

# Stephanie Zoernack Interview

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Peaceful Empath Summit. Get off the emotional rollercoaster. Find your path to peace and feel your life transform. I'm your host, Monica Owsichek. Have you ever had encounters with family members whose energy just didn't feel really good, but you ended up taking it on and absorbing it anyway? Well, in this episode we're going to be talking about empaths and family relations.

Our guest today is Stephanie Zoernack, and Stephanie is the joyful personal growth architect. Stephanie is all about bringing more peace and joy to all aspects of life. She is passionate about being on a lifelong self-growth journey. Her exclusive cow method makes growth fun and ensures a framework for getting results.

Welcome Stephanie. Thanks for being here today. Hey, I'm so happy to be talking with [00:01:00] you today. Yeah, I'm excited to talk about family relations. I mean, I know, a lot of our listeners are gonna be interested in this because navigating family dynamics can be quite the journey, especially as an empath, especially absorbing all of those emotions.

,So before we get started, I just want us to all take a moment and we're gonna take one deep breath in and out together. So ready? Let's take a deep breath in and let it out.

Awesome. All right. So Stephanie, can you just start with what does being an empath mean to you? To me, I never really knew what an empath was until I discovered that I was one. , and then to me it's just. Feel being able, having this special ability to be able to feel people's emotions or what they're [00:02:00] going through or just sense it about them.

, I almost considered like another sense that we, that I, that some people have. , it's this cool gift that people can be given, , which can drain you or it can fulfill. , definitely. So you mentioned, you didn't even know that you were an empath for a while. , what was that journey of finding out that you were an empath?

I feel like a lot of times it can be that light bulb moment or it's that little signs that you kind of missed, And then all of a sudden it just kinda all comes to a head. Yeah, definitely. For me it was. Both of those where I was getting little signs along the way, but I didn't know what they meant and I didn't know what

was happening and I didn't really know, what I was feeling or where it was coming from or why or anything like that.

, and then it was almost like one day I was just like, oh my gosh, not everybody feels this way. Not everybody's experiencing what I'm experiencing. So what is this? Maybe I should like look into this a little bit. [00:03:00] Explore it, so I did a little research and. , , learned about a few different things, like highly sensitive person, empaths, intuitives, , many different things like that, , that I just didn't realize about myself until one day I was just like, wow, not everyone is having the same exact experience as me.

I hate to think that I was so self-centered to be like, everyone must be experiencing what I'm experiencing. But I think that is kind of what we come into this world with. And then it's up to us to realize, you know, what is different and what is the same about all of humanity and you know, what our differences are.

And for me, one of those was being an empath. So when you say I was feeling this or experiencing this and thinking, oh, not anyone else does, what specifically do you mean by that? Like, what were you experiencing? So I was feeling a lot of emotions. I was very sensitive all the time. I didn't know where these [00:04:00] emotions were coming from.

I just didn't think anything of them. I just figured it was normal, so I didn't question it, it was mostly just, I think, absorbing other people's energies, absorbing other people's emotions and. feeling more tired than my peers feeling more drained, feeling like I have less energy for some of the more active stuff that they were doing, , after I focused so much on my academics at least.

But, , yeah, the, I think it was really draining me over time and it, it took that sudden realization to be like, wait, all these things I've been feeling over these years have not even been mine. Yeah. And how, was it something you read? Was it something that somebody said? Was it like, how did you start learning more about highly sensitive and empaths and intuitives?

, well, pretty much probably the same way that I did everything else that I liked to learn about, I just dive into it headfirst, and I just read as much as I can on any topic that I get interested in. And when the word [00:05:00] empath popped up and it was like, wait. This kind of sounds like it describes me a little bit.

I was like, okay, let's dive into this word more. Let's see what it means. Let's see what, people talk about it, different articles, people write about it and really dive

into it and be like, okay, yeah, this is part of me. This is like who I am. Do you feel like you were able to embrace that? Do you feel. It was a little scary.

Oh, it was ultra-scary, right? Um, it took, it took quite a few years for me to embrace it and realize that I didn't have to take on people's energy. Even with all that reading I had done, even with people saying, you know, you don't have to, it just didn't feel possible to me. So I was just in this closed mindset where I couldn't grow and accept it and discover how to use it, you know, in a way that benefits me, fulfills me rather than harms me.

I wasn't quite ready for that yet, and until I was ready, I couldn't take action on that. And [00:06:00] did you share that with other people? So you felt different, and then you started to learn about empaths and you dove in. And so now you're like, okay, I'm, I'm an empath. I think I'm an empath. What does that mean?

What does that look like? And maybe I'm not completely ready. Did you keep that to yourself? Did you talk about it with other people? I do keep a lot of things to myself. , I know that I must have talked about it with my mom at some point because she did buy me the highly sensitive person book. , and, that was when I was researching that as well as, , being an empath and an intuitive.

So I know that I definitely was talking about it a little bit, but, you know, that that part of my life is kind of a little bit blurry and foggy cuz I was so anxious all the time and I was, you know, really struggling in life. So I think my memory blocked a lot of that out. Mm-hmm, but I, yeah, I definitely tend to keep things to myself a lot, um, and ponder on things for a really long time until I know them to be true for myself before I say them to other [00:07:00] people.

So you brought up your mom and so, she was open to it. So she got you the book, which I feel like sounds like she was supportive and she wanted you to learn more about how you were feeling and why you were feeling the way you did. Did she understand what a highly sensitive person was as well? Is she one as well?

She is, definitely not, , not an empath. She's not sensitive, it's been definitely a struggle to have someone extremely sensitive and then someone not so sensitive. And then now my daughter is in the mix too, and she's even more sensitive than I ever was. And, that's even more of a struggle for her.

So it's interesting to watch, but she has always been supportive, you know, quietly in the background. So I don't think she quite knew what it meant for our relationship when I found that out for myself. But Or what it would mean for

our relationship. But she was definitely, wanting to help me [00:08:00] explore, you know, myself more, which is important.

Mm-hmm. I know that it was somewhat of a struggle too though, ? With your mom. You being an empath, being highly sensitive and then your mom now, how did that play out? you know, we're talking about family relationships and how, you know, that can really affect us. when we're empaths.

I mean for everybody, but empaths too especially. Yes, definitely. , as an empath, my mom and I actually always really got along great when I was young. , and I think it's because I was absorbing her energy and her emotions, and we were getting along so well because we were just on the same frequency and we were just almost the same people.

I was becoming her. And so we could get along really well. And she was my best friend for a really long time. It wasn't till until we had a falling out and then I started to realize, that I'm an empath. That, I don't think realizing that I was a highly sensitive person really helped, you know, really did much.

But realizing I was an empath definitely helped me, grow as a person and that also [00:09:00] helped me grow away from my mother, which caused a lot of tension and a lot of struggles that we had to go through. Do you mind sharing a little bit more the falling out, like this falling out happened?

Was it in line with when you realized you were an empath? Yeah, it actually was. It was all within the same couple of years. , it was. shortly after I became a mom. It was about four years that I was into being a mom. And I was always worried that I wasn't gonna be a good mom. I was always worried that I wasn't a good mom.

Almost every day I would worry, am I good enough? Am I, you know, what she needs? And I, and you know, I think a lot of people go through that. And, , one day my mom, I guess she was mad at me and she decided to share with me a conversation that she had with her sister, , where they had agreed that I didn't have the mothering gene.

and that was probably the most hurtful thing that they could say to me that, and I don't know who said it at this point, and I don't even care anymore, but, , someone said it and it was very hurtful and it really put a rift into our [00:10:00] relationship and finding out that I was an empath around the same time.

also had me researching ways to protect my energy and keep it safe. So, I was learning how to push, not necessarily push her away, but protect myself and not let her negative energy come into my, what I was working towards becoming positive energy. Um, that was something that I was working for on myself, working towards peace and joy and love and all the wonderful feelings of life.

I was definitely not there at that point, but that was a goal of mine and. growth was what I wanted to do, and she was kind of dragging me back away from that. She was pulling me back towards what we used to have when I was more like her. And, we got along really well. Once I started evolving as a person, we started fighting more, and which helped me evolve as well, but the [00:11:00] conflicts.

And after that falling out, there were just little comments here or there that we would just be really rude to each other. We would get into fights. , and my daughter was always upset that we were fighting. , just was a very toxic household for sure. It was, I dreamt of many ways that I could leave the household and none of them were feasible at the time.

But, , yeah, it was not a, it was not a good living environment for any of. . Yeah, I can see that. I mean, for someone to say that you do not have the mothering gene, just like you were saying, you were already putting on all this pressure on yourself and already doubting your own capabilities, and then for somebody, anybody to say that would be very, very hurtful and somebody so close to you.

And I feel like what you're describing, I feel like happens a lot when we learn something different about ourselves. So, we learn that we're empaths and it can really shift dynamics because [00:12:00] sometimes, you know, if people are staying where they are, like your mom and you're evolving and you're changing, then that causes this.

Energetic shift in your relationship and everyone feels uneasy and sometimes you're not really sure why. You just feel it? Like your energy is shifting and changing and so, and your moms was kind of staying in the same place. So, I think this is something that happens a lot and that it's something to be aware of as you become an empath.

How is it going to shift so many things in your. because it just changes that perception too, did you have that moment? Like did it take you a bit to realize that's what was happening? Or was it just really uncomfortable for a while? , I pretty much just existed in the misery for quite a while, , before I even started to put the pieces together and realize like, Hey, like.

I [00:13:00] might have a little bit of control over this. There might be tools that I can use that can help me and maybe protect me a little bit better. Yeah. So what are some of those tools? What are, what were the, the most impactful tools that helped you at that time? So you, you have this relationship with your mom where you're almost the same person.

Like really connected and getting along, and then you start to realize that, , you're an empath and that you've been absorbing her energy and you make this decision that you don't want to do that anymore. And so, then it causes all this stuff in your relationship and now you're figuring out like, this isn't how I want to live, right?

I don't like this feeling for my daughter, for me, even for your mom. And so what things did you start to do to make that shift? Well, the first thing that really helped me was reading about this idea of vibrating at different frequencies based on your [00:14:00] positivity and negativity and what, what you're thinking about and what your thoughts are and how you feel.

And as long as I was vibrating at a higher frequency than she was, her negative energy couldn't pass into my energy. It would just completely like hit a wall. It would just be like, there's no way to pass because the energies aren't vibrating the same, so they just hit a wall, and I don't know how long it took me after I read that, before I actually felt it in person, but I remember when I felt it in person.

And remember, I don't have that much memory of this time in my life, and I remember this moment, I remember standing, standing there. She was sitting in her chair in the living room and, I was standing there ready to go into my room and she was just saying all these, these things. I don't even know at this point what she was saying, but I was just like, this is so negative.

And I was just standing there and I was just like, wait a minute. This isn't affecting me. Oh my gosh. This is because I'm just vibrating at this higher frequency. I'm. Her stuff just can no longer get to me. And [00:15:00] just, and it was just this huge, powerful moment where it was like, wow, I do have some power over this.

Like, I felt so empowered. I felt so capable, so hopeful for the future that like I could grow and I could evolve to who I wanted to be and still not be brought down by. other people in my life who were not on the same growth journey as I am, and who maybe even are there to help me on my growth journey.

, and looking at it from that new perspective was like, whoa, like just changing your perspective can change. Your whole outlook can change your whole attitude, your whole energy, everything. So, I think those were changing my perspective and that energy vibration were two of the most powerful, tools that I came across when it came to my relationship with my mother.

What does that look like to change, your vibration, your [00:16:00] frequency? How do you do that? Yeah, I had to work on that. That was definitely not something that came easily. I used to be a very negative person. I complained all the time, people were so down around me and I didn't even realize it.

And it was just cause I was complaining all the time, who would wanna be around someone like that? Right, and it took me a while to realize that, but once I realized that I wanted peace in my life. I didn't have time for that anymore. I didn't have time to complain and bring myself down, and I was searching for peace and that wasn't the opposite of peace.

So I got rid of that as quickly as I could, and it was definitely a process for sure, taking it day by day and removing the negativity piece by piece and changing your beliefs piece by piece. But, it's definitely something that is completely worth doing because it can. change every, yeah, it changes.

Everything changes. Your attitude, your vibration, everything. Are you saying that in order to change your frequency and your vibration, a big part of it is [00:17:00] removing the negative energy? Removing the negative frequency? How does it happen? Yeah, it's probably a balance between removing some of the negativity and increasing some of the positivity.

And I'm not talking about like the toxic type of positivity here, that everything's gonna be okay, you know, no matter what. And you know, every, you know, everything's positive and sunshine and rainbows. I'm not talking about that type of positivity. I'm just talking about being in the now in the present, appreciating life for what it is.

I'm happy that I'm on this journey. I'm happy here to be talking to you. I'm happy to have a roof over my head. There's just things that I'm grateful for and that just raises your vibration so much. And just thinking positive thoughts and even if they're balanced with realism, because I'm a realist more than I am an optimist, but I do tend to think more positive thoughts than negative at this point.

I do balance it with realism, so I think adding positivity and removing some of the negativity, but sometimes just adding the positivity does remove the negativity on its own, and you [00:18:00] don't always have to work at removing the, negative parts. Okay. You changed your perception and kind of shifted things and reframed things to a more positive way or outlook.

Exactly. Okay. And so when you did that, how, how did your mom react? She could tell that I wasn't as affected by what she was saying as I normally would be, she could tell that I wasn't letting it affect me.

I wasn't letting it bother me as much, and over the, the weeks and months after that, there was a lot of pushback. There was a lot of, I think her wanting to deny that I was. Like evolving past it and wanting to drag me back down and keep the familiarity of what she knew whether she realized she wanted that or not, you know, it's just what she knew and I think that's what she was comfortable with.

, and that took a lot of like, just having motivation for myself to do this and the strength within myself to do this for myself since I didn't have her to help me with it, you know? Yeah. I just have [00:19:00] to. be like, you know, I have enough to do this on my own. I don't need, I don't need the support of my loved ones.

I've got this. I'm enough. Mm-hmm. I'm curious from that moment, when you saw and you felt how you were not taking on and absorbing your mom's negative energy anymore. Where is your relationship now? Did it change as you grew stronger and stronger as an empath?

Well, as I grew stronger in my abilities to use my empathy when I wanted to. I found that her stuff wasn't bothering me as much anymore, and she eventually just kind of let that go and just let me be. The tension got a little bit less. It took time for it to get really a lot less, it wasn't until I actually chose to forgive her for saying I didn't have the mothering gene that, the tension was completely gone.

But, because of what I learned about being an empath and how to protect myself and keep my [00:20:00] vibration higher, a lot of the arguments were lessened. There were. The arguments reduced drastically actually, it did take probably a couple of years of, I think it was another three years after that moment when I realized my energy was vibrating higher until I forgave my mom.



And in that time that was an excellent time for me to practice, all my tools and everything that I was learning about how to protect my boundaries and my energy and, , she was probably, Best teacher that I could have had , honestly, even though it was torture. , I think she accelerated my, , my learning and my growth so much faster just because, um, the tension was so high and there were so many problems there.

And we're actually in a really good place now. I wanna say I forgave her for, for everything probably about five months ago. Um, it wasn't too long ago. We barely fight anymore. It's like, I don't know what [00:21:00] happened. I mean, I know that I just told you what happened, but like it's almost like night and day.

It's like what happened? Like, I mean, we even sometimes hug each other now. I feel like a huge piece of that, another layer was the forgiveness, yes, definitely. And I feel like forgiveness, there's so many parts to that it. Forgiving her, forgiving yourself, forgiving the situation. Just a blanket kind of forgiveness can be so freeing.

And I love what you said about her being your best teacher. And I, I believe, and I see this a lot, that our families are her biggest teachers, and it can be difficult because sometimes you have to make the decision to limit the time with certain family members.

That sounds like a beautiful journey that you've had with your mom. For you to be at this place of peace and joy with her [00:22:00] now versus so many people stay in that place of struggle, so I want to celebrate that with you because it sounds like a huge journey, and I can feel how more at peace you are with it thank you for sharing all of that. That's beautiful, and what's one way that you feel like being an empath now is your superpower?

You know, a lot of times, we talk about it could be a blessing or a curse. And so how do you feel like it turned into a superpower or a blessing for you. Well, especially with my family, since I'm close with them, I can pretty much sense what they need just by sensing their emotions. I kind of just automatically know and I still check in with them to make sure that that's what they need so I don't, you know, overstep or, you know, do something that's gonna make it worse.

But with other people, I would say it's just being able to sense when they need. Support and when they need you to back [00:23:00] off, you know, just based on what kind of, if they're feeling sad, like what kind of energy it is. If, if it's either the sad, like leave me alone sad, like I really don't wanna talk to anyone sad, or if it's the please help me.

I really am struggling, sad. Um, and I think that usually I can distinguish that pretty well just based on. just sense, I guess just being around someone and just observing their body language and the way that they're talking or not talking or where they're looking. And if you pay attention to someone, you can pick up so many cues and just, it just kind of, it's this feeling that just radiates in, in my chest and it.

I just feel what they, they're feeling, if I let myself, which is how it's become more of a superpower, if I did that all the time, it wouldn't be a superpower. It would be a; it would be a struggle. But being able to turn that on and off is, um, definitely what makes it a superpower and makes it where I can be like, [00:24:00] I don't know.

I can just help people more and I can better, better understand, you know, , maybe not what they need if I don't know them very well, but maybe how to approach finding out what they need in the way that they best need in the moment. And I like what you said about you can know, but you don't necessarily have to act on it.

And it's that point of asking permission too, because sometimes it's about letting someone just be on their own journey and their own path, yes, definitely. It's always, always, always has to be up to them. Mm-hmm. But you can always state your intention and say that you're there.

Exactly. Well, okay, so. If somebody is listening and they're having a struggle with a family member, maybe not a mom, maybe it's a dad or a sibling, or even their [00:25:00] child, what would be one piece of advice you could give them, especially if they're empaths, like what would be your biggest piece of advice?

Because you know, you've gone through this.

I would say don't take it personally. It's about them. It's not about you when it's, when it's their stuff, it's about them. When it's your stuff, it's about you. But, um, don't let their stuff become yours if it doesn't have to be. Hmm, that feels huge, do not take things personally.

It is about them and their journey and, when we start to do that, that's when all that struggle starts to come in, exactly. Yep. Mm-hmm. Awesome. So, I know that you have a free gift for the listeners, and so can you share what that is a little bit more? Absolutely. So I have a free quiz and it's, a quiz that you download [00:26:00] and it tells you what current stage of spiritual growth you're in.

I have 10 colored cows, which represent, 10 different stages of spiritual growth. I do want to say these are not necessarily in order. People's paths can vary in all different kinds of ways. Mine definitely does not take the order that I have them ordered in the quiz, but It can show you, you know, where you are in your stage, what, where you are in your stage of growth.

It can tell you your strengths, your weaknesses based on that stage. It's all based on color theory, and it can even tell you how to elevate to another level. Stage may, may not be the next one, but one of the ones that's elevated up, yeah, it's a, just a fun quiz. Curious why, why cows? oh, cows represent pretty much my, my journey of personal growth, spiritual growth, all the growth.

It was a very profound moment in my life when I was passing by a field of cows and I was overcome with this sense of joy and peace and presence and [00:27:00] all the beauty in the world, and they've just been, I'm obsessed with them now. I even have tattoos of cows, so yeah, they're, they're, they're all over my room.

They're everywhere. So. Awesome. Well, Stephanie, I really enjoyed our conversation today. Thank you for opening up, for being vulnerable and sharing your journey with your mom. I really think it's going to help a lot of people. And one thing to remember is, do not take things personally.

I think that was a huge piece today to learn. So yes, thank you. Thank you. This was wonderful. All right, I thought that was a fun conversation with Stephanie today. And I just want to remind you to head over to the speaker page where you can grab your free gifts.

You'll be able to figure out what spiritual stage you're in from Stephanie's, quiz with Cows. And that's all for today. Thank you for listening.