

Episode 51: Finding the Courage for a Career Change: Where to Begin (SLP Spotlight)

Meet Sara Schmuckler, a speech-language pathologist who specializes in voice and recently made the jump from a full-time clinical position to starting her own private practice. In this episode of The Missing Link for SLPs, Sara reveals what her journey has been like so far and delves into how she made the brave decision to change her career path.

Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. Tell us who you are and what you do now. Why are you a speech pathologist? What's your speech pathology story?
2. After you graduated, where did you go and what did you do? Tell us about your early experience as an SLP.
3. Tell us about your journey from the time your clinical fellowship ended to what you're doing now.
4. What is it like now that you have your own private practice? What were some of the biggest challenges you had while starting?
5. What are some of your favorite voice resources?
6. What are some words of advice that you would give the speech pathologist who wants to break off into private practice or become a voice specialist like you?
7. What is one client or patient that you will never forget?
8. How did you make the brave decision to change your career path?
9. If you could sum up what being an SLP means to you in one word, what word would that be?

Quote of the Conversation

"We have the ability, under one title, to reinvent ourselves as clinicians. I mean, and also from a treatment standpoint, when something doesn't work, what do we do? You know, we have all of this experience, so we adapt and we reinvent our approach until we find something that works. And that can be just within one session. We're constantly reinventing ourselves as clinicians. As human beings. As people who want to help other people." -Sara Schmuckler, M.S. CCC-SLP

Sara Schmuckler, M.S. CCC-SLP

Speech-Language Pathologist, Founder/Owner of On Your Voice



Sara Schmuckler is a speech-language pathologist and founder/owner of On Your Voice LLC, a private teletherapy practice currently serving Pennsylvania that specializes in voice disorders as well as speech, language and communication deficits for pediatrics and adults. Sara received her Bachelor's in Theater from Temple University, pre-graduate certificate in Communication

Disorders from West Chester University and Master's in Speech-Language Pathology from Towson University. Sara is certified in LSVT LOUD and LSVT eLOUD and is a Certified Lingraphica Technology Specialist. Sara recently made the leap into private practice to have more control and flexibility in her schedule and allow her to specialize in the therapeutic areas that she is passionate about.

Sara is grateful to be working from home now and able to spend more time with her husband, Seth, their almost 2 year old daughter, Talula and Labrador, Rosie.

Keep the Conversation Going

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To the speech path student, one of the biggest pieces of advice I could ever tell you as a student is to advocate for yourself and to work hard. Don't be afraid to ask and question your professors in a way that is respectful. Asking questions is how you can learn and grow.



Thank you for listening to *The Missing Link for SLPs* podcast! **If you enjoyed the show, I'd love you to subscribe, rate it and leave a short review.** Also, please share an episode with a friend. Together we can raise awareness and help more SLPs find and connect those missing links to help them feel confident in their patient care every step of the way.

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Mattie Murrey

Everybody loves a good story, and today's podcast is just one of the best stories of all. You're going to meet Sara, who is a voice specialist. And about a year ago, she and I called [and] chit-chatted. And within just a few minutes, she started crying. And she was just upset with her work setting, and was wanting to smooth her career out and go where she wanted it to go. So, here we are a year later. She has done her vision board. She's done her business planning. She's done what she's needed to do. And she has now launched and opened her own private practice. So, I'm excited to introduce you to Sara, who is the owner of On Your Voice Private Practice Voice Therapy.

Mattie Murrey

Hello, and welcome to The Missing Link for SLPs podcast. I'm glad you're here. Today's episode is part of the SLP Spotlight Series, where I talk with SLPs in a variety of SLP positions and settings, doing things that we knew SLPs did, but also working in areas that we've never thought or heard of SLPs working in. It is amazing the opportunities these SLPs have taken and where their careers have gone. This is storytelling time.

Mattie Murrey

So Sara, you and I have known each other for how long?

Sara Schmuckler

Oh gosh. I don't even know now. It almost feels close to a year. It can't be that long, but it was definitely pre-pandemic.

Mattie Murrey

Yes, it was pre-pandemic. My gosh. I guess that's how we mark our time nowadays. I remember meeting you because you sent me an email. You were just so frustrated at your job. And you were looking for resources and ways to take your career the way you wanted it to go. So, tell us who you are and what you do now. And why are you a speech pathologist? What's your speech pathology story?

Sara Schmuckler

I guess, starting at the beginning... It's a long story and kind of not a straightforward one. Really, it started with my younger brother. He is three years my junior. He has Down Syndrome and autism. So, I was always aware of speech therapists. I inherently kind of became an SLPA of sorts for him when I was just a little kid. But then, fast forward to high school, I was a leading player in a production of "Pippin," and I suffered severe laryngitis, bronchitis, [and] a whole bunch of other things. And I lost my voice, really secondary to vocal overuse and misuse as a young singer who was really involved in every aspect of singing in choir. In shows. In regional competitions if I could. So, my parents took me to see a laryngologist, and I received voice therapy, which I absolutely loved. And that was my first introduction to voice therapy. I didn't even put together at the time that that kind of profession was the same thing that I was doing with my little brother when I was a kid. I just remember being so upset, though, when I couldn't



keep going to see them because they said, "Well, you're better. Sorry." But I just felt like I was learning so much, and I was growing so much. So, I guess being a speech therapist was always in the back of my mind as sort of a someday, maybe type of thing. But ultimately, I pursued musical theater. I went to a conservatory for performing arts, and then I ended up transferring to Temple University, where I continued to pursue my theater degree for undergraduate work. But I also did a side class for phonetics and phonology. What's sort of funny about that is, we were required to do a course that was outside of our major. And I was in communications and theater. That was in communications and sciences. And I had to petition to say that it was different from what I was doing. I believe, at the time, some of my professors said, "Well, it's just still a communications field. That's really not outside of your scope of what you're doing right now." And so, I had to really... I think I actually put together a formal proposal to say, "No, no, no. This is different. I want to learn this, I swear."

So, then I went and I did this phonetics and phonology course. And it was so much fun. Really, I worked so hard. And it was one of those things that, like, you know that you're really proud of yourself after working really hard on something that you maybe didn't get at first. And then, at some point, it just clicks. And then, you just feel like, "There's something right about this. Something jibes about this." It was really cool. So, I got my degree at Temple. I performed professionally in the city for about two years, and I quickly learned that lifestyle was not for me. I was also directing and teaching theater at the time in an after school program, and I had several kids who had pretty severe speech sound disorders. And I remember they wanted so badly to be cast in the lead of the shows, but you could barely understand anything that they were saying. So, I felt really bad. And, at that time, I also knew that I... I just got this sense that I had more to offer than what I was doing, and especially, these kids that I was working with sort of triggered that in my mind. I wanted to kind of go to their parents and say, "You know what? He's got this issue. He's not really able to say his Rs. Maybe you should go see somebody about that." But I felt like it was not my place to say that. So, that kind of was my trigger to go back to school and do my undergraduate prerequisites to get into grad school. Because I didn't have all of the courses that I needed. So, I went to West Chester University, and I did a one-year pre-graduate certification program to get my undergrad prerequisites, and immediately applied for grad school that same year. And then, I went to Towson University for my Master's. And that's how I became a speech therapist.

Mattie Murrey

Wonderful. So Sara, after you graduated, then where did you go? What did you do?

Sara Schmuckler

So, the next thing is obviously CF before you get your Cs. But I think when I graduated, I didn't quite think about the next steps enough, other than needing to get my CF in order to get my Cs. It seemed very clear cut like that, and that my decision about where I was going to do my CF didn't quite matter. And I think that came from both an internal feeling of fear that I wouldn't get a CF placement, and also, some of the verbiage that I was getting from some of my supervisors in school, that was sort of, "Yeah, it's really hard to get a CF that you want. So, if you



get something in slightly, you know, maybe next door to the type of thing that you want to do, then you should take it, and you can take those next steps later." So, I think the pressure of feeling like I had to find a placement right away — so that I could get my Cs, so that I could start working professionally — I took the first thing that came my way. I think another thing was, I really wanted to continue working with adults. I loved working with kids, but I'd also been given this fear instilled in me that it was much harder to get an adult placement than it was to get a pediatric placement. So, I knew that the second I got an opportunity to do an adult placement, I was going to take it.

And my other constraint in my mind was, I had gone to school two hours away from home. And I knew that I wanted to move back home to be with my husband and to be near my family for my CF. So, I ended up taking something that I think was less than what I had hoped for. It didn't turn out to be a very positive environment. I didn't have really good CF supervision and support. And I actually ended up leaving my first CF after three months because I just couldn't take it anymore. And I found a pediatric placement because I just needed to move on and get something else. And I still have that mentality: Get your Cs and be done so that you can actually do what you want to do. So, that pressure and that fear of not getting anything and not being able to fulfill your Cs... I think if I went back, I would have given myself time. I remember meeting a couple people at the time who said, "Oh, yeah. I'm not rushing into my CF. I'm looking around. I really want to get this specific thing. So, I'm going to wait for it." But I think that I just wasn't ready for that. You know, I had already had my undergraduate degree. I had already followed a different career path for a while. This was kind of a new path. I was older than a lot of the kids in my class. So, it just felt like I had to keep moving forward. It didn't matter which way. I just had to keep moving. I couldn't wait. So, I think I would wait. I think I would wait until the right thing came along.

Mattie Murrey

So, after your three months, you switched. And you did eventually finish your clinical fellow, obviously, because you have your Cs. The reason I asked you on this show is because you and I met because you came to me for some coaching. You said, "I'm not happy. This is really what I want to do." And you're doing it now. You've started doing it. So, how was your journey between when your clinical fellow ended and what you're doing now?

Sara Schmuckler

That's a hard question to answer. So, after I did my pediatric placement, I really pushed to get back into an adult placement. So, I was in a skilled nursing facility for the past three years. But I still felt like something was missing. It was a great job, but I wasn't the kind of therapist that I knew that I could be, or that I wanted to be. And you know this, but when we started talking, I had started searching for jobs. I had been searching for jobs for probably over a year already. But honestly, the job hunt kept bringing me the same kinds of things, the same kinds of settings that I already knew that I didn't want to be in — kind of more sniffs and more contract school placements. But then, I just kept looking, and I don't even remember where I found you. But do you remember the first time that we talked, and I literally bawled my eyes out to you? I had no



idea of who you were, but I knew that you were a speech therapist and that you were listening to me, and that you understood where I was coming from. And I'm pretty sure that you asked me something like, "Well, what do you love to do?" Or, "What do you envision yourself doing as a therapist?" Or at least that's how I interpreted it, and that's how I remember it. And you showed me this vision board. You have so many boards filled with post-it notes of your life's goals. And you told me to get a pack of post-it notes and write down every goal and dream — for both professional and personal — that I had ever imagined for myself, that maybe I'd pushed off to the side.

And it's funny, because as I was going through and writing all these things down — it's funny, right now, I have a vision board full of post-it notes right to my right. as I talk to you — and the majority of the things on there are voice related, or voice therapy related, which is something that I wasn't really having a whole lot of opportunity to do. So, you helped me come up with a plan. I'm not saying that you told me to quit my job because you didn't tell me that. But our chats did help me to see that there were a million ways to be a therapist, and that I should stop imagining and just do it. So, I guess that didn't mean that I wanted to start a private practice, per se. That's not really where we ended up after I decided to quit my job. But what it did mean is that I knew that I needed to figure out a way to become a voice specialist. And there aren't a lot of voice specialist job openings being handed out left and right, like there are for other contract-type jobs. So, we talked more, and I realized that the only way that I was going to get the experience and the skills that I wanted was to do it and create it myself. And that led us to private practice. And you gave me some resources, and you gave me names. And I started researching and looking around until I found a program that really resonated with me. And I signed up and I did it.

Mattie Murrey

Did you go through The Independent Clinician, Jena Castro-Casbon's program?

Sara Schmuckler

Yeah. She's wonderful with private practice. Yeah, her start group, START Private Practice.

Mattie Murrey

I brought you through the program with the post-it notes and the vision boards because that's what I did. I was, for a few years, very unhappy with a bunch of things that had been happening in my life. And I decided I just was done being unhappy. And that's why I brought you on. I think I said that earlier. You are an example of somebody who... This is the career that you've wanted to do since you were young. You petitioned for it in college. You fought for it. You dreamed for it. You worked for it. You paid for it. And now you're making those brave steps toward making the career that you want. So, you have your own private practice. It's a new private practice, but you've had success. Tell us about that.

Sara Schmuckler



Well, I wouldn't say that it's a success quite yet. But yes, I do own a private practice. It's called On Your Voice, LLC, and we are doing solely teletherapy. And we are trying to treat adults and pediatrics for voice, speech, language, and communication. And when I say we, I hired a contractor because I felt like my skill set in pediatrics was not as strong as it used to be. And because I'm spending all this time really focusing in and honing my voice skills, and some other more adult-related areas of interest, I wanted to make sure that I focused on that. But I know so many people who have children. I'm a mom. And I hear concerns all the time from people that I know, saying, "Oh, my kid has this. My kid is having this issue. What should I do about it?" And I wanted to confidently say, "You know what? I have somebody for you." And so, I called up a friend of mine, and I hired her as a contractor. So, we have now... I have three clients, and she has one on the horizon. And they're not all exactly specifically voice related, and what I hope to be focusing in on, but again, I like a lot of different areas.

Mattie Murrey

What were some of the biggest challenges you had starting?

Sara Schmuckler

Well, I think some of the biggest challenges are just doing some of the logistics of it. Figuring out your name. What are you? What do you stand for? Who is it that you do want to treat? So, some of those logistics were hard at first, but Jenna Castro's program, again, really took you through the steps to get to that point. And honestly, now that all of those things are done, that seems like just a blip in time. And now, here I am, ready to practice, and I need people to come see me. So, I do think that the biggest challenge, the biggest hurdle that we've come up against, is marketing, and really trying to understand social media in a way that I've never used it before, other than just for fun photos and interacting with people. Now I'm trying to convey a message on a regular basis and have a voice in a very specific way. And it's really challenging. And the other issue, when you're really trying to get a niche of people, is to communicate with doctors and communicate with physicians. And the best advice that I've been given is to create personal relationships with people. But the challenge there is that it's really hard to get past the front desk staff. You can send all you want, but you never know if that stuff's actually getting to the doctor, I have addressed things personally to doctors, hoping that maybe the front desk staff would, you know, follow legal rules and not open mail that has somebody else's name on it. For some reason, I don't suspect that's happening. Because I don't really hear back from people. And granted, we're in a crazy, crazy time. And I don't expect any physician to stop what they're doing when they get a letter from me and then want to set up a Zoom call. But it's definitely a challenge to get through that door. So, I'm trying to use local referrals. The people I have now are all friends of friends. They're not people that I've gotten from physician referrals, but I'm hoping to be able to use my time with them to then connect with their doctors, to go back to their doctors and say, "Hey, we have a mutual patient. I just wanted to give you an update on how they're doing in therapy." And hopefully, that'll kind of give me a foot in the door for potential clients in the future.



Mattie Murrey

Right. Right. And they will come. I noticed, starting the Fresh SLP business, it's slow. But if you keep that quality and that passion and that communication, it'll grow. What are some of your favorite voice resources?

Sara Schmuckler

So, my new favorite resource — I think I just told you about this — and it's called Laryngopedia, which is by Bastion Medical Media. It's basically a virtual encyclopedia of voice disorders and head and neck disorders with pictures, videos, descriptions. It's amazing. It's super user-friendly. It's educational. So, that would be more of the educational standpoint. From a clinical perspective, I really love Pratt. I think Pratt gets a lot of credit, and I think it should. For those who don't know, it's a free program that you can record or import sound files and do acoustic voice analysis. So, it's a lot of fun to mess around with. I make my husband record weird voices sometimes so that I can analyze them and prep, just to kind of see what it looks like.

Mattie Murrey

Train your ear?

Sara Schmuckler

Yeah. To train my ear. I mean, I do voices too. You know, I like trying to mimic "Sesame Street" characters and seeing what that looks like. Because that's what my daughter watches all the time now. But yeah, I use it for voice evaluations. And during therapy too, as really good feedback.

Mattie Murrey

Have you seen Kristie Knickerbocker's vocal fold poster?

Sara Schmuckler

I have, yeah. It's beautiful.

Mattie Murrey

I love that. When I do voice therapy, I carry clinic one day a week. And I sit with my voice patients and show them, "This is what this looks like." You know, like [with] muscle tension dysphonia, "This is what's happening with your vocal folds. So, relax." I wouldn't say it that way, but I just love having those visual cues for those visual things. Any other favorite resources you like?

Sara Schmuckler

Well, the other area that I really love treating is aphasia. And I am a Lingraphica-certified technician. So, I have a skill set with a lot of their devices. And they have a ton of free apps that you can use in therapy. I'm not able to use them right now in the setup that I have. I hope that, at some point, if I'm able to connect with more people in the aphasia community and start to



get referrals that way, that I can find a way to do it more digitally. But Lingraphica — all of their supplies, both their physical devices and their free apps — are really, really wonderful for communication purposes.

Mattie Murrey

What are some words of advice that you would give the speech pathologist who wants to break off into private practice or become a voice specialist like you?

Sara Schmuckler

Well, I think that depends on the situation that they're currently in. So, if they haven't already found a CF, I would say, keep applying to voice clinics. Be open to traveling a great distance to get that kind of education. I think that's really valuable, and that's something that I wish that I had had. If you do have a secure CF in a voice clinic, then, way to go! You're already on a great track. And if you're past that point already, like me and still want to do it, just start taking CEUs in voice. You can follow voice-related fields on social media. There's a lot of really good, free information out there. It's actually really easy to find once you start looking. Network. I know that's like a hot-button word, but... It's a hard thing to do, but it does work. When you see something you like, especially on social media, comment on it. Repost it, and then tag that person. They will see it. And then you've made a connection. In the past few months that I've been this owner of a private practice as an SLP, on my own as an autonomous SLP, I've met more speech therapists across the country, or the globe even, than I have in my past six years in full-time settings, being a full-time speech therapist. So yeah, connect. Read textbooks as much as you can. I don't have a ton of time to read, but I'm in the car a lot. So, I have textbooks on audiobook. And it can be a little dry at times. And it's a little hard to listen to a textbook when you have Siri reading it to you. But sometimes it's the only way you can kind of infuse the information into you. So, yeah. Not when my daughter's in the car. She doesn't like it.

Mattie Murrey

No, maybe a little bit above her head. "Sesame Street" vs. textbooks. So, what is one client or patient that you will never forget?

Sara Schmuckler

That's hard. I definitely have more than one that comes to mind. But in regard to voice, one that sticks with me was my first official voice client in my graduate school clinic. My supervisor taught me about resonant voice therapy. And she really let me take the reins with the treatment, which was super exciting. Our client was so motivated and excited to be there. I mean, she did everything I recommended. This was like your perfect, ideal client. You say, "Hey, go drink more water," and the next week, she comes back and she's like, "I've tracked every little bit of water that I ever drank. And I'm drinking so much more now." But I got to see how something as "simple" as helping somebody to improve the quality of her voice really changed her life. I mean, she started participating in activities that she hadn't for her religious groups that she used to read in. And she stopped reading in these group circles that she had, and she started reading again. So, it was really exciting just to be a part of that process for her and feel



like, even though at that time, I didn't have any idea what I was really doing, I knew that I could see the change in her expression and her demeanor every single week. It got a little better. And that's one I will certainly... She gave me a really good review, too, which was great. I still have it.

Mattie Murrey

Oh, I keep those too. have an accolade chart. It's a folder. And whenever somebody sends me something, I copy it or I'll tuck it in that folder. And I read it or look at it.

Sara Schmuckler

They're really great things to look back on, especially when you're in those dark moments, that you have really helped somebody. And, you know, whether she's still doing it or not, I don't know. But at the time, it really helped her. And I look back at that, and I say, "You know what, you can do this. You have done it. Not just you can, but you have, you did, and you will. And you will continue to.

Mattie Murrey

Right. Well, on these podcasts, I ask the guests, like I asked you, "Tell us your SLP story. Why did you become a speech pathologist?" And then I ask about their favorite client because it's those moments that we remember why we are doing what we're doing. You know, when we make the impact and we make that change, or we help that client and patient achieve what they want to achieve. Because it's not always easy. It's not always easy. How did you make that brave decision to change your career path?

Sara Schmuckler

I was meeting with you. Honestly, I needed somebody to talk it out with. I had talked it over a million times with my husband, with my parents. There were so many moments of doubt because I was having a good, solid income. You know, I had a steady job. It was a good setting. I really liked my co-workers. I actually loved going to work. But there was just something missing. And I had been there for three and a half years. And you know, when you come home every day and you just feel like, "I could be doing something more. I'm not working to my full potential." And I think it wasn't until I talked to you that you really kind of made me take that leap — or at least sit back and question that there are other ways to be a therapist. And there are people out there doing amazing things. And they're typically not the people who are tied to a full-time job where they have somebody else telling them what to do, which is really what I was doing. And you know, that's the name and the game of most jobs. But I wanted to feel like I was carving out my own path and I was creating something that, long-term, I could look back and really be proud of.

Mattie Murrey

You and I have been on the same journey. Me changing my career path. You changing your career path. Having those vision boards. And just making those changes and writing our own endings to our stories. So, if you could sum up what being an SLP means to you in one word, what word would that be?



Sara Schmuckler

Well, this was definitely a struggle. I did come up with two words. I feel like they tie in together. So, I would say reinvention and persistence.

Mattie Murrey

Wonderful.

Sara Schmuckler

So, do you want me to tell you why?

Mattie Murrey

Why? Sure.

Sara Schmuckler

From a personal and clinical standpoint, I would say, we're in a profession that allows us to explore so many avenues — that one day you could be treating social language skills, and the next you're treating a swallow disorder, and the next you're doing accent modification therapy. We have the ability, under one title, to reinvent ourselves as clinicians. I mean, and also from a treatment standpoint, when something doesn't work, what do we do? You know, we have all of this experience, so we adapt and we reinvent our approach until we find something that works. And that can be just within one session. We're constantly reinventing ourselves as clinicians. As human beings. As people who want to help other people. And I think the next word, persistence, because in order to reinvent yourself, you need to keep learning. And you need to keep growing and making new connections. Some days, it's really hard. And I mean really, really hard. I cried my eyes out to you, a stranger who I didn't know.

Mattie Murrey

And you wrote a letter. Do you remember the letter you wrote?

Sara Schmuckler

I don't! I was just begging, begging for help.

Mattie Murrey

I had you... It's something I do with my students. It's a reflection activity. I'll share it back with you. And it was "What was upsetting you?" I'm sorry, I totally took the steam away from your answer. Keep going. I'll jump back on that later.

Sara Schmuckler

Well, I think, the only reason that I found you was because of this persistence. I kept looking. I knew there was something else. I kept looking. It's really hard to find help, especially in a world where people are really struggling to make ends meet. They have so much on their plates. Everybody has so much on their plates. And I think I just needed somebody to stop and listen and take the time to hear me out. [I needed] somebody who was in the field and also forging their own path to give me the courage to say, "Yes, this is something that you could do." But I



only found you because I kept looking. Every single day, I was on the internet. Every night, I went home and I would Google different phrases. I don't even know if I ever put in the word coach. I'm not really sure. I don't remember exactly how I found you. I must have gotten an email that was connected to another email. And I think it was just something like, "Are you new in your field?" Oh, I think it had something to do with, like, "Are you a new graduate and you're trying to find your way?" And I was thinking, "Well, I'm not a new graduate, but maybe she'll talk to me anyway." And I tried. I just tried. I can't tell you how many emails and phone calls I've tried to make to people, and I haven't gotten a response. So, you just keep doing them. And I got lucky that one day, and you responded. And you set up a meeting and you let me cry my eyes out. And we came up with a plan. I left feeling heard.

Mattie Murrey

Excellent. Well, that's a perfect note to end on. Thank you very much for your time and for everything, and for just being such a shining star in a sense of inspiration for all of us.

Sara Schmuckler

Thank you. Thank you for being there and for hearing me.

Mattie Murrey

My pleasure. My honor. I do love what I do.

Sara Schmuckler

Hi, Mattie! Thank you for letting me do this. This is a follow up to the question that you asked regarding what ultimately led me to take the plunge into private practice and leaving my full-time job. So, here goes. I think it's also important to note that ultimately leaving my full-time job was a multi-layered decision, and not one that my husband and I took lightly. As a result of the pandemic, I was at high risk of exposure at my job more than anyone else in my family, who I come in contact with fairly often. We lost our daily childcare, so a full-time job away from home was not exactly feasible anymore. And financially, our student loans were put on hold, which was our biggest expense every month. So, we had the small window to try to make this work. Also, I was watching the whole world change before my eyes, and so many things were becoming digital, including jobs and major educational opportunities. And I wanted to be a part of it. I had always wanted to learn to provide teletherapy, and now seemed like the perfect opportunity to start, when the world was finally more open to it because they had to be. And most people were starting at square one learning with me.

So, leaving my full-time job was a sacrifice in many ways, but a short-term one that had more long-term pros than short-term cons. There was also this crazy sense that the world was ending, right? So, if not now, then when? When I learned more about private practice, I realized it would allow me to be home, to care for my daughter, to specialize in therapeutic areas that I had a passion for treating, and have the flexibility in my life that I wanted and needed to mentally survive this crazy time. So that, on top of the encouragement I received from you and



the guidance from Jena Castro-Casbon's program, I felt ready to take the leap that would be best for me and my family in the long run.

