

Expert Available for Comment:

LAURA VAN DERNOOT LIPSKY

Founder and Director of [The Trauma Stewardship Institute](#) and Pioneer in the Field of Trauma Exposure

Author of: [TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP, Revised and Updated: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others](#) (20th Anniversary Edition, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, September 29, 2026) and [THE AGE OF OVERWHELM: Strategies for the Long Haul](#) (Berrett-Koehler Publishers)



Laura van Dernoot Lipsky is the founder and director of [The Trauma Stewardship Institute](#) and author of [TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP](#) and [THE AGE OF OVERWHELM](#). Widely recognized as a pioneer in the field of trauma exposure and the leading voice in an ever-expanding global movement for trauma stewardship—a justice-rooted approach to sustaining ourselves while caring for others—Laura has helped people navigate overwhelm, crisis, and trauma for nearly 40 years.

As a trauma specialist, Laura has worked with almost every field and industry imaginable—from grassroots organizers and government agencies to Hollywood producers and global tech companies; from professional athletes to Supreme Court judges, from climate scientists to the military. Much of Laura’s work also involves assisting in the aftermath of disasters, whether a climate crisis, suicide, act of violence, or large-scale tragedy. Throughout her entire career, Laura has been active in community organizing and movements for social and environmental justice. She has taught on systemic oppression, liberation theory, and the intersectional toll of trauma across identities, professions, and geographies.

Laura was an early advisory board member of [ZGirls](#), established to support young girls in sports, and a founding member of the International Transformational Resilience Network, created to deepen the capacity to address climate change. Laura also served as an associate producer of the award-winning film *A Lot Like You* and was given a Yo! Mama award in recognition of her work as a community-activist mother. To learn more about Laura in her own words, listen to her TED Talk [here](#) or visit her website [here](#).

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This September, Laura is publishing the 20th anniversary edition of her seminal work, **TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP, Revised and Updated: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others**, co-written by Connie Burk. An international bestseller and word-of-mouth phenomenon, Laura's book has radically transformed how we understand trauma exposure and its effect on our lives.

Whether through personal caregiving, school, work, or efforts to make the world a better place, trauma exposure is ubiquitous, often experienced as burnout or compassion fatigue. **TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP** helps readers understand the toll on their nervous system, individually and collectively—including, though not limited to, exhaustion, numbness, cynicism, guilt, decision fatigue, or the sense that one can never do enough—and shares practical next steps.

Drawing on nearly four decades of frontline experience as a trauma specialist, this new edition blends the latest in neuroscience, field wisdom, emerging research, and diverse spiritual traditions to offer practices for staying grounded in the face of overwhelm, trauma, crisis, and intensifying pressures in everyday life. As fresh and urgent as it was when first published, **TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP** is an essential guide for anyone struggling with showing up without losing themselves along the way.

"Reading this book is like looking into a mirror. We will see ourselves much more clearly, will understand ourselves much better, and will come up with better ways of being and doing." —Thích Nhất Hạnh, Zen master and peace activist

"In a world (and histories) saturated with violence, TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP is both urgent and indispensable. Blending deeply embodied compassion with grounded clinical research, it reframes what it means to bear witness—offering not formula, but compass and method, bridging survivorship and caretaking, oppression and healing at once. Most vitally, it equips us to sustain our humanity while supporting repair and renewal, casting a profound, practical guide for anyone seeking strength and purpose in the face of rupture."
—Ocean Vuong, *New York Times* bestselling author of *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*

"Clear-eyed, powerful, and deeply humane, this book is exactly what we need for a time such as this." —Beth Macy, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Dopesick*

"This book is a gift, a wise and compassionate guide for those who undertake the difficult work of caring for the traumas of the world." —Jack Kornfield, founding teacher of the Insight Meditation Society and Spirit Rock Center and author of *A Path with Heart*

Isabella Nugent

SELECT UPCOMING EVENTS (for a list of all events, visit [Laura's website](#)):

A Path Forward	Seattle, WA	Sept. 10, 2026, at 9am PST
Book Launch	Seattle, WA	Sept. 13, 2026, at 6pm PST
Book Launch	San Francisco, CA	Sept. 19, 2026, at 6pm PST
Book Launch	Brooklyn, NY	Oct. 1, 2026, at 7:30pm EST

THEMES AND IDEAS THAT LAURA VAN DERNOOT LIPSKY CAN DISCUSS:

- How to recognize overwhelm and a trauma exposure response in yourself and others
 - Including the role tech, media, political strife, the climate crisis, and violence close to home and around the world play in trauma exposure
- The warning signs that you may be absorbing more overwhelm and trauma than you realize
- Concrete practices for staying present and whole at work and at home
- Tools for navigating systems shaped by oppression and structural supremacy
- What the latest research reveals regarding how to overcome overwhelm and transform trauma

A Conversation with Laura van Dernoot Lipsky about TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP

Q: This year marks the 20th anniversary of TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP. What makes the book timely, twenty years later?

A: TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP is as fresh, and urgent, as ever. The pressures that shape our lives, whether from the cost and stress of daily life, emerging tech, media exposure, political chaos, the climate crisis, or escalating oppression, have only intensified in the two decades since the book was first written.

While there is more understanding of the need to care for oneself, the often-heard encouragement of "self-care" is not the same as a comprehensive framework and set of practical tools that make sustaining oneself possible: personally and professionally; individually and collectively; systematically and structurally. This is what TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP has to offer.

Q: How has public understanding of trauma changed since the book first came out?

A: When TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP first came out, there was a deeply embedded culture of self-sacrifice among those who showed up to tend to those who were hurt, threatened, or fighting to get some structural boot off their neck.

Isabella Nugent

Health care workers, ecologists, case workers, advocates, activists, first responders, researchers, teachers, journalists, cultural workers, attorneys, disaster relief workers, healers, clergy, service members, law enforcement—and so many others—were supposed to be able to take whatever came. And those who were caregivers in their personal lives were rarely acknowledged, let alone supported, whether parents caring for children, children caring for elders, or neighbors and community members caring for each other.

TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP has helped make the toll of showing up for others something we could see, name, talk about, and respond to. Today, people are more likely to understand how widespread overwhelm and trauma are and more capable of using these strategies to find a better way forward. This is a monumental change.

Q: In your own words, what is “trauma stewardship”?

A: TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP is an understanding that there is a cumulative toll when we bear witness to and care for the hardship and suffering in our world.

Through research, lived experience, and an astonishing breadth of on-the-ground examples and stories spanning a forty-year career, **TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP** offers a paradigm shift from believing the only morally serious way to do good in this world is through self-sacrifice and instead submits a reliable framework and concrete tools for continuing to show up ethically, and with integrity, for generations to come.

*Q: What would you say to someone who thinks **TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP** isn’t relevant to their work and life?*

A: This is for anyone who has ever thought for even a moment, “Life is...a lot.”

Given the magnitude of chaos and pain bearing down on societies around the world, many experience their lives as fuller, messier, and more demanding than in the past. Whether as Chief Sealth describes the web of life or MLK Jr. describes the single garment of destiny, we live in relationship to each other and are inextricably connected with one another. **TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP** helps us make sense both of our part of the web and the web as a whole.

*Q: What do you hope your readers will take away from reading **TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP**?*

A: Threading the needle of caring deeply about how we engage while finding ourselves increasingly numb and disconnected is central to what it means to be human right now. I hope

Isabella Nugent

folks find in **TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP** a path to understanding the toll of bearing witness, a language for naming the impact, and tools for reviving our connections to a lush and verdant life.

When **TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP** first appeared, I was told that many people felt that it dropped into their lives like rain on a desiccated desert. It gave people a way to imagine that the bleak isolation and abiding exhaustion we had accepted as inevitable did not have to be. **TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP** offered an achievable, sustainable, and more humane way to continue to show up in the world, tailored to our individual lives and collective reality.

Twenty years later, I hope it continues to edify and pour life into anyone who encounters its message.

TO BE IN TOUCH WITH LAURA VAN DERNOOT LIPSKY:

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