

Heather: Welcome to Practice Outside the Lines Podcast. I'm your host Heather McPherson, multi-passionate sexuality entrepreneur. Join me as we learn from the people who are working at the leading edge of sexuality. We will listen in to how it all happens, as they share all the secrets to mind-blowing success! So welcome Dr. Lyndsey Harper, you created an app called Rosy, it helps 30 million women who have decreased sexual desire. So, welcome Lyndsey!

Lyndsey: Oh, thanks so much, I'm so glad to be here. I appreciate it!

Heather: So, how and when did you come up with this idea?

Lyndsey: Oh my gosh, well it was definitely a process! But I would say it happened in about, I don't know, 3 or 4 months and it was in the fall of 2018 and I was just kind of, um, really putting together, in my previous life I was a practicing OBGYN. And so, you know really helping people through infertility through pregnancy and uh menopause and birth, all the things that OBGYN's do! But um my patients, all of whom I love and am still in great contact with a lot of them. Really you know take the time to confide with me about trouble they were having, with you know sexual desire, with orgasm problems, arousal just all these things! And I- you know this was on a daily basis. And unfortunately, I had not had the training that I needed to help them with any amount of confidence or really clinical competency, to be honest. And so, I kept just sort of sitting with thinking, like why are my patients... is it me? Like, am I doing something that's hurting my patients, or do I have a sort of specific population? And so, I started to ask around- I asked my partners in my practice, who I love and respect, and they also encountered the problem regularly but didn't really have great resources.

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: So I asked in an awesome group of women physicians (women OBGYN's on Facebook), what do you guys do for low sexual desire, that was my exact post and everybody was just kind of frustrated because I think we hear about it so often

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: - but our lack of training just puts us in this hard spot where we're really, you know, challenged with how often we hear about it but how little we are able to help. And so, I started asking around. What societies do I join or where do I even learn more about this? Then I heard about This Wish which is the international society for the center of women's sexual health. Joined Iscwish, became obsessed, like love all the things and um really decided you know what there are these evidence-based interventions for low desire and other aspects of female sexual dysfunction and I'd love to kind of get that out there in the world and so decided to do that in the form of a mobile platform, which is now Rosy- R.O.S.Y. And it's, uh, you know it's a tool for women to kind of find the resources that they need without having to google it, right. Which is what we know a lot of people do, unfortunately, and they find resources that they weren't looking for, or and it's also meant to be used as a resource for health care providers as well so that they can answer their patient's concerns with a legitimate, but really straight forward resource that's easy to access in private and all those things. So that's where Rosy started!

Heather: That's so cool! It's so amazing and so um, it's so interesting because I feel like you and I are so similar in the regard of how do I get training for this? You know I started out as a couple's therapist and people started talking to me about sex and I figured oh my gosh how do I get more training for this, what do I do? And, there just wasn't much information out there, especially whenever I was in Austin, Texas, there just weren't many trainings, there wasn't many people who were giving information about how to become one. Um, and then I realized that this is a problem across all health care professionals and not just therapists but OBGYNs and medical professionals, all of the people that might come into contact with a patient or client or have them talk about sex, they might not even have one hour in training. That's why I founded Sexual Health Alliance to provide training, just access. And that's why I think this app is so amazing, meetrosy.com is the address, but I think this app is so amazing because it just another resource to help patients and clients find out information. You know I heard about this app through one of my therapists in my group practice, uh Zana Haney, she told me about this app and she was raving about it!

Lyndsey: Awww

Heather: And I was like man I have to get on this thing, this seems like such a cool resource, um but yeah. So it seems like you and I kind of encountered that same problem of not having enough resources, not you know... professionals not having enough training in it, not knowing how to talk to patients. Um, is that something you found I guess in med school, you know doing your residency, training to become OBGYN, and um not really getting any training in sexuality or sexual wellness?

Lyndsey: Oh totally. I mean, this is, you know I know that I'm preaching to the choir here, but our lack of training is a symptom of the complete sort of lack of conversation

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: - or lack of even weight or credibility that this problem is given in society in general, right?

Heather: Yeah.

Lyndsey: And so, it's in stark contrast for me i really you know focused on women's sexual health and when you look at medical school and residency for men's sexual health, I actually am on faculty for Texas School of medicine and I was lecturing my students the other day who were third- years. And one of them spoke up and she was like you know why did I learn about erectile dysfunction in my first year of medical school and this is literally the first time I'm having any type of lecture about female sexual function and dysfunction

Heather: Mhm, Wow! Yeah...

Lyndsey: -and before I started lecturing on it at the medical school there was no lecture on it. And so it really just goes to emphasize how we as a culture are not comfortable talking about female sexuality. And my perspective on it is that, you know, female sexualtiy just generally is about reproduction and about men's pleasure, right? And so, anything outside of that historical context has just been ignored and now I think is just really the time um culturally and within our world as a whole where we start to right that wrong and we say that's a false view of women's sexuality, women deserve to be able to name their

genitals, they deserve to be able to experience pleasure for pleasure's sake and you know we, we are the people that can help make that happen.

Heather: Yeah, so you touched on that piece that this is kind of a, almost a taboo topic to talk about women's pleasure or women's sexual health and so you know this is something very outside the lines in terms of your profession and um your you know just in general people talking about it. And um so how did you kind of pave that path forward in um creating this app in kind of a market where people aren't really willing to talk about it?

Lyndsey: Um, well it's been an experience and a journey. I've never had, I mean other than my private practice, I've never had a business venture and so I've learned literally so much, as much as I probably learned in residency I learned in the past couple of years.

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: But it's been such an amazing opportunity and I'm sure that it's a lot like your experience as a therapist. Which is that people are really looking for a credible and safe space to be able to talk about these things. Right? And so it's not really as hard as one might think. And so when I was thinking about- I remember working out with my trainer whenever I was thinking about starting Rosy and she was like, well what are- are you worried about what people are going to think of you?

Heather: Yeah.

Lyndsey: Like are you worried about how people are going to perceive you?

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: And honestly that had never crossed my mind and I was like you know what, the fact that I should be or could be worried about it is actually promotes this in my mind more. Because the fact that this problem has gone undiscussed and ignored, leaving women feeling isolated and ashamed for centuries, is a taboo for somebody to work on who is really knowledgeable and passionate about the field, is really a problem in and of itself, you know? So

Heather: Absolutely.

Lyndsey: And yeah I haven't really, honestly I haven't encountered anything like that in my day to day work. Even I raised around a funding for Rosy, you know I talk about Rosy in groups of women, I talk about Rosy in groups of men. Um, you know not Rosy particularly but women's sexual health positions and trainees. And everyone is really excited about it, you know whenever we view it from the lens of inequity and sort of what women deserve and that women deserve better- people really start to understand that this is just an unmet need that deserves attention and we really focus on doing so in a really evidence based and respectful way. You know there's not really anything salacious about what we're doing, it's very fact based and tied back to health and the well being of people as a whole.

Heather: Yeah.

Lyndsey: And so it's actually been a wonderful journey that has been very well received. Heather: You know I feel like that's where times are a-changing. You know I feel so old when I say that, whenever I graduated from grad school over a decade ago, there were no sex therapists in Austin, Texas- a progressive city. There was I think one certified sex therapist and that's it! And now there's like hundreds it seems like.

Lyndsey: Yeah!

Heather: Hundreds of sex therapists, not as many certified sex therapists, but hundreds of people who are practicing sex therapy and so I feel like it's become less taboo, it's become more acceptable. And that's such a beautiful and wonderful thing.

Lyndsey: It is and I agree with you that I think we're right on the cusp of this

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: Really massive change, not only for our fields but also for society and for people, you know as individuals.

Heather: Absolutely.

Lyndsey: And yeah I think it's a perfect time to be thinking about you know how can you contribute to the

field, how can you innovate within this space, what can you do to take this to the next level? I was actually- literally yesterday- I heard this quote- I choose to risk my significance to live so that which came to me as a seed goes on to the next as blossom. And that which comes to me as blossom goes on to the next as fruit. And that's by Donna .

Heather: Ah, I love that.

Lyndsey: And that really inspired me because I sort of feel like that is what we are doing. It came like, the field of sexual health, sex therapy- however we wanna talk about- it came to us as a seed and we're gonna do whatever we can to grow it and nurture it and take it to the next level so that when we pass it off, you know to the next person, maybe it can be a blossom or however you want to think about it, but I think there's such an opportunity and we are at such an early stage in the process that however we choose to contribute will make such a magnitude of difference.

Heather: I love that, yeah. This is such a young field, young industry, there's so many amazing ideas being kind of uh put into the universe each day and people creating amazing companies, just like this app- Rosy. Um, and I think that is what's so cool, is that there's so many different, I know you and I talked about this before we started the podcast, but there's so many different um different places that one can go into! Right, so many different areas in this industry, the industry of sexual wellness, sexual health, that one can kind of dive into. And you started out as an OBGYN, and there are many OBGYN's in sexual health who get certified through ASEECT or Sexual Health Alliance as well, um and so yeah I'm curious kind of how did you decide to close up your private practice, or your practice of OBGYN and kind of shift more focus to this app. Cause I'm sure this was a really hard decision, it was what you trained for, what you went to med school for right?

Lyndsey: Totally!

Heather: I mean that seems intense, that's a lot!

Lyndsey: It was probably the most thoughtful journey because I truly do love to take care of women and I

still practice actually through our platform. And so I still get to have that relationship, thank god.

Heather: You're just doing it in a different way.

Lyndsey: Exactly, I'm just doing it in a different way but at the beginning you know it was a major shift and I left my practice, which you know I had pregnant patients, I had partners who had invested their time and their energy and their, you know, just their love into helping me grow as a person, and so that was a huge decision. Oh, and no one had ever left my practice in the distance of 60 years, like I was going to be the first one to leave!

Heather: Oh wow! That's sound scary!

Lyndsey: Yeah and there was so much... no one was putting pressure on me..

Heather: I'm sure people looked at you like you were crazy!

Lyndsey: Yes!

Heather: Like you wanna create this app?

Lyndsey: Yeah, seriously! Like, seriously. My most senior partner, whom I love, was like oh you're taking a sabbatical.

Heather: Haha, you'll come back.

Lyndsey: Haha, I love you so much but it's not a sabbatical! So, that was really.. That part of it was probably the most difficult part of it all because I truly felt like I owed so much to them professionally and even personally that I hated to disappoint, but I felt so called to do this and I truly feel so passionately about it. And I looked around and I just decided you know no one else has done anything like this in the past, however long it could've been possible. Why do I think that someone else will do it if I don't do it? I really couldn't stomach that. And so the other alternative was for me to sort of be the founder of it but to pass it off to someone else to run or someone else to fundraise for and I just really felt, I truly view Rosy as my fourth child, that's how I feel about her and it's like

Heather: Yeah.

Lyndsey: - I'm not going to pass my kid off to someone else to raise, like I'm doing this. I'm totally

invested in it and whatever it takes, you know I'll do it. And I feel that my training is a piece of this, right?

Heather: Oh, absolutely, yeah!

Lyndsey: And it's all part of the journey, it's not like- someone was like oh you used to be a doctor! I was like I'm still a doctor like you don't get it!

Heather: And you still teach too, I mean right you still teach?

Lyndsey: Yeah I still teach!

Heather: - At the university level haha.

Lyndsey: Yeah I still teach, and so to me it's all part of that secular journey that we're all on and I'm open to new experiences- especially now because of how much this one has taught me and brought to my life and um I'm just really super happy that I made the decision that I did. Even though it's not easy on a regular basis, I'm still happy that I did.

Heather: Mhm. Yeah I think it's a constant work in progress, right?

Lyndsey: For sure.

Heather: Whenever you're starting a new company. You know you were named *Forbes* top 53 in disrupting healthcare, which is pretty damn impressive, and you know I think I read recently that you recently announced that there's 1 million dollars in seed money, funding grounds I guess, and you've had investments...

Lyndsey: Yes!

Heather: ...like VC investments and angel investments. How did you go about that process? Because I feel like you know, as people who are you know transitioning into an entrepreneur in the sexual health field or the sexual wellness field, um that transition is really daunting. And so raising money is a part of that. So, tell me a little about that.

Lyndsey: Yeah. You know, I was talking to my sort of mentors about raising money and we were making the financial model, like how long will it take to run Rosy for X amount of time, like 28 months, 2 years.

So, like the number was like 500,000. And to me that felt like a little bit more stomach... like I had never raised any money for anything!

Heather: Mhm, yeah.

Lyndsey: Except for when I was like had a, I don't know, lemonade stand in fourth grade!

Heather: *laughter*

Lyndsey: But um, you know, so I was like 500,00 I can do that. And then we started looking back and we were like you know what that's not going to cut it, you know I have, there's employees involved, there's just so much going on. And so we had the target being a million dollars, and I remember first being like coming to terms with that. Like, I Lyndsey Harper am going to raise a million dollars like this is actually going to happy, it just sounded like such a big number to me.

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: But the thing is, like if there is someone interested in this, it is definitely possible. People raise more than a million dollars every day. And-

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: - you know it's all about asking around. For example, in Dallas there's a um there's a wonderful entrepreneurial ecosystem, that you know, if I were raising in this field again, and I didnt know anybody, I would definitely reach out to a healthcare incubator, in Dallas theres one called Health Log Cators, but theres some all over the country. They can kind of introduce you to investors, they can kind of show you the ropes to the lingo, show you how to get a debt together, help you understand the fundamentals of you know what information do I need to have a grasp on in order to get other people behind my idea and really get you to craft the story. And so I think it's all about, you know we're all learning throughout our entire lives and this is just another iteration of that. And so, instead of my training being complete after residency now i'm just getting all new training in the business and leadership world. Which is equally as exciting but it's also humbling because you're asking around for help a lot. And you've never mastered all

of the skills you need, just as soon as you fundraise then you've gotta ask for another new skill set. And then after that one comes in, you need a new one.

Heather: Sure.

Lyndsey: And so it's never over and it's so much more of a process than like you said like a destination.

And I think as long as you view it that way, that you're never going to run out of resources, either in terms of people to ask or money to get funded.

Heather: This idea of abundance right, I think that's so important when you're thinking about entrepreneurship and launching something on your own, to have this idea and this message that there's plenty out there- there's plenty of opportunity, there's plenty of money, there's plenty of people who need this.

Lyndsey: Absolutely and I think as long as that's your true viewpoint and there's, that's actually true, it's not as if people, that there's a ton of people innovating in our field unfortunately. Heather: Absolutely, yeah. It's so new!

Lyndsey: Um, yeah and um there's a lot of, you know, investors who wanna get behind something that is profitable.

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: And so that's really the trick, how do you take what is your passion and what is a good idea and make a business out of it, you know?

Heather: Mhm, exactly.

Lyndsey: That's sort of, that's really where the nails you know the nails enter into the coffin.

Heather: Yeah!

Lyndsey: There can be a lot of ideas that having meaning and are mission driven

Heather: Right, yeah.

Lyndsey: But there does have to be a business angle

Heather: Yeah, it has to be profitable.

Lyndsey: Exactly.

Heather: Yeah, running a business has to be profitable and I think that a lot of people can run into that issue where it's mission focused instead of business focused.

Lyndsey: Right.

Heather: And the mission can be really important and powerful, but if we're not making a profit we're not going to last really long.

Lyndsey: Right, yeah.

Heather: And I think that a lot of people don't realize that, and they need to figure out how to make this business sustainable.

Lyndsey: That's right.

Heather: And so, I think I read that your husband was kind of involved in investments too. So tell about this kind of family piece of it right?

Lyndsey: Oh my gosh, yes!

Heather: It sounds like he's really um kind of helped you along and supported you and I think that that can be a sort of interesting piece too.

Lyndsey: Aw thanks, yeah it's been sort of a crazy situation. So my husband, is definitely like a born entrepreneur. He's probably at this point started like 9 businesses.

Heather: Oh wow! That's so cool. Haha.

Lyndsey: The first 8 didn't work out, as you'll see. But the 9th

Heather: That's how it goes, right! I mean with these things you just have to keep on pushing forward.

Lyndsey: Exactly, and the ninth now he's been running for almost um, let's see, probably 10 years- he started it the year our first daughter was born. So anyway, just his kind of passion for entrepreneurship, his passion for figuring things out, his passion for kind of problems that only you can solve on your radar. I think for better or for worse sort of worked its way into my brain. So, look for issues where you have

the unique ability to understand because of your position, because of your life circumstances, whatever it is. And think about you know real and accessible ways to solve those problems. And so I was approaching life for years probably in that way, and that sort of brain training I think really led me to you know exploring the idea and option for Rosy. Um, and so when I started to think about leaving and doing it full time, I remember asking him like what do you think I should do? Do you think I should do this? And I remember him saying like Lyndsey this has to be your decision, I can have zero influence on this. In a way it's so sweet, because he was trying to protect me.

Heather: Oh yeah, aw, absolutely.

Lyndsey: Being a founder is heartbreaking, there are times when you're like what was I thinking, like why did I do this?

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: And so he was like, he being a founder multiple times over, understands that it's not an easy road. And I think, but also on the other side neither is being an OBGYN or anything else I had decided to do in my life. So I was like, whatever. So I took the leap and really ever since then, you know for a long time, I would call out relationship kind of like bath time CEO cause I would just go and I would ask him like 30,000 questions, I take a bath every night while I'm in the bath.

Heather: *laughter*

Lyndsey: And he's like Lyndsey can we just schedule meetings, like you're wearing me out with all this stuff.

Heather: Aw, hahaha. It either needs to be container or to business talk! Oh I totally get that, I feel that in my relationship too.

Lyndsey: Totally! And so he has been a great resource. His company actually, which does technology consulting, incubated my company, they got us to market before we were even able to fundraise. So they definitely play a big part in our journey and he and his co-founder continue to be my board members. So, you know

Heather: Okay.

Lyndsey:- we have a definite, obviously, personal relationship and then um a professional one as well.

Which we try to keep separated but it does get a little blurry sometimes.

Heather: *Laughter* It happens, I mean that's what it is! Whenever you're a founder or CEO I mean that's your life now it's not just a job it's 24/7!

BREAK

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END OF BREAK

Heather: Um, I heard you talk about your kids. Rosy is your fourth kid so you know you have

Lyndsey: Yep.

Heather:- Tell me about kind of being a mom and a founder, if you talk to your kids about sexual health and kind of how that goes- I don't know how young they are. So yeah, talk about that. Lyndsey: Yeah, totally! So first, my kids are 4,7, and 9.

Heather: Okay.

Lyndsey: And, yeah I think that they are just used to having really busy working parents, like since birth. I had my first daughter during my residency so that work schedule was an 80 hour work week Heather:

Wow,yeah.

Lyndsey: And so, it's never really stopped since then, you know. There was call, whenever I was in private practice, I mean we still in this day and age carry a pager- I don't know why that hasn't stopped, I'm not sure!

Heather: Really, that's so strange!

Lyndsey: Right, especially in the hospital!

Heather: Oh, okay! Man, I did not know that.

Lyndsey: Yeah so, and ever since I had the baby like my pager would go off and my daughter would get upset.

Heather: Aw.

Lyndsey: And so there's always been an element of it to like, we just work a lot.

Heather: Yeah.

Lyndsey: And that's just sort of our life situation, I love what I do and so does my husband, and so there's not ever been a lot of compromise there. And I think that's sort of bled over, my daughter will sometimes google me and somethings will come up and I'm like oh my gosh. And so that's that's funny but it's not really different than before in terms of how much I work.

Heather: Yeah.

Lyndsey: But in terms of talking to them about sexual health, you know, through what I've learned and I would say, even before I started on this journey, as a regular OBGYN, I was doing a terrible job, or maybe not as good of a job as I could have of really teaching them about the difference between a vulva and a vagina, or we don't use any words like downthere, we call parts what they are. Heather: Yeah, mhm.

Lyndsey: And I mean we talk alot, theyre all kind of like I've got all the books. And so I've got like all the books.

Heather: Hahaha, that's great, yeah.

Lyndsey: And I'm like I'll be that Mom, I don't mind at all. If anyone wants to talk to me about anything, Im open to it.

Heather: Yeah.

Lyndsey: And so theyre tired of vulva puppets, books about reproduction and anatomy and periods and

discharge. And I, you know, we all implement to our children, or maybe I say it in social circles mess up our children in our special way and i'm just

Heather: Exactly!

Lyndsey: I'm doing the best I can with you know what I've got and I'm hoping that some of it will sink in. But my oldest daughter doesn't, she's like totally against talking about it. And I'm like where did you get this embarrassment and shame cause it didn't come from me.

Heather: Oh, yeah!

Lyndsey: You know, but it's there.

Heather: That's so interesting, it also shows you that there's so many outside of our control like environment, social media, and friend group, and you know sometimes religion that really can imprint on us and give us shame around sexual health in the long run

Lyndsey: Right, and it's like no matter even if like, in our circumstance, I try everything I can to try to circumvent that, it's there.

Heather: Yeah, yeah it's just our culture.

Lyndsey: Exactly.

Heather: So what are the milestones in this company? Cause I know like you created a couple years ago, do you have kind of like ok, when he hit this mark then I can breathe or here's or next goal, you know what I mean?

Lyndsey: Um, yeah.

Heather: Do you have kind of that set up?

Lyndsey: We do, you know. We have, whenever you raise money for investors, you set up milestones to kind of track your progress and to help investors understand what the work you're doing everyday is accomplishing. So there definitely are no goals where I can breathe after accomplishing them. Heather:

laughter Oh man, you gotta enjoy the success sometimes, right!

Lyndsey: *laughter* Apparently. I'm not sure when that milestone will come.

Heather: Probably around the 3-5 year mark, is what I'm guessing.

Lyndsey: There we go! Ok, we'll see. So, yeah we launched in the spring of 2019. Closed our investment this spring, which seems now like 10 years ago but it was only about 6 months ago. And so our next milestones are really about how many users are using the app, on a regular basis. So like, in the app world, we talk about that in terms of daily active users and monthly active users. We also have a lot of goals around creating content.

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: This year we're focused on developing new, in depth classes for our users that have reached out to us! So for example the classes that we've released so far this year have been about cancer and sexuality, and really helping to address that population for which there are very limited resources. We launched one for sexual pain and these are all expert created classes. So you can download the app completely for free, all the educational content is free to access and then we have a library of erotica and then this library of classes, and access to those is 10 dollars a month. And so, we're really focused on creating value not only for our free users but of course also most importantly for our paid users so that we can continue adding value in a way that improves their lives on an on-going basis. So we launched a class this month on sexual trauma, we have a big series about religion and sexuality coming out, we're doing a lot of stuff around erotica. So, I mean the fun never ends. You know!

Heather: Oh yeah!

Lyndsey: I mean the ideas are easy to come by, it's the prioritization of those ideas in order to accomplish our goals and that really makes all the difference.

Heather: So you have people writing erotica for this app!

Lyndsey: Yeah, girl!

Heather: That is so amazing I think that's so important because you know fantasy and you know erotica and porn, or whatever it might be is so important in terms of when we're talking about women's desire,

you know and arousal!

Lyndsey: Totally. Yeah, and we couldn't you know, whenever I was thinking, like conceptually thinking about Rosy, what I think the problem was when I was sitting in those ICWISH lectures like what are the evidence based interventions for low desire okay, they're education, they're bibliotherapy, self-help, and whatever sort of medical or therapeutic interventions that someone might need.

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: And to me, this just felt so disperous , just I thought from an OBGYN's perspective who was trying to counsel a patient, like well that's way too many resources to tell anybody about in a sasaint kind of way, and so I really imagined Rosy as this island of all these resources together where a woman could have a brand destination in order to access these types of things and so we definitely couldn't have a whole complement of those resources without erotica!

Heather: Haha, absolutely!

Lyndsey: And like what a fun opportunity and so,

Heather: And well, I can't tell you how many clients of mine have found their sexuality by reading erotica and accesing this sexually explicit imagery as well, right?

Lyndsey: Totally.

Heather: Like I feel like that gives us ideas and often times it's of course something we don't talk about something we don't think about and of course it's something that's taboo. And so to have access to resources like that is amazing!

Lyndsey: Well, I think so, thankyou! I think so too. And it's really fun! It's a super popular part of the app. You know, we really view our goal as taking women from being in a place where they're kind of shut down or kind of ashamed or embarrassed, even feeling frustrated about their certain circumstances to a place of being able to explore and talk ab out pleasure openly, um this sort of metamorphosis right of not being in touch with the sexual side of yourself to sort of regaining touch with that. Or maybe discovering

it for the first time and so erotica is a huge piece of that. Not only for the first time so that you can explore fantasy for yourself but also to maybe have something off point for your arousal or desire pathways to talk to your partner and share you know some new ideas for novelty. So there definitely is a huge therapeutic component in erotica for so many women!

Heather: I love that, and you know I think that having kind of this compilation of resources so that people can kind of figure out what works best for them at that stage in development is so important too. Because obviously education can be so important, self help help can be so important. But um having kind of the different choices to were you're at in your development is critical because sometimes you know we might want to go toward self-help first because that's um less embarrassing maybe, it's more direct and concrete information versus um reading erotica or watching porn. And so I think that having those choices is so important, just empowering women to kind of take control of what feels right to them in that moment.

Lyndsey: Well that's definitely our hope, you know. And it is interesting to sort of watch user behavior during a journey through the app and over time with the app and how that user behavior changes. Some women just use Rosy for erotica, which is amazing, because clearly they're doing okay in most circumstances. But you know, a lot of people will access that education and self-help first, and then over time sort of

Heather: Right, mhm.

Lyndsey:- start to become more comfortable with the idea and the conversation then kind of open those new doors to erotica, talking in the community, you know maybe scheduling a visit with a provider like me or like you in the platform. So it's definitely a journey for our users as well.

Heather: Yeah, absolutely. So, you know you mentioned that, this has kind of been in our field in grad school too, you learn nothing about business you learn nothing about entrepreneurship and you mentioned that after you graduated from med school, you're learning all this stuff about how to be an entrepreneur and how to run a business, which is amazing because doctors have to run businesses too! Lyndsey: Yeah,

shocking!

Heather: Exactly, and so I think that, you know, learning all that stuff on your own is kind of how it has to be done at this point. But I'm curious sort of how did you do that, where did you go for resources to learn from in terms of this personal and professional development.

Lyndsey: Oh my gosh, so many different people. Truly my first instinct, you know because I am a first born daughter, and to be very prepared I that I wanted to get an MBA. I'm like I need formal training, I need some more letters behind my name, you know let's do this.

Heather: You know that's so interesting, cause I actually, sorry to interrupt you, but I just actually talked about MBA this weekend and we learned nothing about entrepreneurship! Hahaha. Lyndsey: Right! It's useless. That's the thing, there's nothing like on the job training. But I think I personally cling to whatever I can to validate my skillset, right, whether it is an MBA. Maybe I wouldn't know anymore but atleast I would feel more prepared. I don't think

Heather: Have the confidence, yeah

Lyndsey: Right, exactly. I don't think in reality it would have made a difference and I didn't have time to do it is the other thing. So when you learn, whenever you're an entrepreneur, if you don't hit play as soon as you can with your idea, you know, the opportunity might be lost and it probably will be lost. And so, for example if I had taken a break to get an MBA for however long it would have taken me to get one, like this probably wouldn't have happened, you know.

Heather: Yeah, losing time.

Lyndsey: Yeah, you just gotta get on it, and I'm thankful that I did. And honestly I would still say that I'm learning so much everyday since I started with a women's physician group called Brave Enough. And there was a lot of um, personal sort of development in that group. Um, I kind of learned so much! I didn't know about the concept of boundaries, I didn't know that I'm sure you're like what has this girl been up to for 39 years, but it's honestly taught me so much about just how to make my life exactly what I wanted

it to be. And that is also obviously applied in business. Um, I learn everyday I like read all things Renee Brown, and this is really how I focus the like um

Heather: i love me some brenne.

Lyndsey: Oh my god, I'm obsessed. Brenne if you're out there

Heather: Especially with leading and

Lyndsey: Yeah!

Heather: Yeah, absolutely How to Lead.

Lyndsey: Her new book dare to lead, read it as a team, we've read it actually twice now. And that's truly my natural way to lead, you know, from a personal place and really with connecting with others. And that comes through I hope in the products as well, and so it's everything. Like we're reading a book now as a team called hooked, which is all about product development and habit forming. So it's never over, once again, it's just like what do I read next is basically the question of the week. You know after you finish one thing, then what do you move onto? But, it's never over, um, and that's okay right? It's okay that theres no letters that go after your name with the completion of your business or whatever. But you get so much just practical training and um knowledge about communication between you know your self and your investors or your self and your users or your patients or whatever we want to call them. And how really that's at the core of everything is that ability to communicate clearly and honestly is definitely the key to most successes.

Heather: Yeah, absolutely. I couldn't agree more. Um, you talk about your team, that you have a team of people helping you with this, a team at the Rosy app, um meetrosy.com. Im curious, kind of when do you decide to hire your next person?

Lyndsey: Yeah! So we are a team of 5 women. And it's like I'm obsessed, they're like my little block-I love them all so much theyre so dedicated. And truly the fact that they left their own jobs to come and work for my own little baby startup makes me so, I'm just so filled with gratitude. And so, you know I think the way that we've approached hiring is just out of sheer necessity. Like when, we are about to

break, where are we about to break and who can fill that role? And so there has, at the beginning I mean there was some strategy to it, I obviously needed an engineer and I definitely needed a designer, and I probably need 3 of each at this point but we have one. Um, and then you know we have somebody who focuses on full time in marketing. And then in March we hired someone for customer success and basically that's, she creates, you know she's in charge of creating the focus of content and also just making sure that people are successful within the app.

Heather: Sure.

Lyndsey: There's never like a perfect recipe, I would say that it's totally business dependent but it's all about like, especially in the start-up world when you literally have to make every dollar count for 5 dollars.

Heather: Right, exactly, yeah.

Lyndsey: When you have to literally make all your money stretch because you're on a limited amount of time, and you have to show traction

Heather: Right.

Lyndsey:- during that time, um, you know it's just basically how much capacity do you as an individual and as a team have? And then once that capacity is exceeded, a lot, then it's probably time to hire somebody. But it does affect how long you're able to stay in business before you raise again. And so, you have to make all of those decisions very carefully and as the CEO you are the steward of all that money

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: And basically the success of your dream kind of depends on you being uh very diligent about how you spend it.

Heather: Absolutely, well and in leading the team right, if you have a team of people who are overwhelmed or overworked, that can be really difficult too.

Lyndsey: Right.

Heather: So it's kind of this fine balance of how do you keep the team involved, encouraged, and excited and not weighed down by how much work there is to be done.

Lyndsey: It's an every day balance, for sure! I mean, you definitely hit the nail on the head.

Heather: Yep!

Lyndsey: Even this morning, you know at our team meeting we truly, we truly feel that we can work on this for so many years with so much money so the ideas are bound. And so it's all about just prioritizing those ideas, but not only our mission but also what do our users find most helpful. Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: And keep it, I mean like you said it is a hard job as a leader to number one: stay positive all the time, right? In front of your investors

Heather: Yeah absolutely, yeah.

Lyndsey: -In front of your team, whomever, family, whatever.

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: Um, but you know sort of all the realities, all the ins- and outs, all the other things that are kind of going on. But it is your job to keep the troops rallied

Heather: *laughter*

Lyndsey: - and that's the true art of leadership.

Heather: Yep.

Lyndsey: It's like you've got this mission, you've got this job now kind of get to it, and nobody-.

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: - there's not really much time for anything else. So I do think that it is a very fine balance that I didn't understand before. I'm thankful, really truly thankful, for the opportunity cause you know having a team that is so passionate about our work makes all the difference in the world. And I'm so thankful to get to kind of exercise this muscle in my life for sure.

Heather: Absolutely, yeah, yeah. The team is the heart of the company right?

Lyndsey: Totally!

Heather: That's the um such an important piece and leading that team, becoming a leader, is such an important piece to become successful as well. I'm glad you talked about that for a bit. Um, so what advice do you have for someone who wants to go into maybe this field, maybe develop an app or maybe become an OBGYN that specializes in sexual health, um... What would you say to them?

Lyndsey: You know I would say, just that it's all about asking questions to the right people, right? So there's two different ways to view like asking for other people's opinions. And I think one is in a true like targeted, information gathering way. And that's the one that you want to do. I think the other is in like a sort of polling the audience, opinion gathering type of way and that's the one you want to avoid and you want to try to find- you know, ask the right people the right questions. But then, overtime, feel as confident as you can to start of listen to your own internal voice and intuition.

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: And I think it's very easy to feel, and I have definitely felt this way, in the past, and probably a lot of times in the present still, that other people know what they're doing more, um, you know other people are experts, you're a novice. All of these limiting thoughts

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey: - that actually have no space for in this field because there really are very few experts in this field to be honest

Heather: Right, yeah, absolutely.

Lyndsey: - and the world is our oyster right? Like

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey:- I was talking to another, she's a euro-gynecologist, whose very passionate about sexual health, we were talking about this last year, her name's Kelly Casperson, she also has a podcast, and she was like you know i just don't know, I feel like there's already so many voices. And I'm like there are not! It's the

same voices and they're saying the same things

Heather: Mhm.

Lyndsey:- and we, there are so many truly millions of people in this country and all over the world that need this information, that need access to these resources and we like if we like multiplied ourselves by 100 and we all had bull horns, there's not enough people doing this, you know?

Heather: Right, yeah absolutely,

Lyndsey: And so, just you know ask the right questions of the right people, take that next step forward wherever your intuition and your heart is calling you, and just keep on keeping on. You know, I mean you're going to be told no more times than you'd like, but that's, that's okay, that's another person you got to talk to about sexual health, that's another person that now may think about their own lives and their own relationships differently. So every opportunity that maybe ends in a no was still an opportunity for you to educate and share your passion. So i think really approaching it in that way makes a big difference, in terms of longevity haha

Heather: Yeah, haha, absolutely.

Lyndsey:- With the nos.

Heather: Keeping it going, yeah. So um, in terms of running the business what are the most important numbers or percentages that you look at on like a daily or weekly basis or maybe even monthly business.

Lyndsey: Totally, yeah. I mean we are obsessed with our daily active users, so how many people are active in Rosy on each day, our monthly active user, so that's the same question but unique active users each month, um what is the conversion of users from free to paid, so like of all the people that download and create an account on Rosy, how many of them convert to a paid account, um obviously we're watching our revenue numbers each month, um I'm trying to think if I'm leaving anything out. We also like to know just a lot about our user behavior. So we watch like which parts of the app people interact with the most, what product changes do we make that then change the way that a user behaves in the app and how can we continue to add value to our users life so that she will think of Rosy as that brand

destination for, you know, evidence based resources for sexual health. So we're very focused on those metrics, there's definitely a lot more but those are our top lines for sure.

Heather: Yeah. And I think that I mean, data is money

Lyndsey: Yeah.

Heather: - and that's such an important um piece to a business and whether you're, you know, in a private practice as a therapist or an OBGYN, or you know, running an app, I think not enough people pay attention to the numbers which is why so many businesses fail and so that's such an important piece to kind of keep in mind and think about like what is the most important to you, um, to grow, right? Lyndsey:

Absolutely and it's something you have to define, you know, I think that's hard sometimes when you don't have a business background

Heather: Mhm, yeah.

Lyndsey: - or you're just kind of getting in the space. Cause like even if what you say, even if your goal is 100% off or the original metric you thought you were going to track is totally wrong, you've just gotta start somewhere. So just put something down on paper, like if you're for an example, if you wanna see x number of patients in your 6 month of practice, put it down on paper, write it, have it as a goal. You might be completely wrong but at least you're tracking toward something, right?

Heather: Right, yeah, absolutely.

Lyndsey: And it's the same you know in the technology world. When you're new to project analytics and all that stuff it can be extremely overwhelming, but unless you start you're never going to know what you need to fix or how you're going to improve upon it.

Heather: Mhm, yeah.

Lyndsey: So I would just say that put something down on paper if you're just getting started so then at least that way you can iterate on it and you're not just wandering without any sort of direction.

Heather: Start somewhere, write it down, keep track of it.

Lyndsey: Start somewhere, there ya go!

Heather: Hahaha, yeah, awesome! Well thank you so much this has been so, um, enlightening just to learn about the app world, um and how that kind of intersects with the sexual health world uh, can you tell people how to find you? I know that you give a free complementary Rosy care package for healthcare professionals. So any healthcare professionals listening to this, um definitely listen to Lyndsey as she tells us this next step of how to get that and then

Lyndsey: Yay!

Heather:- and then obviously if you're not a health care professional how to find you.

Lyndsey: Okay, perfect. Thank you so much! So our website is meetrosy.com. So anybody can go to our website and you know check us out, we're available on apple and android for free and we do have a paid version for expanded content. If you're a healthcare professional, so basically that means anybody with a NPI, you can go to our website and click on healthcare professionals or its meetrosy.com/proffessionals and sign up for a healthcare professionals package and really the purpose of that is to send you know healthcare professionals who many want to refer Rosy to their clients or patients, we send these cards that you can physically hand out just as a reference so that as people leave they don't have to try to remember what Rosy is and what the website is and all that stuff. So, it's just a physical card that people can hand out if they think that it would be a benefit to their patients, or their clients as well, on the website, then that also gives any healthcare professionals free access to the complete app. It's really important to me that anymore who is going to be recommend Rosy as an intervention be really comfortable with the way that were presenting things, with the information that were providing

Heather: Sure, yeah.

Lyndsey: And so I wanted all healthcare professionals to be able to check out the full content, not only, you can always pop in and read erotica, cause that's fun to do.

Heather: hahaha.

Lyndsey: But also to check out the resources, before you recommended them, just to make sure you feel

comfortable

Heather: educational, yeah

Lyndsey: - exactly. So in the app store you just search Rosy, and it will pop up and then we are also on instagram @meet_rosy and we do lots of education on our instagram channel as well. Heather:

Wonderful, beautiful, well thank you so much Dr. Lyndsey Harper, it was a pleasure speaking with you um and definitely for our listeners, um check our meetrosy.com and the app! Lyndsey: Aw, thank you so much for having me! This was great fun and I'm so glad to know you and thank you for all the work that you do in our field as well!

Heather: Absolutely, likewise.

Heather- Thank you for listening to Practice Outside the Lines podcast, my name is Heather McPherson, certified sex therapist, consultant, and sex entrepreneur. Did you know that we have a certified course on starting or growing your sexual health focused business? Go to practiceoutsidethelines.com to get started. If you loved this podcast, take the next vital step and review it on iTunes or your favorite podcast player. Thanks so much for hanging out with me today.

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