THE RESILIENT KID PODCAST

Season 4 – Episode 7

Being Brave Enough To Embark On A Journey - Emma Thackham

Ashley: Hello and welcome to the Resilient Kid podcast with me, Ash Costello. I am so excited to have Emma with us today who's our, our guest. I'm going to introduce Emma in a second. Now we've probably known each other for, oh, Three years, maybe? Something like that, yeah. I think pretty much as we started to build our house.

Yeah. So yeah. So Emma's seen the, the transformation from pretty much block to, to today, where we're sat, we're sat in our studio. So Emma, please introduce yourself to the Resilient Kid audience.

Emma: Thank you. Thank you for having me. Okay. So I'm Emma Thackam. I am an art therapist. I'm also an artist.

I run a flooring business as well, which is very different from those two other things. And now I'm also a children's author as well. So we're here to talk about my book.

Ashley: And it's so important. And obviously I knew most of that about Emma, but actually when her book came out. I felt like it was really, really important to highlight her story.

Now this book, and it is beautiful by the way, is not actually in English, is it? It's not in English, not yet. I was going to say, is that a yet? Please say it's a yet.

Emma: Yeah, later this year or early next year, it'll be translated back into English. Excellent. So what, so what, like, tell us what language you're seeing.

So it's currently in Finnish. Because my sister and her mother are Finnish. My sister's half Finnish. Her mum is Finnish. And so we've released it to begin with in Finnish.

Ashley: Excellent.

And so you might think, like, Ashley, why have you got Emma, the author, here when her book is, is not kind of accessible to anybody else who, who, you know, doesn't speak English.

If you don't speak Finnish, well, I'm going to tell you why because the story is so beautiful and I feel like because I've known Emma for a little while because I've known a little bit about Emma's story. The journey of it is so lovely and so beautiful and gives us hope and gives us. That sense of what it takes to be brave and to go on to embark on a journey.

Really, Emma, that's what you've done is kind of embarked on this journey. And I just feel like, oh, my God, that must have taken so much. But the rewards I'm guessing outstrip that the. You know, the worry, the stress of it all.

Emma: Yeah, I have definitely been very lucky. And I can tell you a little bit more about that.

Ashley: Yeah, absolutely. So, Emma, tell us, tell us a little bit about your story because this book, this character, Simi. Simi. Yeah, Simi's the character in, and please just show them Simi's because it is beautiful. She is such a beautiful character. This is her. Is totally inspired by a real-life story, journey that you went back to. Tell us a little bit about,

Emma: okay. So Simi, the name Simi, I actually found in my birth records which I got when I'm 18, I'm an adoptee. So I was adopted when I was a very small baby. And my name was Samira originally. So we thought we'd call the character Simi. We wrote this story together, my sister and her mum and I and so yeah, she was based on my journey to Dominica to meet my dad for the first time.

So this, the, the journey that Simi takes, she hears that her dad's living deep in the rainforest and the story the story that the adventure that she embarks on really mirrors the journey that I went on with my dad the island when I met him just two years ago so I was a fully-fledged adult when I met him.

And in the story, she's a young girl. So there are differences but it's very much based on that amazing adventure that we had together.

Ashley: And so tell me a little bit, because that's, you know, it's really important. I know that in my audience, we have, you know parents who adopt, we have got adoptee parents. So, so grownups that were adopted when they were younger. And, and also one of the really and, and I hope you're okay with me sharing this about DNA. Yeah. So one of the things, so I've got lots of friends who have been taking DNA tests because it's become a bit of a thing, like, oh, let's find out how much you are Irish, you know, and things like that.

And I've got lots of friends who have, who have found siblings who found parents who've, you know, and it's amazing. But you were telling me because we were having this conversation off air that you only found out where you originally like your father was from.

Emma: My heritage. Yeah, I didn't know what race I was for most of my life until, well, it's three years ago now that I had a match on Ancestry DNA and it was my sister.

So I knew my, I knew about my maternal heritage, which is British, white British my mum is a white British redhead, bright red hair. So the complete opposite to me. But I didn't know anything about my cultural heritage background, my racial background at all until just a couple of years ago.

Ashley: And do you know what? It's, So, so I talk a lot about resilience and about the components that build resilience, especially in our kids. And one of them is, is around connection and around belonging.

You know, I know we've kind of talked a little bit about it. But that sense of, yes, you have this lovely British, white British culture, but actually you don't look like mom, you know, so it feels like there must have been a massive gap for you to where do I come from?

Where do I belong?

Emma: Yeah. So I was adopted into a white British family as well. So both of my adoptive parents are white British. I do have an older brother who's black, but we didn't have any wider families that were black. So we didn't have any of those cultures, traditions around, you know, doing our hair

Ashley: And that's massive, isn't it?

Because I know, I've got friends who go, no, no, it's a specialist. So I, I have um, three nephews, okay. Um, White parents and two of the boys have Afro pair. Okay. One has, red hair. Yeah. Randomly. Two of them have Afro hair and they have to go and get, you know, and it was a real thing for the parents to go, hold on.

I can't do this. I need to get help because I don't know about this. So they actually go once a month, they go to a hair salon. You know, and, and they have a fabulous hairdresser who, who doesn't just chat about the hair and how to look after the hair and things and tell mom and dad how to do this, but actually talks a little bit about culture and things that they haven't got because that this, this has come out of nowhere for these parents.

So, because they're not adopted. So yeah. So tell me a little bit about. You discovering where your roots were from.

Emma: Yeah. So it was, it was, it was amazing. Really. I was actually university as well. I was training to become an art therapist. I was doing an MA and I sat in the lecture and I got a beep beep on my phone.

To say I had a match on ancestry and I was like, Oh wow, brilliant. Another cousin, because when you go on there, usually you match when you have like 8 million cousins. So I messaged back. Hey there cousin. How are you? And my sister said actually, no, I think we're sisters. And she didn't know anything about me.

Because I had just disappeared when my, my mom, my biological mom was ill after I was born. So my dad had only ever actually met me twice. And then she was hospitalized so we just disappeared. So I was immediately put into foster care, emergency foster care. And they didn't contact him. He wasn't on the birth certificate.

So he just had no knowledge of what had happened to me. So my sister, so he'd kind of just kind of put me very much at the back of his mind and kind of got on with life, had a beautiful family with my sister and two brothers as well. And so she kind of just said to him, Yep, you know, we've had this match she says that her mum is such and such a person.

Do you know her? And my dad's like, oh yes, I did have a relationship with her. I met the baby a couple of times and then they disappeared.

Ashley: Wow, that must be like groundbreaking for your dad and your sister, because your sister must have been like, what? Yeah, it could have gone really badly. And I'm sure it does.

I'm sure it does go a lot. I've

Emma: been so lucky.

Ashley: So did your sister look like you?

Emma: Yeah, we do look like each other. It's amazing. And one of my brothers in particular, we really look like each other. We've got a picture of myself, one of my brothers and my sister at his wedding because he was getting married just shortly after we met and they invited us, which was lovely.

And everyone laughs because they say that I look more like our brother than she

does.

Ashley: So it must be for the, for the child in you, like the, you know, growing up without that connection, without somebody who really looked like you, that must've been just like to, to stand there. I know they're not like mirror image, but to stand there and see yourself in somebody else knowing that they belong to you and that's good, so that must've been beautiful.

Yeah.

Emma: Yeah. I, I'm, I'm an artist as well as not therapist and.

A lot of the driver between, behind my work has been this kind of search for an identity. I've explored that through sculpture and painting and drawing, sketching, writing and poetry. And one of the words that I came across when I was researching about this kind of feeling of not knowing was a Welsh word, which I will probably murder the pronunciation of.

I think it's hreith or hreith. And the meaning of that word is a deep sense of loneliness, longing, or homesickness for a person or place that doesn't exist. And

when I heard that word, it was just like Amazing, kind of, thank you. I was just trying to think of the word. It was a light bulb moment.

It really struck deep into the core of my heart as, oh my goodness, this is the feeling that I've carried within me from being a small child and not, not having any words to kind of put to what this sense of unknowingness is. Yeah, a deep sense of loneliness, longing and homesickness for a personal place that doesn't exist.

Ashley: That's just amazing to think that that one word can sum up that feeling you've been carrying for such a long time. Yeah,

Emma: it was really important to me that word. And I must, I must speak to a Welsh person again to get the pronunciation correct because I always get it wrong. But yeah.

Ashley: Wow. Yeah. That is so powerful to hear that.

And, and I think one of the reasons why I wanted, apart from to, to look at your beautiful book, is because I think that's so important. Like, you know,

knowing where we belong, knowing where we've come from, whatever that is, you know, whether that's a place in the world, whether that's a family, you know, I always talk about our kids.

We need to make sure they know they've got a seat at the table. And sometimes that might mean, you know, them doing jobs around the house that they know they're needed. They're belong here. We have your back kind of thing. And I think it's so, so important, but particularly for. People who've been adopted.

Emma: Yeah.

Ashley: Like really, it's so important that they have as much information as they can.

Emma: I think so. And I think that society is much better at doing that now. A lot of the work that I do as an art therapist is with adopted children. And the social work teams are so good now at providing that therapeutic support for one.

But also access to things such as life story work. Children will often come as a life story book and I did for my white British side. I, which was really quite unusual back in the 80s. It was, it was. So I had pictures of my mom and my aunties and grandparents and that did give me a kind of rootedness in, in one way, but in another way, it really amplified the not knowing on the other side of like my racial background.

Ashley: And I was gonna say there's that compare and contrast because that's, that's fabulous that you had that. Yeah. And I'm sure your adoptive parents were really, you know, supportive. Yeah. And you were loved. But the, the, the fact that the part that you had was the white path. Yeah. And it wasn't what you look like.

Yeah. You know, and I think we don't talk enough about that.

Emma: And I think growing up in Cheshire as well, you know, it, when I was growing up here, the diversity was much less. Yeah. I think it was something like 98 percent white. So I think that's, that's changing slowly. But surely now. So I think it was, it was really My cultural heritage was really something that I did long for, you know, to be able to explore.

I mean, as soon as I could, I went to Liverpool at university and I started to volunteer in there was a cultural project called the Black E, which was the oldest cultural project in Liverpool. So I learned to cook. That's where I learned about Caribbean food. We did. Games tours with young people in the Caribbean centres and all the different youth centres in Liverpool.

That was the first place where somebody called me sis. And that just kind of sense of community and belonging started to kind of emerge a little bit then. And yeah, I think that's why we wanted to write this story because we all felt quite strongly that there was there was a message that we wanted to share about going on that journey, being brave enough to embark on a journey into the unknown.

Simi's looking for her dad. She doesn't know what he looks like. She wonders about that. Does he look like her? Where is he? You know, is she going to find him? And in the journey, she's doing it alone, you know, and she's got to have that faith in herself that she's kind of strong enough to make her way.

Ashley: And not knowing as well. And I think when you use the words being brave enough, I think that's absolutely right. Because not knowing how you've had,

you've had a beautiful experience, haven't you? But I have been so lucky. And we know that sometimes that doesn't work out. But I guess if I was to actually say it didn't work out, say you hadn't had met the family

and

weren't, or weren't greeted with open arms,

would it

have

still answered some questions for you?

Emma: Definitely. And I did meet my birth mother and it didn't go quite as well when I met her. I met her and we, we had a really lovely experience, but we weren't able to sustain that because of the ongoing problems that she has, you know, so in some ways, again, I was still lucky she was happy to meet me, but it wasn't this kind of fairy tale.

Lovely ending.

Ashley: So we answered some questions, but actually, you know, that's probably as far as it, it was. Yeah,

Emma: that wasn't amazing. And sometimes it is, you know, I initially when I first did the AncestryDNA, I didn't get any close matches. So it took a year. until my sister found me. And that was enough at that time.

You know, if they had never done the DNA test themselves, I felt content knowing what my race was. Well, and you've not actually said, where is your Dominica? Yes. It's the tiny little island of Dominica right at the bottom of the Caribbean. So not the Dominican, Dominican Republic, it's Dominica, which is further down,

Ashley: which is a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful.

Yeah. Tell me a little bit about, because, so I want you to show a few of the pages, if that's okay, just ready, you know, so that when it comes out later in English but,

or, you know, Obviously, you can always get somebody you know if they speak Finnish. Yeah. Right now. So tell me a little bit about, because you spoke then about Simi doing it on her own.

Yeah. What does, what does she look like? As in, is anybody going to look like me? Yeah. On this journey? Yeah. What she, what are the kind of things as she goes through this journey, do you think is going through her mind? Because I think that will really resonate with those adoptees that are listening or those who have got kids, you know?

So what other kind of questions do you think? Simi comes up with as she goes on that

Emma: journey. So there's definitely a question in her mind, you know, does dad want to see her? You know, as she's going on this journey, she really has this deep sense that she needs to find out. But she's unsure, you know, she's, she's worried a little bit, you know, do you, do you look like me?

Do you want to see me? You know she's not sure what she's going to find. So it does take courage for her.

Because there's always

Ashley: that rejection, isn't there? It's that fear that, well, he's not in my life now. So actually, is there a reason for that? Yeah. That he doesn't want anything. So you, you've talked about your sister and two brothers, and you've been to the wedding and stuff.

Did you get to meet your dad?

Emma: I did. Well, funnily enough, when I found everybody, it was, we were still in lockdown so we couldn't actually meet because he had gone back to Dominica to work on rebuilding his mother's house, which had been destroyed in Hurricane Maria. So he thought that would be like

Ashley: your grandma,

Emma: grandma's house.

Yeah, yeah. And when he got their lockdown happened and he was stranded. So he was stranded there for the whole of lockdown. So we met on WhatsApp call to begin with. And then as soon as the lockdown restrictions were lessened and the borders opened, I booked a flight and said, I'm coming.

Very impulsive, you know, but I wanted to go and I kind of said, I'm coming. Would you like to see me?

Ashley: All of those feelings. Was that partly though, that you wanted to see where you were from? The land. I wanted to put your foot there in the land. Yeah. And if, if dad said, yes, amazing, but you were going anyway.

Exactly. Okay, cool. I love that. I found

Emma: where my roots were. I needed to go in. And, and make roots,

Ashley: put your roots down. Yeah, yeah. I love that. So, so Simi gets to meet dad, Emma got to meet dad, which is lovely. How have you built or have you built a relationship? Because you've talked, obviously you have with your sister, because my guess is that, you know, her and her mum, you've, you've all worked really hard on this beautiful, beautiful book.

How, how has that been for you? Have you built, has that been easy? Has it, has, has it been, and obviously you don't have to tell us any personal, but has it been easier than you expected? Has the, have you got the same kind of relationship, say, with your sister? Have you been able to build that with dad or your brothers?

Emma: I feel really, I keep saying feel really lucky, but I really do feel such gratitude to the warmth of the family because I do feel like part of the family. They've just really embraced me which has been so wonderful. But the really nice thing about doing the trip over to Dominica was that we got to spend.

A week together. And my dad drives a mini bus, so he'd bought this mini bus to transport materials to build the roof. He sent me videos of them, chainsawing these big trees down to create a roof to his mother's house. My grandma's house. But also, they didn't have a bus service like we have.

They have lots of little mini buses that go around there. the island and people just kind of flagged them down and jump on. So that's what he does as well while he's there.

So I rode around the island with him going to all the places that Sammy visits for a week and people would just jump on and off the bus as we were going, which was just brilliant because it meant that we got to go in they'd say I want to go to this village and it might be right in the heart of the rainforest.

So I got to see like all these amazing places that are off the beaten track, which we wouldn't have gone to Otherwise but what was really nice was that we were sat side by side because I would sit in the front with him and so there wasn't that pressure, you know, intense pressure. We were looking at the flora and fauna talking about things.

And all of that time, my husband and I said to each other that was that week of embarking on the journey together. It was like. squeezing in, you know, maybe two- or three-years' worth of visits. If he'd have been living in London where he's got a home, we might've gone to visit him, I don't know, maybe three times a year, maybe, you know, we live in Cheshire, he's in London, but we had this kind of intense week together.

Intense in some ways, very, very relaxed in other ways. And it, we got this easy kind of friendship happening. And it was amazing,

you know, he took me to see my great grandmother's house. I'll show you actually, because I did a drawing. of it when I was imagining what it looked like, and then when I got there, it was almost identical to this drawing that I made.

It was really spooky.

Ashley: So there's a real, like, there's a psychological theory that we talk about genetic DNA that comes down, you know, like as women, our eggs are passed down to our grandparents, not parents, mother. But actually, that, that a lot of our memories are. So you, so how amazing that like you turn up and it's like, wow,

Emma: this is,

Ashley: this is what I thought.

I know it was

Emma: really, really spooky. And, and you think about ancestral traumas being passed down as well, don't you? Through the DNA as well. And that was something that I was really quiet. aware of as well, because now that we've got all of the family history, we can link our history right back to slavery.

And that was really, I think, especially being on the island, that was really quite emotional. And there were times when I was there that I did have kind of quite emotional reactions, moments when I was on my own, where I really was kind of feeling a lot of that history and being emerged. Immersed even in the space.

Ashley: Yeah. And, and I guess, so there's a picture in here that you showed me before that is just stunning. So Simi goes to a waterfall. Will you, will you just show that? Yeah. Okay. To those people who are watching, it's one of my favorite pages actually. Those who are watching on YouTube. For those who are listening to the podcast, what I'd really like, you to do Emma is, is that it? Oh there you go, is to just describe it and describe kind of what's going on for Simi in this, in this picture because it is just stunning.

Emma: So in this picture Simi has arrived at Trafalgar Falls, which is another place that we've visited, and they have two, there are two huge waterfalls.

So there's one which is called the Papa, which is the big Tall, tallest one, and then there's the Mama Waterfall too, so it's a dual waterfall, and she's taking breaks, she's been on this journey, she's been to lots of different places, and she needs to cool off, so she stops at the waterfall for a moment to kind of gather her thoughts, and, She's starting to feel tired and she's wondering whether she should keep searching and I stopped here myself with my dad and he kind of stayed back at the viewing area and I went and I sat and meditated in the waterfall while I was there and it was just really It's very, very moving to be there surrounded by the wonderful, wonderful rainforest.

Yeah, because you forget

Ashley: it's rainforest there, isn't it? And also, I guess there's, there's an element of you as you immerse yourself there and around, you know, and in the picture, you can see all the greenery around and the two, you know, the two waterfalls and the height of the papa waterfall and stuff.

And I, like, I, I just imagine you kind of Connecting in. This is where I'm from. This is my, you know, this is my ancestry. And I just really, I guess being thankful that you get the opportunity to do the journey, to meet the family. Yeah, that is, yeah. I definitely had a moment when I was there. Yeah. So tell me a little bit about what was it like when you first met?

Was dad the first member that you met? No, we all went to Margate actually. Wasn't expecting Margate to come out, so we go from Dominique to

Emma: Margate. Okay, go on. So at the time my sister was living in Margate, so she invited us down. So I went with my two youngest kids and my husband and then my brothers came up from London because they were both living in London at the time.

Their mum was living in London at that time, so she came too. And we just met on the beach. And my sister has kids. She had a little baby at the time. So I was lucky enough to meet her baby. Well, he was really little. And yeah, he just snuggled in, had a little cuddle. And it was really, it was a beautiful day.

We were so lucky. We had blue skies and sunshine. All of the kids played together, the cousins. And we just hung out and it was just lovely. Just from the, from the word go. My brother-in-law, my sister's husband, his mum came too. So everybody just wanted to kind of. kind of celebrate that we'd kind of all found each other.

So it really was, you know, the best possible outcome. Yeah.

Ashley: Yeah. But how, how lovely that again, it was near water that can kind of connect back in.

Emma: And there is something about water that I just find so healing. I think people talk about water as being like a purifying element, don't they? It kind of washes things away.

It's about renewal. So yeah, I do think I'm a water sign as well. Very good. Yeah, there's something special about water for sure.

Ashley: Definitely.

And then what was it like meeting Dad? Because I think one thing that really struck me is when you were telling me the story of Simi is, does he look like me?

Yeah. And what was that moment like when you first laid eyes on him?

Emma: And that, funnily enough, I think that's one of the things why this kind of theme runs through the book. One of the things I was most worried about was that when I arrived at the airport that I wasn't going to recognize him. So I wasn't worried about what was going to happen when we met.

I was just really anxious that I wouldn't recognize him when I got there. And that wasn't an issue at all. I recognized him straight away. He recognized me. And it was fine. It was nice.

He'd parked just outside. It's a tiny, tiny little airport. As you're flying in, it's really funny because we've just been back.

I've just taken the children for the first time and all of the kids. Even my grown-up son who lives in London, he came with us too. But as you are flying in to land, it literally feels like the plane's gonna land in the rainforest. . Wow. And my middle boy, he said to me, oh, are we landing in the trees?

but it's such a small airport. So he'd park just outside. So he, he, you know, took one of my bags and we just kind of walked down to the car. And then we, we. It's a little mini bus. So we jumped in the bus and he said, why would you like to go? And I said, let's go to the Kalanago territory, which is the indigenous people.

And he's like, right, brilliant. That's just, it's on the way. So we went and he stopped at the side of the road. You must be thirsty, chopped a, bought a coconut from the seller at the side of the road. And, you know, gave me a gift of, Coconut water, you know, we shared a coconut later. We stopped and he bought some mangoes and he said, I'll show you how we do it.

in the Caribbean and he kind of peeled it and held it in the peel. So none of this kind of chop, I always chop it into squares. But you know, he just peeled it back and we ate it. Beautiful, it was mango season. Wow. So the mangoes everywhere.

Ashley: And that must have been amazing for your children. Like to not only see like, you know, the jungle, the rainforest, but to You know, have coconut to hand.

Yeah. Have a mango, and go, this is the way we do it. Yeah. You know? Yeah. To just have that view, because yes, we live in Cheshire. Yes. It's beautiful. Exactly. But we don't have, you know, and yes, of course we're, we're more diverse and I hope to God we're more inclusive. Mm-Hmm. But. There is that element where, when we go Sainsbury's, they don't peel it for you, do you know what I mean, how amazing for the kids.

Emma: Yeah, so the time I was describing then was when I've gone on my own, but again, we did exactly the same thing the second time we went, and we went, we took them to what would be their great, great grandmother's house, which is a tiny tin and wooden house in the town village of Salisbury. In Dominica, not our source, right?

And in her garden one of our cousins looks after that plot and he's growing all sorts of fruits. So he picked us a ripe passion fruit. There was a pineapple growing and if you've seen the way that pineapples grow, they just look amazing. They're like the crown on top of the, there's a plant.

They're like the peacocks of Drag World. Yeah, they're amazing. So the kids got to see this. Pineapple that was almost ready there were breadfruit, sugar apples and yeah, I think that the, the land, the fruits of the land the water, there were 365 rivers in Dominica, so water is such a huge thing there, all of those things.

are really important things I wanted to show the children. I wanted them to be able to connect with like I had, because I think, especially for my younger two children who are paler skinned than I am, they don't have, they're growing up in Cheshire too, and so they don't have that rootedness. here either.

A little bit more now that we've found our wider family, you know, and so we spend time with them. Whereas my oldest son's moved to London, so he's more kind of immersed within a diverse community. So, and I think for him, it was really important to go on the journey too. He's 24 now and he's grown up with almost his whole life also not knowing about his roots.

So yeah, it was really, really amazing to be able to go and take the kids there this year.

Ashley: And I think really as we're kind of wrapping up, for me, kids knowing where they come from. What their grandparents do, you know, like I talk about my

grandparents a lot because of their you know, aspects that they did in the war and, and things like that, because they're not around to talk about it anymore.

Like my, so that's my grandparents, my mum is not around anymore. It's really important that we get, we connect our children, like we're that hand holding between the generations for them. And I think without us filling those gaps, you know, when we're gone. They've not got those stories, they've not got that sense of belonging, they've not got those roots, you know, and I think it's, it's so, so important that they hear that, that they know who they belong to.

And what would you say, Emma, as we finish to either parents who have adopted children or adoptees themselves? What would you say? Because this is a really brave journey that you went on. Beautifully illustrated by the way in the book, but really brave journey. What would you say to those? parents out there, do you think?

Emma: I think it's; it is about being brave enough to embark on the journey. I think for me, I held back for many, many years. I didn't do that ancestry DNA test for so many years. And then one day I thought I'm going to do it, but it takes a bit of guts. And I think if you've got wider family that can support you in the journey, then really do draw on those resources.

I think that can be really grounding for you while, while you're going through things. And also, I would say the whole time that I was discovering my family, I was lucky enough that I was training as an art therapist. So I was in therapy myself through it all, which I think was really, really useful for me to have a place to go and explore everything that was going on in my inner world.

with somebody else who was not involved was also really helpful and useful.

Ashley: And I think that's really important from, you know, from our point of view as a therapist, we, you know, as often as parents, we think that we need to know everything. We think that we're, you know, the ones that should be able to provide everything for our kids.

Mm-Hmm. And actually it doesn't, it isn't that way. We are not, you know, we are not mechanics fixing cars here. Exactly. These are little human beings. And actually to reach out and get some professional support. Mm-Hmm. And, and what I would say to you is if you are a grownup adoptee. Go and get a specialist.

You know, there are, there's lots and lots of therapists out there that, that specialize in adoption and being able to, you know, they've got the experience and they've got the knowledge to help you answer some of those questions that you're at, that's running around your head that maybe you can ask your adoptive parents.

Emma: Yeah. I find with a lot of the young people I work with who are adoptees, often they want to protect their adoptive parents from the pain of them wanting to have these answers because they feel like it's going to hurt their adoptive parents if they're curious about their past. So it, that can be a, a block, a blockage for them.

So yeah,

Ashley: I've got two cousins who are adopted one who did not want to know anything. Absolutely nothing. Yeah. And, and, you know, and had an amazing relationship with his adoptive parents. Mm-Hmm. , who he called mom and dad and brilliant. And, and he, and you know, they were very open saying, this is where you've come from.

What do you want to do? Blah, blah, blah. He was like, absolutely not. Yeah. I don't, I'm happy. And, and that's okay if that's, if that's your thing. Yeah. I think I've also got. Others who are constant, who've, who've constantly got those questions running around the head and they don't want to turn to mom and dad who they, who they know, who they've grown up with because they, they, you know, I think often we, we think that we're going to reject these and actually it's not the case.

Sometimes you can have it all, you know, where they support you and you never know what's going to happen at the end of that journey. But by the sounds of your story, Emma, it's absolutely worth it, whatever happens.

Emma: Yeah, and I think that's another reason why I like to share about my own experience, because just to kind of give people the courage to kind of give it a go.

And I don't, I always think that you don't have much to lose by embarking on the, on the journey.

Ashley: You've got everything to gain. Because like you say, even like with your biological mom, even if it doesn't work out, it still answers some questions that maybe you had running around your head. And what I would say to those parents

out there that have adopted children, you know, you are their mom and dad that, that have grown them, that have fed them, that have loved them.

And these other people are not going to replace it. They're going to answer questions, aren't they? And that's, and actually I think that is a real gift if you have adopted kids and you support them, you know, and you don't have to do it. young, like this doesn't have to be, but talking about them so that they have a sense of where they've come from, because you're always going to be their North Star, I think, you know, you're always going to be their North Star for them to come to you, but they will still be naturally curious about where they've come from, who do they look like you know, apart from kind of medical questions, a lot of adoptees kind of think about.

Emma: Yeah, I think it just helps you feel like you're more of a cohesive identity once you kind of get some of those questions answered. Kind of a little bit

Ashley: more whole. Yeah. Yeah, I love that. I love that. Thank you so much. Emma, where can we find Anytime. Anytime. Where can we find you? Because Emma is an amazing artist.

I've seen some of her work. She is a brilliant therapist. Please tell us where can we find you if we, if we want to work with you, you know, to just work through some problems because, you know, I talk a lot about talking therapy, you know, that's my bag. However, to be able to do art therapy is a gift. That is a real gift.

And you don't have to be Not at all.

Emma: No, it's not about It's not about perfect pictures at all, it's about the process of exploring with materials, more than anything, and exploring your emotions through different kind of media, yeah.

Ashley: And I think for me, it's really important, particularly for younger people, but for any age, is sometimes we can't, we can't, or we haven't got the words to be able to express how we feel and art therapy gives us those tools and that is such a beautiful thing.

So where can we find you Emma?

Emma: Yeah, so I am at onelifearttherapy.com Almost forgot the ending there. And I'm one life artist. It's on Instagram as well.

Ashley: Brilliant. So we'll put all Emma's details in the show notes. So please check out the show notes and check out the reels that will be coming out.

And obviously we'll send out this on the newsletter as well. Emma, thank you. I feel really privileged and I hope that you as listeners or watchers. Have, have been touched by this story because for me, it's I feel like I've been on a journey with you and Semmi this morning and so yeah, I just want to say thank you very much for sharing.

It is an absolute precious story to be a witness to. So, thank

Emma: you. Thank you. Yeah, well, if anybody is going through something similar and want to contact me, they're very welcome to as well. Oh, that

Ashley: is lovely. Thank you very much. Take care, everyone. Until next time, that's us signing out from the Resilient Kid podcast.

Bye for now.