

Lindsay Melka on Daniel Sokal

You're listening to the Abundant Practice Podcast. Where we work through the stuck places folks hit while building their private practices. Each week we dive into a practice building through different lenses. You'll get trainings, listen in on mini-consultations and conversations with other consultants. Each month there is a niche deep dive where we flush out a niche from a marketing perspective. Plus every now and then we throw in a "Where are they now" episode, and check in on the clinicians who were on before to see how the advice played out. When relevant, the show notes will include a worksheet for you to bring the content into your practice or life. Because I love you listening, but I want you to take action, too.

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Welcome to the Abundance Practice podcast. I'm your host Allison Puryear, from [AbundancePracticeBuilding.com](#). So first of all I have a little bit of an announcement before we dive into my conversation with this awesome consultant about my conversation with Daniel last week. This has to do with a consultant that's on here waiting patiently for me to finish my sentence.

So, Lindsay Melka, you guys, if you follow the podcast, you heard her on episode [17.1](#), we'll put that in the show notes in case you missed it. She's also guest [blogged](#) for Abundance. She has been a consultant client of mine. She has killed it in building her practice. She just gets the stuff. She puts herself out there in ways that aren't always comfortable. But not excruciating, right Lindsay? You wouldn't say any of it is excruciating?

Okay, good. So she's challenged herself is what I'm saying. She's really built an amazing, beautiful, very comfortable practice. And she is joining Abundance Practice building as a consultant. So, if you guys are wanting some help getting started, a pick your brain session with Lindsay might be exactly what you need. She is going to be answering whatever questions you show up with and it's going to be awesome. I'm really, really excited to have her on the team, and excited to re-introduce her to you guys. Hey Lindsay.

**Lindsay:** Hi Allison. This is so supporting.

**Allison:** yay! To show you guys a little bit about how Lindsay thinks and beyond the ways we've already had her in the Abundance family, I wanted to have her on to have her talk about Daniel and kind of the niche conversation that he and I shared. And some other things she might add to the conversation. So where do you want to start?

**Lindsay:** I listened to the podcast with Daniel a couple times. And some of these things kept coming up for me. I had a lot of questions I wanted to ask him. And there were some things I noticed he said that I really wanted to dive in and get more information about. So, I guess I could start with what I felt like he was looking for. What I heard. I can start there.

He had mentioned he really likes working with people that are super dedicated. They are really self-aware. What I heard, and put together in my head with my own words was that they look good, and

they probably are doing really good, but they feel there is something deeper, something hidden, maybe unconscious, that needs to be worked through. Maybe something that is yet to be revealed. He had said that he really likes working with people who are open to doing deeper work. It sounded like a lot of his clients had already been in therapy. So, that would lead me to, I don't know, just think about people that are ready to go to a different level in therapy. And he's a psychoanalyst, so, that's great.

What I saw that he didn't really say, and I could be off, but I was hearing him talk about people that maybe are looking for relationships that could be better. He had mentioned that he really likes working with clients that have narcissistic loved ones. And I don't know if he said father specifically, but basically he liked working with people that were involved in some kind of relationship with a narcissist. So, that can look like a lot of things. I know that with some of the clients I have worked with in similar situations, they might have really unfair boundaries. They might not know what a healthy relationship looks like. They are always searching to perfect themselves. I was thinking of folks seeking self-identity or self-actualization. And I think I wrote you, and when I was talking about this podcast, that that might be too heavy. But, that's kind of the clientele I think he's working with.

**Allison:** yeah, the pretty heady clientele who already are going to know the terms "self-actualization".

**Lindsay:** Yeah. And he doesn't have to use that term. But they might. They might know it. It's just like they are looking for a sense of self. I know adult children of narcissists often have shame, insecurity, they might be overachievers, love is conditional. So maybe he could somehow advertise to clients that you are looking for relationships where you can be yourself and be safe. Something in that realm [unknown 05:30.40] might help.

**Allison:** Yeah, that conditional love piece feels like such an intense pain point to me.

**Lindsay:** Yes. I feel like that's a good point. That there's probably something in there, like talking about the aspiration of what they want in a relationship, but also the ways in which they got this pattern of seeking people that they are never going to be good enough for.

**Allison:** Right. Exactly.

**Lindsay:** Because what came up, for me, and I think he had said this, too. I don't know if many people are aware that there's a narcissist in their life. Or that they were raised by one. They just might notice that they have to work so hard to be accepted. And that they are seeking that unconditional love. They don't know why. And he might have gotten to that point with some of his clients. So, he could look at that specific area, like looking for the pain points in that arena. Should I go on?

**Allison:** Yeah, go for it.

Lindsay: Okay. So, he said that he loves working with people who are hard working. That he had a lot of blue collar clientele. He works with some professors. So what I thought of was maybe they are working really hard, and that might be how they are earning love from people? I don't know. But what is it about that population? Because I think of professors and blue collar workers as different. But there are some similarities. I just don't know what that is, but it might be helpful for him to get clear about these people. To me, it just means they work hard. Both of those. So that might be a part of what he's attracting.

Another thing I wanted to mention is maybe people are unaware of the fact they are attracting certain people in their lives like a narcissist. So, if they are dating a narcissist or married to one or a friend that's a narcissist, do they have any part of that? I don't know. Might be something to look at.

**Allison:** Right. And I wondered too, if just recognizing the fact is like a first thing. So it could be blog posts or blogs. He's doing blogs. So, it could be a blog of like one of them is Signs that one or more of your ex's were narcissistic. Here's some patterns you may see in your relationships. And similarly the sign you were raised by a narcissist, this is how it manifested. Just like, this stuff he knows well, because these are his people. He knows his clients really well. So he knows the specific struggles they based on their relationships with those folks with narcissism. So having some blogs specific to those pain points and a call to action at the end.

**Lindsay:** And it's definitely a hot topic right now.

**Allison:** Oh yeah. And maybe he could specify that he's an expert as a psychoanalyst than working with a personality disorder. Some people might know what a personality disorder is, but if there's some way he could highlight his specialty, because there's so much fluff out there about narcissism.

**Lindsay:** Yeah. I like that idea. I also think he could either talk about this on his website or write a blog about what is freedom from a narcissistic person look like? Because he said that he really likes working with people who have gotten to the point where they are free from the chains of a narcissist. How would you market that to people who want that freedom? How did he get them in there? Or I think he had said they had gotten there already.

**Allison:** I think he could be really careful about how he words it so that its extremely clear that when he's doing, when he's working with people they are no longer in the home of these folks. So it could be, his call to action, to end, after saying how you could leave, or what the freedom would look like or whatever, he could say once you are free from the clutches of the narcissistic partner or parent, I would love to help you find your new normal. Or something like that.

**Lindsay:** I agree. I remember a while ago, I had to do a special training working with narcissist and borderline personality disorder and I remember the thing that stuck out the most was them saying, if you've just been in the room with a narcissist, you'll know. You'll know how you leave the room how you feel. So, I'm wondering, too, if that could be a way to hit the pain point. If you feel belittled or you feel like you've been manipulated. If you feel less than. And you don't know why. And taking things personally. And so on and so forth. I think that could be a really good place for him to attract people.

**Allison:** Absolutely.

**Lindsay:** I wonder if he works with therapists. Because I know personally, a lot of therapists have to work with actual narcissist and it can be really difficult. And some people like it. But that would be something to look at.

**Allison:** Yeah, that's an interesting thing. Because while it might not be in their home. It might be somebody else who specializes in narcissism. And when we see one type of client over and over, some of their consistent issues can help us struggle with our own reactions to those. Our own counter transference.

**Lindsay:** Yeah. So I had a few more questions I wanted to ask him. I wanted to know how his client's relationships change through working with him. Because you were talking a lot about relationships. And I am just wondering how he could advertise the end goal. You can't guarantee that your relationships will be amazing after working with me. But, saying something about what will be different. Also, he had mentioned he likes working with people who have been parentified. Or have parents that want to be best friends with you. So, I was curious, what is it about those clients that is attractive? What is it about the clients that have narcissistic dads or moms that he likes so much?

And I think they both tie really well into self-identity, again. If your parents isn't a parent and is a friend, that can be confusing.

**Allison:** It would. And we see this in our clients in so many different ways. So I think another thing he wanted to distinguish is how is that different than a client that didn't grow up with a narcissist but was parentified for other reasons.

**Lindsay:** And I know working with people that have been parentified, it's so difficult for them to talk about it. Because usually they really like their mother, they just feel really awkward talking about them being such a good friend. And I hear that a lot. I wish they would just be a dad. I wish they would just not tell me about things that make me feel uncomfortable. When people get really awkward about it. So if there's some way he could relate that feeling, it would be helpful.

What I really wanted to know, I mean I love questions, but the thing that really stuck out was that he said he had great referrals upstate, and he got really excited when he talked about it. And that they send him his ideal clients. And I would love to know what those people are thinking when that person walks in the door. Like ah, this would be perfect for him. What are they seeing? Because it's working. Because he said, oh, they send me my ideal clients.

**Allison:** Oh, that's such a good question! Like if you were to go to them and just ask them that. He could use that! Sometimes we are so in our head about our own practices and to have that former supervisor, that colleague say, oh yeah, well I know when they are X, Y and Z, they are perfect for you.

**Lindsay:** Yeah. And I don't know, maybe they know, oh this guy has a narcissistic father. But I don't know. I'm sure it's much richer than that. I don't know if when you were my consultant, if you had me ask people to describe me in three words? Or did I get that somewhere else?

**Allison:** Maybe. Because that's something I've done before. Like when I was starting Abundance, I did that.

**Lindsay:** Yes. It's really uncomfortable to be like, compliment me. Tell me nice things about myself. It's really weird, but it's really helpful. I think asking those people, the faculty upstate, would be kind of cool. And they might have connections to the university where he is now. I don't know. But how would people describe him and his practice.

**Allison:** Awesome.

**Lindsay:** In terms of networking, my specialty is shame and low self-esteem. I didn't really know what specialist to go to outside of a therapist that would really deal with that. But, I kind of turned it around and reframed it, and I think pretty much everybody comes across clients who have low self-esteem. They may not see the shame, but...

**Allison:** We know the truth.

**Lindsay:** For Daniel, I think he could really network with so many people. He could go to all different types of physicians and just share what he does. I know when you network, you are supposed to ask them how they work. And then maybe he can input how he helps. But he wouldn't have to go to a specific provider. Like a gynecologist or a nutritionist. He could go to all of them. So, that's what I did. I went to a gynecologist. I went to a nutritionist. I went to a chronic pain clinic. Because I don't think that these providers will know if they have clients that have narcissistic loved ones in their lives? I mean, maybe they do. But they'll know when they see relationship stress or marital discord. Or maybe people that just have low self-esteem. And maybe it looks like stress, our body, or depression, or all sorts of things. And [Unknown 15:07.9] inflow of calls, which will happen, he can still decide if it's a good fit or not.

**Allison:** Yeah. And I think, I would also encourage Daniel, and anybody out there listening who is still working on this niche thing to kind of hone in on if there's a tell of some sort. Like when they think about their ideal clients. And there is some specific thing that they deal with that their non-ideal clients don't. So my ideal clients are similar to his as in they are extraordinarily hard working. But might have a lot of pride in that busy-ness. They have, with the overachiever in them, because my people are always trying to be loved by doing, as well. Like describing that in the words that they use can be incredibly transformative for them. And because most of the time they just think they are hard workers. And they've always been praised for it. And it's in this positive feedback loop. It's actually running them into the ground. So he has an opportunity to find this common thread among his people that he can talk about in a blog. Or have on the home page of his website. Or something like that, that helps clearly define them. And it might be something that shows up medically. Like they might be some medicizers, and they are all coming in with stomach aches. Or nausea due to anxiety. Or whatever. So exploring how things manifest within his ideal clients could point him in the direction of different care providers.

**Lindsay:** Yeah. There are so many people that he could reach out to.

**Allison:** Yeah. Right.

**Lindsay:** I think, too, if people are really feeling with parents that have poor boundaries. Parents with personality disorders. It's been around for a while. So their whole life. So somehow marketing to that. There's just something deeper. Something isn't right. Or as resolved. But that's back to the niche, not so much networking. That just came out.

**Allison:** Awesome. I agree with you. There are enough narcissists out there, unfortunately, that yeah networking with whomever with probably yield some referrals once they really get to know Daniel.

**Lindsay:** Yeah, and another thought. Just keep coming. I mentioned of the possibility of him working with therapists. It would be great for him to network with therapists and psychiatrists. Because in my practice, I have encountered clients that I don't feel are that great of a fit for. And I feel it in session. And I always wish I had someone like him to refer these people to. I just don't know very many people. So he, I think, could really stand out within the mental health community. Because it's such a specialty. Both, working with the personality disorders and doing psychoanalysis. I would love to know one here.

**Allison:** [Lindsay was speaking at the same time....17:57.5]

Empathic Counseling, Denver? What is it?

Lindsay: Counseling and Psychotherapy is the long version.

**Allison:** Well, Lindsay, thank you so much. I think this is going to be really helpful. I talked about Niche Blitz, that is something that's happening, I guess it's happening when this airs tomorrow and the next day. So if there are still spots, check it out. It's [Abundancepracticebuilding.com/blitz](https://abundancepracticebuilding.com/blitz). It's a great way to have a one on one conversation with yours truly to help you clarify what your niche is. Check it out again, [abundancepracticebuilding.com/blitz](https://abundancepracticebuilding.com/blitz). And Lindsay, thank you so much!

**Lindsay:** Thank you for having me!

**Allison:** Yay.

Thanks for joining us on the Abundance Practice Podcast. Check out this week's show notes for relevant links, resources and homework. If you're new to private practice, check out the free checklist you need to get started at [Abundancepracticebuilding.com/checklist](https://abundancepracticebuilding.com/checklist). And if you need more support, check out the Abundance Party at [abundanceparty.com](https://abundanceparty.com). See you next week!