



## **Episode 46: The Origins of Self-Worth, A Conversation with April Henry, LMFT Associate**

Liz Higgins (00:02):

Hey y'all! Liz Higgins here... And welcome to the Millennial Life Podcast, where my main goal is to share conversations that will inspire you and drive you toward the life and relationship you desire. I'm here to share what I've learned as a licensed therapist and relationship coach, specializing in millennial relationships and wellness, as well as transformative conversations with other professionals. Thanks for listening, and enjoy today's episode!

Liz Higgins: (00:32)

Hey, everybody! I am so excited to be bringing another episode of the Millennial Life Podcast to your ears and your earbuds today. Like I mentioned last time, it's been a long time coming. We took a little hiatus, but it's wonderful to be back, and I'm incredibly excited for today's guest. Miss April Henry is with me today. Hello, April!

April Henry: (00:56)

Hello everybody!

Liz Higgins: (00:58)

So... April is a licensed marriage and family therapist associate. She's a mindset coach, which I think is an awesome thing. She is a self-proclaimed homebody, which I know so many millennials are gonna be like, 'Oh, yes, that's me.' . Yes. Um, she's a couples and individual therapist here at Millennial Life Counseling in Dallas. So April, I'm thrilled to have you here! You've been with our team for, gosh, I can't, I don't know... Five months, something like that.

April Henry: (01:28)

Five months now. Yeah!

Liz Higgins: (01:29)

Yeah. It's been wonderful having you here! You're rocking it with client work and all those things. So as we get started today, I, I love asking this question to people that are therapists and coaches that I come across such as yourself. Uh, what really drew you into this work and this

career path?

April Henry: (01:48)

Yeah, I think, you know... The, the typical therapist answer is, you know, 'my own life experience' right? I'm one of seven siblings, so I come from a family of many, many personalities. Many different family dynamics. And so I think, um, this work was kind of, or my desire to do this work was kind of birthed out of my own life experiences with family and, and life transitions and self-esteem... You know, the topics that we're, we're mentioning today. And so, I'm so grateful and I feel such a sense of gratitude to do this work. Specifically with women. And I am just like, I'm blown away by, you know, individuals' and couples' progress in this space. And so, like I said, I just am really, really grateful to hold this title and, and to know that I'm a, I'm a seed planter in somebody's journey and their healing story. So yeah. I am, I'm, I'm doing this thing .

Liz Higgins: (02:53)

Yeah, you totally are. I love that - a seed planter. I think so often that is the, the privilege and the role that we have in this work with clients, you know? So I, I really like that. What would you say is one of the most rewarding parts of this work for you?

April Henry: (03:11)

Yeah. I think, like, watching your clients transition in the room, right? Obviously, I always kind of tell my clients that the most work, the most significant work is done outside of this space, right? We get 50 minutes with our clients and we handle that time with care. But to come in and see a client using, um, creating new narratives for their lives and, and really stepping into the role that they've mentioned in the space that they want to live out is just so, um, impactful for me as a therapist. And like, it makes me so proud for, for my clients. And, I think it's just important that we're highlighting to our clients that they've done that for themselves, right? And they've made the hard decision to, to be in this space and process emotionally. And, and while we hold space for that, they do the work.

April Henry: (04:06)

And so it is just really an honor to watch them, them grow. And, and that's my favorite part of this process is like, okay... You know, I always tell my clients, this is the, the profession where you really kind of work yourself out of a job . And it's a good thing, right? It's a good thing to eventually see your clients move on and transition out of this space. While we would like to keep them forever, it's nice to know that, that they've gotten what they've needed. They've grown, and they can transition and go be in the world and use the tools that they've learned in the, in the space.

Liz Higgins: (04:40)

Yeah. That is so huge. And you said something a few minutes ago about, like, I, I think alluding to sometimes it can be hard to even enter this space for people. I mean, I don't know. I'm just curious, in your experience, do you hear people share to you, like, what it took for them to come into therapy? Or like, from your perspective, why some people struggle to take that first step to try it out?

April Henry: (05:05)

Absolutely. I think my logical brain says like, we know the statistics, right? I think the statistics say that it takes a client about seven years to kind of ramp up and make the decision to actually

pursue, which it feels crazy to me.

Liz Higgins: (05:21)

I, I was thinking that I'm like so crazy, right?

April Henry: (05:23)

Mm-hmm. Imagine sitting in, in pain for seven years before you make that move. But I think for clients, they, they really have reached a breaking point by the time they're, you know, actually filling out those intake forms and, and coming into the room. And so, I think that also just highlights where your client is in their growth journey, and how eager they are for change when they're sitting in that room, right? Because it takes so much, um, to get them there. And it can be emotionally scary, right? To address all, all the things and, and dump each week or, or biweekly, right, all these emotions. So, I always highlight that for the clients, like how proud I am of them for even making the first step. Even making the call, right? So, right.

Liz Higgins: (06:15)

Yeah.

April Henry: (06:16)

Yeah.

Liz Higgins: (06:16)

No, I think that's huge. I've often found myself going back to reflect on that "stages of change" model, because you just meet people at such different spaces inside of themselves when they come to therapy. Some are still in this, like, super pre-contemplative state. Like, 'I don't trust you. I don't know what this is about. Don't make me go there.'

April Henry: (06:36)

Absolutely.

Liz Higgins: (06:37)

You know, and then others are just ready. They, they've already got their bootstraps on and they're, like, down to go deep fast, and it's like, 'All right, let's slow that down.'

April Henry: (06:46)

. Absolutely. Yeah. It's a slow process. And I, you know, that's something that I also highlight in those earlier stages. Like, 'Hey, you know, um... This is also a process for you to, you know, build a relationship with me and feel the comfort level to share all these personal details about your life.' So we create space for that in the beginning. And like I said, I'm just so grateful to, to be a part of anyone's journey. Right?

Liz Higgins: (07:13)

That's awesome. April. So I know you have experience facilitating coaching and therapy. What are some helpful aspects of each? Because they're kind of different.

April Henry: (07:24)

Absolutely. Yeah. This is the, the common question I get (with mostly my coaching clients) is like, "What's the difference?" Right? And so, in a nutshell, I kind of describe therapy as a space for you to kind of, um, focus on your, your past, in a sense and kind of uproot and create

meaning. Making about different experiences in your life. Obviously in therapy, this is a space where, um, I can assess, I can diagnose, um, mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, um, any types of trauma, that type of thing. Um, and so you're focusing on that in, in developing, creating a space for emotional processing in that. Whereas coaching is more present and future focused. And I, I kind of mentioned this, or have noticed in my own coaching experiences, that my clients who've already been to therapy, and who have done that kind of heavy lifting and that hard work, tend to excel at a faster pace in the coaching space because they have that self-understanding.

April Henry: (08:33)

And so the coaching, the coaching space is a little bit, it's more collaborative and you're focusing on goal setting. And there's accountability and there's a different element of support there. And, you know, obviously as a coach, I get to provide feedback, and I get to give advice, and I get to encourage in a different way than that would look therapeutically. So, um, it's almost like, I wanna be careful when saying this, because coaches, you know, they, they do have a significant role, but it's almost like a bit of a friendship, right? Um, an elevated, elevated friendship, if you will. Whereas the therapy space is more, um, obviously you wanna build rapport and you wanna create connection there, but it just looks, the tone feels a little bit different in the space.

Liz Higgins: (09:22)

It sounds like maybe it's a little more boundaried, like, I don't know if I would use that word. Not that the coaching relationship is unboundaried, but it kind of offers different opportunity to connect, like you're saying, in these elevated ways. Absolutely. It is really different from therapy.

April Henry: (09:40)

Absolutely. Yeah. And I always kind of pitch that we, we have a board, right? So if anything goes wrong, we have a board to respond to, or... Whereas coaching does not. Um, however, you know, I do believe that there are good coaches out there that have good intentions and, and good competency to work, to work with specific client needs. And so I'm happy to be doing that work as well. And I often try to, um, bridge the gap between the two. Even in the therapy space, it's like, you know... My therapy hat is always on, but my inner, my inner coach is like, 'What are we doing outside of the room and how can we be action-based? And clients tend to like that as well.

Liz Higgins: (10:23)

Absolutely. I think I noticed that in the origins of Millennial Life Counseling as a practice, it was like clients were coming to us wanting, like, tangible, actionable ways to make shifts in their life and their relationships. Even those early on in their relationships, they wanted to know like, what are the tools? What are the things we need to know so that we do things maybe differently than how we saw it growing up, or...

April Henry: (10:50)

Absolutely.

Liz Higgins: (10:51)

Like the people around us who we care about who are kind of struggling. Yeah, that makes so much sense. I was so excited when you joined our team and just knowing that you came in with this coaching part of your career kind of already happening and you were doing that and

entering therapy, because there is still some work to be done to bridge that gap, I think, in our field. Some people aren't quite sure, and I think they maybe don't fully understand those differences of each, but I think they hugely compliment one another.

April Henry: (11:20)

Absolutely. I agree. Yeah. And I, you know, I'm, I really appreciate your, your thoughts and feelings about coaching, because it is kind of one of those things in the mental health field where people are like 'A coach? Like, what, you know, what, what is that? What do you do?' Um, and so I think, you know, my coaching skill paired with my, my therapy skill makes it kind of like a superpower. .

Liz Higgins: (11:45)

I love that. Absolutely. Your clinical superpowers. Yes. . So, I know one of the things we wanted to get into a little bit today was some stuff around, like, self-image and self-worth challenges that people struggle with. And I'm imagining both in the coaching and therapy sector for you, this is something that you hear come up for your clients. So how would you define that? Like, just kinda getting into that self-image, self-worth issues, what does that look like?

April Henry: (12:17)

Yeah, you know, I think I, I would kind of generally define self-image as, you know, the ideas or the thoughts and beliefs that someone holds about themselves, right? Um, and this, this ability to, to love yourself through healthy, right, healthy self-esteem is kind of like this ability to, to love yourself through all phases of life, through all seasons of life, um, and all imperfections. And I think working specifically with millennial women, um, I see a lot of self-esteem, uh, underlying self-esteem issues come through in the work. Whether that's what they're coming to therapy for or not. I find that some of their, their growth areas are kind of rooted in this element of low or unhealthy self-worth. And so it's really been my mission to kind of help women navigate that and, and, you know, rebuild that for them.

Liz Higgins: (13:23)

Mm-hmm. I think you brought up a really important point there. It's like, not necessarily the thing they're coming to you to work on. So it... Maybe they have awareness of it or they don't, which is interesting. I don't know, do you have thoughts around, like, how that can maybe get buried? Just even one's awareness that they really hold themselves in low regard?

April Henry: (13:48)

Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, thinking about it, I, I think about like the couples that come in, right? Transitioning a little bit. A lot of times couples are, you know, on intake forms, they're saying, we're coming in for communication issues. Which may be true, but then they get in the room and you realize, okay, there's a little bit of, you know, attachment injury or conflict resolution issues, that type of thing. So specifically with my women, I think they're coming in for relationships and life transition. And, um, I like to kind of coin it as the, the quarter life crisis, right? This identity, um, crisis and wanting to find their purpose. And then when you begin to process with them, you realize, 'Wow, you know... The, the foundation that you've built for, for yourself, which typically is not even rooted in their own beliefs about themselves, but something outside of themselves. You go, wow. Like there's a low self worth there.' And that becomes a foundational piece that helps you rebuild, you know, the career shifts and, um, self-esteem and all the things that come with it. So, yeah, I think, you know, this is, this is big work and, and it's foundational, foundational work.

Liz Higgins: (15:05)

Yeah. I think about, like, maybe a big tree and future focused work or kind of solution focused stuff. Sort of like maybe going into the leaves and rearranging some things, but like you're talking about going deep into those roots Absolutely. Doing some absolutely, some deeper real foundational pieces here. And there was kind of a mic drop moment a minute ago where I was like, 'Oh, that is so true!' Where you said like, sometimes the, the way people feel about themselves isn't even rooted in themselves. It's like from external sources.

April Henry: (15:42)

Yeah, absolutely. And I think that's the, the birthplace of low self-esteem, right? It's that we're allowing other people to define us, and that is what, you know, codependency, lack of boundaries, that type of thing. And so that's how low self-worth kind of shows up with, specifically, my clients. But I'm sure it shows up for different ways for different people or different women. Um, but absolutely. I think a lot of our clients, uh, even before this, we were talking a little bit about, um, backstories and family of origin. And so a lot of times you'll see that parental influence, familial influence or influence from our peers right? Kind of creates this, uh, this identity for ourselves. So in, in early childhood or adolescence, and then you become an adult and you're like, 'Well, dang, who am I? Um, I've allowed these people or these outside external forces to, to define me, and now it's time for me to, to rebuild, and I don't know how to do that, and I don't know where to start.' Right? And so that's where the, the therapy work comes in and the coaching work comes in.

Liz Higgins: (16:55)

Yeah. Because it's almost like you're... that work and that resetting begins with peeling back the layers of the onion and really getting to what's deep inside to determine like, what, what sticks and what fits and what can stay. And what do I need to rewrite and rework?

April Henry: (17:13)

Absolutely. Yeah. Mm-hmm. And that's where we're talking about kind of the, the differences between the coaching space and the therapy space. Like a good coaching client would be, um, anybody, right? But it would be someone who's probably done a little bit of that back work, and therapy, and understands like, 'Hey, I have a little bit of, you know, I have some self-worth issues. I know where that stems from, you know, that's influenced by mom or dad or whomever.' Right? 'But now I'm in a place where I'm, I'm ready to move forward. I'm ready to rebuild my identity.' And then that, that coaching (and the therapy work as well) can be beneficial for that forward movement and, and that future focused work.

Liz Higgins: (18:08)

You know, we were talking earlier about just some of the clients you've seen. And, and I think throughout our practice we see a lot of really successful, driven, millennial individuals. You know, they're doing big things in life. They're kind of self-sufficient and, and managing, you know, life pretty well. Probably from the outside seem to have it all, yet from your perspective, a lot of these people still really grapple with those issues of negative self-image and self-worth. So how do you think that is? I mean, what do you kind of make up about that?

April Henry: (18:44)

Yeah. Yeah. I think, you know, it's important for us to normalize that for, for our clients and for the listeners, right? I think we hold this idea that successful people don't struggle and that they

don't have, um, issues when in reality, they do. Right? And I think that goes back to a little bit of that family of origin work, finding out where that low self-esteem was birthed, right? Although they're driven, although they have, you know, the nice job or the, you know, nice things or what have you, um, there's a little bit of external influence that, that they're trying to navigate and to help rebuild in themselves. And so I think, you know, as adults, this can lead to a struggle of continuing to outsource your worth and, and yes, that's where the work begins.

Liz Higgins: (19:46)

Ooh. And I think that's... Right in that space is where we see so much, uh, like relational pain occur. Absolutely. And people really start to outsource their worth. They're looking outside of themselves for a person, a thing, uh, a number, maybe money, who knows? To fill that hole. There really shouldn't have ever been, been a hole in the first place, maybe, but, yeah.

April Henry: (20:13)

Right. Which leads to some of the, the negative impacts of low self-esteem, is that like, that codependency element. Like, I'm allowing your view of me to be, my view of me, right? And really learning how to, to get away from that. And you may also see that show up negatively for clients, like in, in their inability to create boundaries in their life. Whether that be with family, whether that be in their work lives or in their relational lives, right? With friends, with romantic partners. And so, um, yeah. Helping, helping clients to navigate that, that negative piece is the start of rebuilding.

Liz Higgins: (20:59)

Oh, that's, yeah. And it sounds amazing. I'm sure. Well, I suppose I can personally testify to the fact that it's not always easy.

April Henry: (21:09)

. Absolutely not!

Liz Higgins: (21:10)

But it's such meaningful work that pays off, like for your lifetime, honestly.

April Henry: (21:17)

Absolutely. Yeah. It's foundational, I mean, you know, thinking about the element of self, we kind of get the cliches like, you have to love you before you love someone else. But it's so true, right? I mean, the reality of it is, is that you have to do that self-worth. You have to know who you are, um, in order to be a light to other people and, and build healthy relationships and healthy dynamics in your life. And so, you know, you know, I think, again... I see it a lot specifically with my female or my, my, um, millennial women clients and... Yeah. I just wanna help dismantle that with them.

Liz Higgins: (22:01)

Mm-hmm. So pull us into that a little bit. Like what are some general ways a person can start to change the way they experience themselves or feel about themselves?

April Henry: (22:13)

Yeah. So I, I'm an advocate of studying yourself, right? I think that you have to know the issue in order to, um, help the issue, right? So start being really intentional about studying yourself. What am I thinking? What am I saying about myself? Who am I interacting with? How do I

interact with them? So kind of, like, taking inventory of, of what's going on, right? And then noticing the things that, that work well for you and that don't. And the things that don't work well in relation to your self-esteem, that becomes what you work to change, right? And so I think that comes with challenging your negative self-talk, right? And I believe that, I always kind of tell clients that the first, the, the easiest way to challenge your negative self-talk is just declare the opposite of what you are, you know, repeating in your mind.

April Henry: (23:11)

So if the narrative that you've adopted is that 'I'm unworthy' or 'I'm not smart enough' or 'I'm not pretty enough' or fill in the blank, is really to verbally declare the opposite, regardless if you believe it or not. Right? The brain's powerful. And I believe that verbalizing those things will allow you to create, um, new pathways, right? To, to, um, understand and, and kind of develop new meaning about self, right? So I think that's another way. You have to challenge the negative self-talk. Study yourself. Um, and I'm, I'm really big on visualization activities with my female clients. Like, I wanna know, I, I believe in this idea that women show up in the world as who they are, right? But then they have kind of this internal world that we like to call our higher selves. And so I'm always interested in what her life looks like. What does that higher self look like? And so I'll, you know, do this whole meditative practice with them and put that vision on paper. And that becomes your, your foundational piece. Like, how do we achieve this person? And I think what's unique about that exercise is that clients realize what they're wanting. And the woman that they're wanting to be is so very practical and achievable.

Liz Higgins: (24:38)

Hmm.

April Henry: (24:38)

And they're like, dang, you know, it's not hard to, you know, dress a little bit nicer or, you know, whatever, whatever, fill in the blank, whatever it is for that particular woman. So do a visualization activity with yourself and, and create a picture of your higher self. And then you have kind of like the... What's the quote? Visualize your highest self and show up as her. Like, do it, do that. Yeah.

Liz Higgins: (25:04)

I, I love what you're talking about right there, because I think it also just highlights every single person, everybody listening, every client you work with, anybody that opts in to an exercise like that. And you come up with something there, it just proves you have the capacity for this. Absolutely.

Liz Higgins: (25:23)

It's already in you. Yeah. It's just kind of connecting in to that part of you and letting her take the lead, maybe not those wounded parts.

April Henry: (25:33)

Absolutely. And, and then... Another thing that's really unique about that exercise is always as clients, like, how near or far do you feel from this person? And usually, they don't feel too far from her. So I think that we allow it to live in our head, which makes it feel like it's bigger than us, right? But she is us. And so we have to learn, uh, to embody that. And so I, I try to simplify the process for clients, um, and, and put that on paper for them and allow them to live in that, at least in the room. Like, show up as your higher self in the room. We can, you can role play,



whatever you need to do, but I feel like really leaning into that woman helps you to embody her at your fullest.

Liz Higgins: (26:22)

So I'm gonna experience share really quick because I love that you're bringing up this, like, kind of take those thoughts captive and, and introduce affirmations. I was at, I was working with a financial coach a couple weeks ago, and she was having us do that. She was like, she had some affirmations written and I just thought I was so like, resistant to them! 'Cause they were ones like, money finds its way into my wallet, , I attract money wherever I go. And she's like, you just say these and, like, see what, what you notice and what comes up . And some of them felt cheesy, some of them were pretty, like, vulnerable and insightful, and like I wanted to believe them. But yeah, it's just, it's fascinating doing an exercise like that because it really shows you where you are in terms of your growth. Absolutely. And just the insecurities I felt in trying to like, own those statements. But some were really challenging for me! I was like, okay, so trying to be gentle with myself through that. Yeah. But there's some work to do. I wanna get there, you know?

April Henry: (27:27)

Absolutely. That's so true. I know those affirmations can feel really loony, but like after so long you're like, hmm, you know, I'm, I am getting a little bit more money or what, whatever the case may be, whatever it is for that client. And that makes me think about, as an intern, I used to do a little bit of mirror work with clients and they would cringe at it. And then you'd be surprised at how difficult it is to speak positivity - even to yourself. And so I think I might bring that back for my clients. You gotta get a little bit uncomfortable for, for growth to happen. And so, you know. Yeah.

Liz Higgins: (28:04)

I love it. I can tell that you really enjoyed those experience-based, action-based things in the work with your clients. And, um, oh! And I think that brings me back to something you said at the start of our conversation today, which is like, sometimes, sometimes the transformation - you see it happen with clients in the room, and that's so amazing. And other times, like, I think as therapists and, and for you as coach, like we don't, it's, it's outside of this room. It's back in their world where, like, the real changes and shifts happen. Um, absolutely. So you don't always necessarily see it happening, but like, it can happen in the, in this space, it can happen outside of this space. I think the main point is like, just move into the work. Absolutely. 'Cause it, it will bring benefits.

April Henry: (28:49)

Absolutely. Yeah. And, and that goes back to, you know, the, the comment I made earlier about being a seed planter. I've just gotten really comfortable in being that and knowing that, you know, there's not always going to be significant change that you see in clients, but the work that I do, I hope that I just plant a seed, right? And, and if it needs to bud elsewhere or if it needs to bud in, in the coaching space or with another therapist, I'm completely fine with that. I think, you know, I've done, I've done what I needed to do even if I've just planted the seed.

Liz Higgins: (29:26)

Ah, that's beautiful. Yeah. So for people listening that are maybe feeling really drawn to what you're talking about, but maybe feel a little on the fence or unsure, like, 'Do I need therapy? Do I need coaching? How, how do I even even get started?' Like what would you say to them? If

they're curious?

April Henry: (29:46)

I'd just say lean in. Take, take the first step. Um, and you mentioned curiosity. Be curious. These resources are not anything that you have to jump into automatically, right? There's therapists who do consultations, there's coaches who do consultations, so vet us, right? Find out if, if we're, we're a good fit for you. And, and hopefully the people in this space that you come in contact with, they can help you find what you're looking for as well. And so I'm happy to, to do consults with potential clients and, um, if, if I'm not the person that you're looking for, I'm happy to, you know, guide you in that direction. So I just say lean in and, and really follow, follow your gut. And I think that can only take you, take you up.

Liz Higgins: (30:36)

Oh, that's good. April, thank you so much! You have really shown some wisdom on us today, and I can tell... You are good at what you do, but incredibly passionate about what you do. Which, yeah, I think honestly makes a wonderful clinician and coach. So thanks for joining us today. This is awesome!

April Henry: (30:56)

Thank you for having me. I'm so, so grateful! Liz Higgins (32:17):

Liz Higgins: (31:01)

Thanks again for listening to the Millennial Life Podcast. If you like the show, leave us some stars or write a review. If you wanna get your hands on more information, relationship skills or tools, head over to [millenniallifecounseling.com](http://millenniallifecounseling.com) and check out my free ebook, the Five Relationship Mistakes You're Making, and What to do about them. You can also join the mailing list from there and stay in the loop on updates and new episodes.

Thanks again for listening to the podcast. If you like the show, leave us five stars or write a review. If you're interested in learning more, sign up for my free e-book "The One Barrier to Commitment All Millennials Face" at [millenniallifecounseling.com](http://millenniallifecounseling.com).