. You know what I mean? Yes. That's so embarrassing. I'm like, "Wait." So, I think that's the stigma that we have to get rid of. Why is it so tragic and sad when somebody has a something like a cancer or they're in an accident, but I can't even imagine how Jay must have felt. That is what's the saddest part about it, is wrapping my head around how he was feeling in the end, you know?

A: Yeah.

Z: Yeah.

A: Have you spoken to your kids about their Uncle Jay?

LP: So I have. Oh, they know all about him. But I think pretty soon, Ian and I have to figure out the plan of how we're going to talk about it more with them. I mean, my kids are seven, five, and two. And Elle sometimes will ask now a little bit more like, "how did he die?" Because we, still, I think it's really important to keep him alive and we tell happy stories and there's pictures of him in our house. But for now we say, "Uncle Jay was sick and we'll explain a little bit more," and that's fine. She just accepted it as a seven year old little bouncing girl. But we definitely, I want to make sure... I want to talk about this stuff with my kids, because I want them to know if they ever experience anything like that, we can figure it out, you know?

Z: Yeah.

LP: Yeah. Thank you for covering this.

Z: Thank you for sharing. We really appreciate you being open about it.

LP: Of course.

Z: Yeah.

LP: Yeah.

A: It's so sad. And we haven't figured out yet how to prevent suicide a lot of the times. which-

LP: Yeah, I know.

A: ... is a real tragedy. And growing up, my mom was in the hospital a couple of times for depression, but it was not spoken of. I did not know why she went to the hospital.

LP: Yeah. Wow.

A: And we didn't talk about it until I was in college. Can you imagine?

LP: Wow. No, oh my goodness.

A: Yeah, I know. And-

LP: Wow.

A: And then, sorry. I'm just trying to think.

Z: That's okay. [inaudible 00:40:06].

LP: Yeah, of course. It's okay.

A: No, no, there was no... I mean, talk about stigma. I mean, I think my-

LP: [inaudible 00:40:13] couldn't even imagine.

A: [inaudible 00:40:16], I guess my mom, the first time she was depressed, I think she was... wait, let me think. 28, right? In the hospital and the doctors told my dad she was never going to get better.

LP: Wow, that's so sad.

A: And it's 1973 or 1974.

LP: Yeah.

A: But I don't think he had anyone to talk to about it.

LP: Yeah, and [inaudible 00:40:36].

A: And my grandma came and stayed with us and no one ever said anything. And then she was back. Four months later. And then it happened again few years later. And I remember a teacher, Ms. Mullary, my fourth grade teacher, taking me outside of the classroom during recess to ask me if I was okay, because my mom had just gone to the hospital. And I got defensive like, "What do you mean? Of course I'm fine." But she acted like, "Your mom's in the hospital for severe depression, that's a big deal." But it wasn't okay yet to talk about it.

LP: Yeah.

A: And [inaudible 00:41:11]. But now, my mom, can talk to her about it. Sometimes I'll have a patient whose family member might need ECT, electric shock treatment, which is an amazing treatment depression. My mom had that a few times in life. And it saved her each time she had it, because medications didn't work so well for her. And my mom is happy to speak to that person to demystify it, to explain it, because people are scared.

LP: Right. Of course.

Z: [inaudible 00:41:37] have imagine that she'd ever talk about it to a stranger, let alone her family.

LP: No, no. Yeah.

A: Right. Absolutely not. So, this stigma.... and I think I became a psychiatrist to try to master some of these things that I went through. Also, my aunt has schizophrenia. And it was always, if someone has diabetes, you can measure a blood sugar level. If someone has cancer, you can see it on a scan or you can see a lump. But if someone has mental illness, you can't see it. You can't [inaudible 00:42:07] something. Maybe someday we'll be able to, but it doesn't matter. It's still an illness of the brain. And just because the brain is also the organ that does the thinking there's that sense, "I can just, if I was stronger, I could think myself out of it, or I could pull myself up by my bootstraps." Well actually, your neurotransmitters are completely out of whack and they need help.

LP: Right. I know. And that's what was so hard too. Jay was reading tons of self-help books and he tried so hard to figure it out. And I think he just didn't want to be a burden to people. I think he felt as if there was never going to be any hope for him. And we just really, as a society, need to keep pushing. And shows like Ted Lasso are amazing, and talking about it. And Amy, you were one of the first people I really think I was upfront with when it happened. I was pregnant with Vivian. And I just felt so vulnerable and sad. My brother had just died, but there was this other piece. And when someone passes away, it's only human nature, but everybody wants to know what happened.

Z: Yes.

LP: And so I just felt... I didn't know how to explain it without making it seem that my brother... I just felt like it questioned his character. And now I feel so confident in explaining it to people. He was an amazing guy. This is a disease, a terrible disease he suffered. It is not Jay. It's not his fault. But in the beginning, even just five years ago, it was very difficult for me. But you are so kind and amazing. And I just remember you were such a safe place for me to be able to talk about it the way I could just literally, verbally, blah, it all out to you.

A: Thank you.

LP: That was so, so amazing.

A: No, that's the only way to be.

Z: Yeah.

LP: Yeah.

Z: We are big proponents of... the whole point of this podcast is being open and we're big proponents of therapy. We've had our own therapy on the show. So, if you hear anything that we're saying resonating with you, please talk to somebody.

A: Yeah, let's put a link to a suicide hotline in the podcast.

Z: There is a breadth of resources out there for you, many of them free.

LP: Yeah.

Z: Yes.

A: One of the good things about the pandemic is the advent of online therapy, because now is much more accessible to many people all over the country.

LP: I agree. I agree. I agree. I think it's a huge positive that came along with it. Yeah. Thank you for talking about it.

Z: Yeah. Thank you.

A: Of course.

Z: So, since our podcast is called, Am I Embarrassing You?

LP: Yes.

Z: Would love for you to please share an embarrassing moment between you and your mom, and one between you and the kids.

LP: Okay. I have a really good one between me and my mom. So, my mom started teaching health when I was in eighth grade, which was when we had sex education at our school. So, my mom literally taught all the boys and girls in my grade.

Z: Oh, no!

LP: Luckily there was another health teacher in our grade, so I didn't have her, but I just remember-

Z: Oh my God.

LP: ... people, I recall, being like, "Mrs. Johnson, just how to put a condom on a banana."

Z: Oh my God. That's too good.

LP: That is my embarrassing story, is my mom taught every eighth grader, basically, about sex education when I was in eighth grade.

A: Wait-

Z: That's our best one yet.

A: But Linds, you didn't have health until eighth grade?

LP: We had health, but for some reason, I don't know why, but it was eighth grade that we really got into the heavy duty stuff.

Z: I think that's normal.

A: No, but you had health class in fourth or fifth grade about like puberty and puberty stuff?

LP: No, I remember in fifth grade they showed us the famous period video. And it was just this VHS of what to do. And then we got a little card. We put our information. And in the mail we got a period pack. And I'll never forget, it was magenta and turquoise and it had pads and tampons in it. And my mom was so open with me, but yet I was so embarrassed. I hid it and she's like, "What are you doing?" I don't know. It was...

Z: I was at an early bloomer that I didn't even... I got my period a week before fifth grade started. So I was nine, almost 10. So by-

A: [inaudible 00:46:47] at almost 11.

Z: Yeah, sorry. 10, almost 11. And by the time that I got to health class that year I was like, "I'm so much more mature. I know all this stuff. Don't give me your cardboard tampons." I was like-

LP: I love it.

A: I love cardboard tampons.

Z: I know, but I mean, everyone was like, "Oh my God, what's this?" And I was like, "Please, I'm the grown up here."

LP: Been there, done that. I know.

Z: Oh my gosh.

LP: I remember that one time in... I think one time in fifth grade. And then it came back in sixth grade. But I remember literally being in the bathroom being like, "No, why is this happening to me?" Like total, Are You There God, It's Me Margret moment.

A: That's what I said.

LP: Crying, like, "This can't be happening."

Z: Linds, in your school in fifth grade, did they separate the girls and the boys? Did the boys also watch that period movie? Do you remember?

LP: No, no. The boys watched a different VHS. I don't know many details about it. But-

Z: Probably about wet dreams or something.

A: We could ask Ian.

LP: Yeah.

Z: Yeah, let's ask Ian.

LP: We should ask Ian.

Z: He's going to be like, "How am I supposed to remember that?"

LP: I know. I know. Isn't that funny?

Z: Yes, that's really funny.

LP: But I have a good one with the kids, too.

Z: Oh, good.

A: Okay, good.

Z: Please.

LP: So, I hate public restrooms. I don't know anyone who really does love them, but of course, we should say, "Go to the bathroom before we leave. Blah, blah, blah." But the girls have to go to the bathroom all the time. And so, already going into a public bathroom, I'm like [inaudible 00:48:12].

Z: I'm the same.

LP: So in the stall, always, in the stall I'm like, "Don't touch anything, hands down, arms down, nobody move. I'm going to make a toilet paper nest for you. I'll pull your pants down for you. I'll lift you." And then of course, I'm like, "Okay, I'll go." So I'm like, "Don't move, don't touch anything." And of course, one of them always opens the door and there's mom like peeing. It happens like once a month. I'm like, "Why? Why?" I mean, it's just other women, but that always happens. And they get [inaudible 00:48:39]

Z: I love the paper nest. I never heard that. I love that.

LP: Yeah, I call it the nest. I don't know if that's what other people call it, but we call it the toilet paper nest.

Z: I love that.

LP: I know.

Z: I'm a squatter.

LP: I'm a squatter. And Elle tries to say that she's ready-

Z: Oh, no.

A: Kids can't squat.

Z: No, they can't.

LP: She can't squat.

Z: She's not even tall enough.

LP: Right, she's not. And that's the thing. And she's like, "Mommy, I am strong." And I'm like, "Yes, but you are literally not tall enough."

Z: They're so cute.

A: That's so funny.

LP: I know.

Z: That's so much fun. That's funny.

A: There's so many funny bathroom stories.

Z: I know. Well, you used to have to take [inaudible 00:49:17] to the bathroom all the time with you.

A: Oh yeah.

Z: I remember that. I'm like, "Why is my brother in the bathroom?"

LP: That's so funny.

Z: "This is the ladies room."

LP: I know. I know. Well, poor Ian has taken the girls someplace and sometimes there's a family restroom now. It's gotten better. But he's been like, "What am I going to do?" What one time he went into the women's bathroom at the old Barnes & Noble. No one was in there, he said, so he just went into the women's room to let the girls pee. And a woman came in and was like, "Geez!" and he was like, "I've got a three and a one year old, lady. I'm just trying to let them pee. I'm not peeing."

A: And not bring them into the disgusting men's room with men's urinals, seeing their penises. They'll be traumatized.

LP: I know. I think you made the right choice. That lady didn't agree, but.

Z: Whatever.

A: Yeah.

LP: I know.

Z: So, one other question we ask every guest, which is, what is your favorite breakfast cereal?

LP: Ugh, you guys, I love breakfast cereal so much.

Z: As do we.

LP: It was very difficult for me to decide my favorite. I listen to your podcast all the time and I love hearing this answer. I think Captain Crunch with crunch berries.

Z: Nice. That's-

A: That's hers.

Z: No.

A: I forgot hers.

LP: You're Lucky Charms, right?

Z: I'm Lucky Charms. [inaudible 00:50:32].

LP: I also love Lucky Charms so much. I know that. I know that it's Lucky Charms.

A: You love Captain Crunch and I don't.

Z: No, I don't love Captain Crunch. Jay used to love Captain Crunch.

A: Sorry, having a moment over here.

LP: It's so hard. I love them all. I also love... I think there's a berry theme with me. I like Kix, but I like the berry one.

Z: Me too. I love Kix.

A: You love Kix. Kix is delicious.

Z: I used to be obsessed with Kix and I would put it in my yogurt as a kid and it would make it colorful and thought that was the best thing ever.

LP: So good. It's so funny, because I think about... I remember one podcast you were saying, Amy, that you always had sweets around and it was sort of a thing where it wasn't like they would gorge on them because they never got them. And it's the same thing here, is we'll have like a box of fun cereal. And I'm always shocked how long it lasts in our house. But they're like, "Eh." Elle will be like, "Can I have oatmeal?" I'm like, "Who are you? I just got the fun cereal. Okay, here you go."

Z: That's great.

A: That's awesome.

Z: It totally works. A lot of my friends grew up without sugar cereal. It was totally banned.

LP: Yeah.

Z: And just, it's crazy, because one of my really good friends came over to our apartment in 10th grade and had never had Lucky Charms before. And I looked at Mom.

LP: Oh, no.

Z: Mom and I were like, "This isn't going to go well. She's going to pass out in a sugar coma from having one Lucky Charm."

LP: Yes. That's so funny.

Z: Creepy.

LP: I love making them into rice crispy treats around St. Patrick's Day. I don't know. I don't even really celebrate St Patrick's Day, but I love a theme.

Z: That's such a good idea. Love a theme.

LP: It's good. Wait, can I say one more breakfast thing that I'm so excited about?

Z: Yes, please.

LP: Because I didn't have growing up that came neighborhood. I'm addicted to Krispy Kreme. I can't tell you. I love it so much.

Z: It just opened in our neighborhood.

LP: Yes. So, for a special thing we'll order... they had the Halloween ones that were so cute. So, one Saturday we ordered the Halloween ones. And then they had the winter ones. And I'm really excited about the Valentine ones, so.

Z: Those are good. [inaudible 00:52:31].

A: Years ago when Krispy Kreme first came to New York, there was one on 3rd Avenue, as you know, right? At 84th Street, where the McDonald's is now. And Zoe was still allergic to eggs, but Jayden loved donuts, but we couldn't have them at home. So, Emma, our nanny, would take him sometimes, but she would call it special bread, so that when he came home, he didn't say he had a donut.

LP: [crosstalk 00:52:54]. Aww, that's so smart.

A: Because Zo knew the donuts were good. She'd come home from nursery school and say like, "Mom, if donuts aren't that good, why is everyone bringing them in for their birthday treat? And eats them in five seconds?"

LP: Did they? Aww.

A: And I was like... I would order these vegan donuts from some place that I found. They were so gross. And I would pretend that they were good. So, the day that Zo ended her egg allergy-

LP: Best mom.

A: ... we did a taste test, Krispy Kreme, Dunkin Donuts. Clear winner. Clear Krispy Kreme.

LP: Clear winner.

Z: Clear winner, Krispy Kreme. And so then I could go into the store and then I had the best time and they used to have that conveyor belt and then it left the neighborhood and then last month, it came back.

LP: I know. And it's one avenue apart, right? Wasn't it... it was 84th and 3rd.

A: Yes.

Z: Yeah.

LP: And now it's like, 85th. It's so close, but one avenue over.

A: Yes, between 85th and 86th on Lex, yeah. And they were so nice, Krispy Kreme. Last year, anyone who showed their vaccine card got a free donut.

Z: We did it.

A: You could get one every day if you wanted. We did go. We went once.

LP: Awesome.

Z: We should have gone again.

LP: I know. I know. I love-

Z: That was [crosstalk 00:54:03].

LP: I have to make sure I'm good about it, because I just love sugar and I'm like, "Oh, I'm going to give myself diabetes or something." I just love sugar. It's my weakness. I love sweets.

Z: Me too. That's why I'm confused. Even my boyfriend, he could have sweets growing up, but he didn't really like them, kind of like my brother. And so now, I always would rather have dessert. If my dinner is bad I'm like, "Whatever, I'll have dessert," and he's like, "I want to have more dinner." I'm like, "Just get over with the dinner. Have the dessert." He's like, "No." Or if he has some Frosted Flakes he's like, "I have a headache." I'm like, "Oh, please. It's nothing."

A: He says that?

Z: The sugar. I'm like, "Oh my God." But my sugar tolerance is so high, and I'm very proud of it.

LP: I know. Mine too. Mine too.

A: So proud.

LP: Mine too.

Z: So funny.

LP: I love it.

A: So, we're doing something special today. And we would love to talk about the giveaway that you're doing for one of our listeners.

LP: So, I'm so excited about this giveaway, because I love our craft subscriptions. And we're giving away a three-month craft kit subscription. So, we'll ship it to you wherever live and we'll customize it based on how old you are. You can be an adult. We have awesome adult options, all the way down through teens and tweens and kids and toddlers. And we'll ask your interest, too. And we'll customize the crafts based around... If you love food, we'll do fluff art donut canvases, on theme with our podcast.

Z: Wow. That's so generous of you. I might enter my own giveaway because-

A: No, you're not allowed.

Z: Okay, just kidding. I'll just come in and paint plaster. But so I'm going to post [inaudible 00:55:37] on our Instagram. So look out for that. But you'll just follow us and follow The Craft Studio NYC and I'll tell you what to comment on our Instagram. So, just look out for our Instagram feed posts.

LP: Amazing.

Z: And you can enter the giveaway when episode goes live on Thursday. So, that's all we have for you. We could talk forever with you.

LP: I know. Oh my goodness. This was amazing. Thank you so much.

Z: Thank you.

A: Lindsey Peers, thank you so much for coming on our podcast. You are the best. We love you.

Z: You can follow The Craft Studio on in Instagram @craftstudioNYC and check out their website. You can get your own craft subscription. If you don't win the giveaway you should still get something and check it out, because it's the best. I'm 23. I've known only since I was 5. And I still love it just as much as I did then. You can check them out on

craftstudionyc.com. And that's all we have for you. Thank you for listening. You can follow us on Instagram @embarrassingyoupodcast. And we're now on TikTok. Check it out.

LP: Ooh.

Z: I'm making all the TikToks. Mom has created a monster by convincing you to do it.

A: It was my idea. Can you imagine?

LP: Now she's created a monster.

A: Go Zo!

LP: I love it.

Z: And see you next week, thank you Lindsey.

A: Thanks, Linds.

LP: Thank you for having me. What an honor. Love you both so much.

Z: Love you. Thank you.

A: Love you.