

Wynne Leon (00:00)
Hi Lindsey!

Lindsey Goldstein (00:01)
Hi, nice to be here. Thank you for having me.

Wynne Leon (00:04)
I'm so excited to talk to you because you know your novel Gap Year, I mean it involves two of my favorite things climbing in Ecuador. But more than that I mean it also just the courage of your main character. Jane. You set her up with this big inflection point and I'm gonna read from the blurb. Jane's life is turned upside down within 48 hours.

Her only child leaves for a year abroad, her husband abandons her for another woman, and her boss issues her an ultimatum. She makes an emboldened, impulsive choice. She's going to leave it all behind for an adult version of a gap year. She heads to Ecuador to climb the volcano she once dreamed of summiting, hoping the challenge will help her rediscover who she is after decades of putting everyone else first. So...

Just that's such a good setup. What do you think enables Jane to, you know, take that gap year to leave it all behind and choose herself instead of trying to hang on?

Lindsey Goldstein (01:11)
Well, I think, so I think all of us have things that we always wanted to do and we had kids or we got married or we got a different job or something that precluded us from doing those things. so Jane finds herself in this unique position that everything comes to a head at once. And she always wanted to do this in her twenties. She was a budding ecologist. Then she abandoned that at the time to get

Wynne Leon (01:17)
Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Lindsey Goldstein (01:41)
know, her CPA and take a very practical job to support the family. And she realizes there's really nothing standing in my way now, that my child is off on her own gap year to Spain, my husband is off with another woman, and she never loved her job as a CPA, it was just a filler. ~

Wynne Leon (01:43)
Mm-hmm. Right.

Lindsey Goldstein (02:02)

And now she's faced with, take this promotion or essentially she's asked to resign because her position is already filled. I mean, why not? She decides she's going to, like you said, for the first time in her life, do something impulsive and grab life by the horns and do something she'd always wanted to do in her 20s. So that's what happens.

Wynne Leon (02:19)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah. Yeah, it's

such a good setup. It reminded me of a quote from the Buddhist nun Pema Chodron. ~ She talks about when things fall apart, one of my favorite books is, and her quote is, things falling apart is a kind of testing and also a kind of healing. We think that the point is to pass the test or overcome the problem. But the truth is that things don't really get solved. They come together, they fall apart, they come together again, they fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting

there be room for this all to happen, room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy. And somehow that seems to be what Jane embodies as she like, let's go, right?

Lindsey Goldstein (03:06)

So I think, and I have her say this a few times and her daughter reiterates it and it's something my mom always said to me, everything has a funny way of working out. And that doesn't necessarily mean it works out the way you want it to, but it does work out one way or another. And so I think Jane also takes that with her. I'm going to go and one way or another, this will work out.

Wynne Leon (03:15)

Mm-hmm.

Right, Yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Yeah. Yeah.

Lindsey Goldstein (03:31)

Not

just her trip to Ecuador and climbing the volcano, but all of it. All of this mess that her life has become.

Wynne Leon (03:38)

Yeah, and she gives it the space

to work out. That's what's so cool about this setup, I think. mean, not very fun situation that Jane's in, but ~ yeah, she really does put it to space. And one of her friends that she meets along the way, Laura, she says, I'm pretty sure climbing a volcano won't be my calling, but it will give me some confidence to try something new. Or at least I think so. And...

know, gosh, that matches my experience, know, trying one thing leads to another. And, you know, how did you come up with that wisdom for the gap year?

Lindsey Goldstein (04:13)

I that I've lived my life that way. mean, let's take writing, for example. I started out by, I didn't necessarily write anything until I was about 39. I mean, I wrote papers for school and all that. In the back of my head, I always wanted to write, but I was afraid to. But I gave myself, I guess, license to try something small. So I started with personal essays.

Wynne Leon (04:16)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Mm-hmm. Right.

Mm.

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Lindsey Goldstein (04:41)

started to gain a little bit of traction. I was able to publish some of those. That was when I could then segue into trying to write a book. And so I think that that, you know, relates to what you were saying.

Wynne Leon (04:49)

Right.

Mm-hmm.

Yeah. Well, and you and I were talking about, you know, being hiking and climbing. think that practice, you know, the getting strong, the, you know, doing the small challenges to get, to do the bigger ones. I mean, it really does work to, to help build up the stamina in internally and externally.

Lindsey Goldstein (05:14)

And that's, you know, it's something that I guess I've learned in my life. and I try to impart now to my kids. I feel like they get very frustrated when they try something and they're just not automatically good at it. And I tell them, know, nobody is, mean, maybe there's the very small percentage of people who are perfect at something. The first time they try it, I said, but for the most part, people try something and then maybe they fail. And I said, and for me, it was getting.

Wynne Leon (05:18)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm. Right.

Lindsey Goldstein (05:44)

over that fear of failure. I have had the deepest seeded fear of failure most of my life and it was realizing that I actually learned something from failing and that's because I tried it. If I don't try it and I don't fail I won't learn anything so you can apply that to hiking, Jane does.

~

Wynne Leon (05:50)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah, right? She does.

Lindsey Goldstein (06:06)

You can apply that to writing. I mean, I failed many, many times. I don't even

Wynne Leon (06:06)

Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Lindsey Goldstein (06:10)

know if I would call them failures. I think I would just call them learning experiences. But that's how you get to where you want to be.

Wynne Leon (06:13)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Right?

And it might not even be where you want to be sort of ala Jane, you know, it's going to get you somewhere, right? You're going to get somewhere. Yeah, that's true. You know, I think with my kids, I see this, you know, they'll watch YouTube videos of people who are really good at doing that trick shot or whatever. And it's like, but do you know how many times they videoed something?

Lindsey Goldstein (06:23)

There's some more.

you

Wynne Leon (06:43)

Not working? You know, that's totally edited. They didn't pull it apart where they had to do it a thousand times in order to get that one shot. Yeah.

Lindsey Goldstein (06:48)

yeah.

Absolutely. mean,

I tell them anything that's I think worth having in my life. I had to work for it and ~ you get such satisfaction out of working hard to improve, know, whether it's ~ hand-eye coordination, know, for me tennis or just that, you know, neuromuscular connection of

Wynne Leon (06:59)

Mm-hmm. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Right.

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Lindsey Goldstein (07:20)

fingers to keyboard and words being produced. ~ But I said, nothing starts out easy. And that's why I said it's worth continuing. said, eventually you get to a point where there's such enjoyment from it. ~

Wynne Leon (07:23)

All

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Yes.

Lindsey Goldstein (07:36)

You know, and I started out running years ago. I started out running because I decided I no longer wanted to play tennis when I got to college. And I had this, I don't know why, but I really wanted to be on the crew team and I'm five, five and 122 pounds. And the, only had a heavyweight crew team. So the next lightest person was 150 pounds and five 11. And I thought.

Wynne Leon (07:52)

Hmm.

Yeah

Yeah.

Lindsey Goldstein (08:06)

I'm gonna, I'm gonna do this. So I did, I hung in there for two weeks at tryouts and finally the coach came to me and she said, you know what, have you ever thought about being a coxswain? And I said, no, I'm not gonna do that. I'm not gonna sit in a boat and yell at people. So I remember for the first time in my life, I just willingly went for a run.

Wynne Leon (08:17)

Hmm?

Yeah, yes

Lindsey Goldstein (08:29)

Cause I had a lot of anger to burn up. So I would

do a run and then I started running every day and that led to, you know, post college running marathons and countless numbers of half marathons and running was something that I hated doing when I was much younger. And I think it's because I hadn't practiced it. You get to a point where you practice it so much that it feels good.

Wynne Leon (08:41)

Hmm.

Yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Lindsey Goldstein (08:54)

And this is, know, like you said, I try to tell my kids this, you know, you should have seen it. Cause my daughter will say, how many miles did you run today? And, know, I'll say, it's only four to five, only four to five. You know? And I said, you know how long it took me

though, to get to the point where I say that's feels good. And it's pretty much nothing, you know, that's like, it's nothing, you know, I said, it took me years and years and years of making my body practice this. So.

Wynne Leon (09:16)

Yeah.

Yeah. I love

that story though, from tennis to crew to running. Talk about, letting things unfold.

Lindsey Goldstein (09:32)

And like you said, I didn't get to be on the crew team, but it led me somewhere. You know, it me to decide to go for a run that day. And that, I mean, opened a whole new world for me of friends and running community. And it's a whole nother breed of people.

Wynne Leon (09:36)

Right?

Yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Right? Yeah. And a different, right?

Well, that's true. And different places to do things like marathons, right? I imagine. Right? Right.

Lindsey Goldstein (09:54)

Yeah, ~ yeah, I got

to do the New York Marathon, which is still one of my top experiences in my life.

Wynne Leon (10:00)

Mmm, I can

imagine that's a hard one to get into.

Lindsey Goldstein (10:05)

I was lucky. friend of mine, her father had several lottery tickets and she gave me one. So I did not have to qualify. I'd only run at that point one other marathon.

Wynne Leon (10:11)

Mmm.

Mm-hmm.

Lindsey Goldstein (10:20)

Just the, mean, a running through all five boroughs was amazing, but also people of every religion, race, whatever, cheering you on and coming together as one. I was crying by the end. And I remember a good friend of mine that lived in New York city. She was following me the whole, pretty much the whole time. He was taking subway and taxis and buses. So you finish in central park. And I saw.

Wynne Leon (10:32)

Yeah.

That's so cool.

Yeah.

Lindsey Goldstein (10:50)

her and the light was, you know, it was kind of that golden light at the end of the day, was dappling on the leaves and just the whole thing. I just started to cry and she's very motherly and she said, are you injured? You're injured, stop running. And I said, no, I'm not injured. I'm just so happy. This has been such an amazing experience. And I said, and also you're out of your mind. I have two miles left. I'm not stopping.

Wynne Leon (11:14)

Yeah

Yeah,

that is so neat. What a great, great story. ~ That is, that's wonderful. Yeah, you know, I think I would say one of the climbing quotes that has always ~ struck me comes from the French poet and novelist, René Demal. And it's one climbs and one sees, one descends, no longer, sees no longer, but

Lindsey Goldstein (11:20)

It was amazing. I mean.

Wynne Leon (11:43)

has seen. There's an art in conducting oneself in lower regions by memory of what one has seen higher up. When one can no longer see, one can at least still know." And I think, you know, that's what you've written in this book for Jane is in the effort and talking to you about running or hiking, all those things. We get that confidence from trying these things and then we can still

Lindsey Goldstein (12:08)
Absolutely.

Wynne Leon (12:12)
use that to apply to

parenting, to any other tough thing we want to do, right?

Lindsey Goldstein (12:19)
Absolutely, yeah. Like, I ran a marathon, I can have a baby.

Wynne Leon (12:20)
Yeah.

Yeah, right, right. Which is

a perfect segue to my next question, which is a two part question. I mean, you have a career, you're a mom and a wife. ~ And then you decided to add author to your long list of accomplishments. How did you go about researching a book that includes Ecuador and the Galapagos and climbing?

Lindsey Goldstein (12:49)
So, I mean, some of that I used my own experience there. I knew which areas I wanted to include in the story because of places that were special to me when I lived there and still struggle. So I lived there, I took a, I guess, more traditional gap year when I was 18, 19, so I deferred college and then...

Wynne Leon (13:01)
Yeah. And say more about when you live there.

Hmm

Lindsey Goldstein (13:13)
repeated my senior year of high school for no credit and lived there for a year and then I spent two subsequent summers there. And Galapagos is still one of my favorite places in the world. But while living in mainland Ecuador, there were certain places that, I love Quito and I loved Cuenca, just such a beautiful city.

Wynne Leon (13:16)
you

Lindsey Goldstein (13:37)
And I had, when people would come visit, I always took them to Otavalo to get there.

Wynne Leon (13:41)

Yes, one of my favorite places in Ecuador.

Lindsey Goldstein (13:45)

So, but obviously I hadn't been there since 1996. So I, there was a lot that I knew had changed. So I did go back and see what had changed. ~

Wynne Leon (13:55)

Mm-hmm.

Lindsey Goldstein (13:57)

what new construction there was, what looked different, what looked the same. And then as far as climbing Cotopaxi, I did not do that. So I spent about two months researching what you would do to train, what kind of equipment you would use, what it looks like. I read lots and lots of accounts of climbing it and preparing for it and use different people's perspective and experience.

Wynne Leon (14:00)

Mm.

Lindsey Goldstein (14:27)

So all the guiding companies, I read what their guidelines are just so that I would understand what I would be getting myself into. And just as far as finding time for that. I mean, I would say that now I've gotten to a point where I do write almost every day, but that's because if I have a half an hour or an hour, I will take that time and I will write.

Wynne Leon (14:39)

Yes.

Lindsey Goldstein (14:55)

than if I need or even now if I need to research, you know, I will give myself a task for that day with the time that I have available. There was a time in my life where I felt like if I don't have four to five hours, I don't have time to write. But that's gone out the door because with as far as my my job as a physical therapist, I do schedule my own patients so I can decide I'm going to see patients, you know.

three days a week or four days a week and then set aside this time. ~ Parenting, I don't have a choice. ~ So I also make sure that if I'm gonna have time to write, it's during the time that they're at school because otherwise nothing gets done. And I'm useless at night. And I know there's people who wake up at five and write till seven. I love to exercise and that's my time for exercise is to get up in the morning and do that.

Wynne Leon (15:24)

Mm-hmm.

Right?

Lindsey Goldstein (15:53)

So it's just about when you have the time, not sitting down and scrolling or...

Wynne Leon (15:59)

Yes, that's true. And I

love what you just said about if even if it's just a half an hour, it doesn't have to be a huge block. It's just about the regularity of it.

Lindsey Goldstein (16:09)

So I try really hard to be diligent and not just sit down with my phone and look at social media or something, but no, I'm going to take out my computer and I'm going to write for that. Any little snippets of time that I have are valuable.

Wynne Leon (16:24)

Yeah. Right.

That's so good. mean, and it's just like practicing on the running, hiking, climbing scale too. It's working up that muscle. Yes. Yeah.

Lindsey Goldstein (16:36)

Yes, absolutely. And

it is something, you know, my daughter, she likes writing and she said, you're such a good writer, mom. And I said, but I've been practicing now for 11 years. I said, and even, you know, now if I write something today, I think maybe it's a little bit better than something I wrote yesterday. You know, I said, it's been practicing and reading a ton.

Wynne Leon (16:58)

Mm-hmm.

Lindsey Goldstein (17:02)

And then I get to sprinkle in the occasional conference or those are just like back to back seminars of learning things from professionals. So those are few and far between.

Wynne Leon (17:13)

Yeah.

Of course,

given your phase of life. So what would you do if you were to take an adult gap year? Do you have anything on your list?

Lindsey Goldstein (17:28)

I mean, if everything else from my life just faded away.

Wynne Leon (17:33)

Well, let's

hope without the trauma. Without the trauma that changed.

Lindsey Goldstein (17:37)

I have

always wanted to do a writer's retreat somewhere scenic ideally, but I would love to live somewhere scenic and you know that would allow me to go out for a run or something but where I'm inspired to sit and do mostly just write during the day.

Wynne Leon (17:42)

Mmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Lindsey Goldstein (18:00)

I mean, I guess I sort of always think about somewhere in Europe, like Italy. But that's what I think I would do for a year is spend the majority of my time writing and ~ somewhere very scenic.

Wynne Leon (18:05)

Mm-hmm. Great.

Yeah.

Right.

That sounds lovely. Yes, yes. Renting a villa in Tuscany with good food, wine. I think your passion for writing comes through in this book and in talking to you. So clearly I think that would be well suited for you.

Lindsey Goldstein (18:21)

With good food.

There you

Yes, I agree, thank you. Yeah, I've always threatened my husband. Not threatened, but I hint, I guess is a better word. So, you know what would make a wonderful gift?

You know, you could just send me, even if it's for a week, to this chateau in France where I can just sit and write. And he's like, okay, when are you doing this? No, no time soon. No time soon. Yeah, exactly. I can dream.

Wynne Leon (18:51)

Right.

Ha ha ha ha!

Right, right. Right now it's just on your dream list, but yes. Yeah. Absolutely.

Absolutely. Well, thank you so much for taking the time to talk about your book Gap Year and all your pursuits. So fun to talk to you.

Lindsey Goldstein (19:15)

Thank

Thank you so much, Wynne. It's been awesome talking to you.

Wynne Leon (19:22)

Have great

day.