

Susan David Helping the Helpers

Susan David: [00:00:00]

Loneliness is real. And loneliness isn't just the experience of being physically alone. It's often also the experience of lacking meaningful connection with ourselves.

We can be in a crowd or we can be so busy, but we lack connection with ourselves. And that is, , ground in which, , stress and burnout become absolutely fertile

Jill Stoddard: [00:00:28] you're listening to dr. Susan David on Psychologists Off the Clock.

Diana Hill: [00:00:32] We are four clinical psychologists here to bring you cutting edge and science-based ideas from psychology to help you flourish in your relationships work and health.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:00:49] I'm Dr. Debbie Sorensen, practicing in Mile High Denver, Colorado

Diana Hill: [00:00:53] I'm Dr. Diana Hill practicing in seaside, Santa Barbara, California.

Yael Schonbrun: [00:00:57] From coast to coast. I'm Dr. Yael Schonbrun, a Boston-based clinical psychologist and assistant professor at Brown University.

Jill Stoddard: [00:01:03] And from sunny San Diego, I'm Dr. Jill Stoddard author of Be Mighty and The Big Book Of Act Metaphors.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:01:09] We hope you take what you learn here to build a rich and meaningful life.

Diana Hill: [00:01:12] Thank you for listening to Psychologists Off the Clock.

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Jill Stoddard: [00:01:54] hi everyone. It's Jill here, and I'm really excited to bring you this episode today, where I had the honor to interview dr. Susan David and I wanted to gear this episode toward the helpers.

I think many of us have been doing a lot of helping and I wanted dr. David to talk about how we can take care of ourselves and take care of each other. And I think there were so many little just gems of wisdom throughout the episode. And I'm here with Yael and I'm wondering what stuck out most to you about this episode Yael.

It

Yael Schonbrun: [00:02:34] was so many things were really useful about this episode, but one of the things that really resonated with me was this idea that.

This is one of the first times that we as therapists are sort of going through the same exact experience as our clients at the same time. So as we're giving them advice, it's also a really important time to sort of take stock and say, Oh, that's that's advice that is relevant to me because I'm going through this too. And, and for that reason, it's almost like we're sharing in the experience. That our clients are having more than we ever have before. And I've found that I've been doing a lot more, revealing of my own experiences, saying a lot more things like me too, as clients are going through it. And I think that it's actually a really therapeutically, helpful thing to be doing. Cause it normalizes that we are all going through something that's extremely stressful and in a sense, it really speaks to the fact that we're all having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation.

Jill Stoddard: [00:03:29] Yeah. I totally agree.

And I've even noticed with my clients that they're asking after me more you know, how are you doing? Which, you know, I know that they've always cared about me, but there's a new level of like, acknowledging that we're going through this too, and really wanting to check in and make sure that we're okay.

And I think in, in line with that too, is. we are supporting a lot of people through this difficult time. And one of the things I took away from this episode is how important it is to. Get back to basics. And I think as therapists, like we sort of assume that we have the basics down, you know, we've been doing it for a long time.

We've been teaching it for a long time. And at least for me, when I really stopped and looked at my own experience, I noticed I'm not sleeping well, I'm not eating as well. I'm exercising less, I'm drinking more. And I just became aware that things that. Had become automatic health behaviors or self care behaviors had kind of flown out the window without me even being aware.

And so I think dr. David talks about some things that we already know intellectually, but there are some really good reminders here that we have to return to paying attention and really prioritizing these practices for ourselves. If we're going to be able to serve the people that we serve.

Yael Schonbrun: [00:04:56] Yeah. Yeah, I can totally relate to that.

And I think, you know, just the common human experience of going through this pandemic is all of our nervous systems are on high alert. We're all stressed out. And when that happens, all of our limbic systems sort of go into action and our prefrontal cortex goes offline and we start to engage in just reflexive behaviors as opposed to more intentional behaviors.

And so those reminders really are useful to kind of. Take a breath, you know, center ourselves and then make a more mindful choice and an intentional choice. That is a healthier one, which is exactly the guidance that we give for clients. And, and I think right now more than ever is really important for therapy so that we don't burn

Jill Stoddard: [00:05:36] out.

100%. I couldn't agree more. And one thing that I've been using to facilitate that, which is something else dr. David spoke about in this episode is , you know,

getting in touch with. The parts of the things that we're doing that we want to do rather than just the things that we need to do. You know, I think it can be easy to look at all of the stressful balls we're juggling around parenting and working and everything else.

And I've, I've been able to zoom out a little bit and go, Oh, Right. Well, I actually want to prepare healthy meals for my children. It's not just something that I must do or have to do or need to do. It's also something I want to do. And there's something that becomes a little bit more, I feel a little more empowered when I'm able to notice the parts of my day that are things I'm actually actively choosing, which is what you were just talking about.

Yael Schonbrun: [00:06:33] Yeah. I love that.

Jill Stoddard: [00:06:35] Okay. enjoy this episode with dr. Susan David.

I am thrilled and honored that I have the pleasure of interviewing Dr. Susan David today.

Susan, David is one of the world's leading management thinkers and an award winning Harvard medical school psychologist. Her best selling book, emotional agility, was winner of the thinkers 50 breakthrough idea award. Susan's Ted talk went viral with over 1 million views and its first week of release.

She is a frequent contributor to the Harvard business review, New York times, Washington post, wall street journal and guest on national radio and television. Named on the thinkers 50 global list of the top management thinkers. Susan is a sought after keynote speaker and consultant with clients that include the world economic forum, E, Y, United nations, Google, Microsoft, NASDAQ, and many other national and multinational.

Organizations. Her focus is on defining and executing effective strategy, especially in the areas of engagement, high performance leadership, and culture change. Susan is the CEO of evidence-based psychology on the faculty at Harvard medical school, a cofounder of the Institute of coaching and on the scientific advisory board of thrive global and Virgin pulse.

Susan lives outside of Boston with her family. Susan, thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us today. I really appreciate you being here.

Susan David: [00:08:05] Thank you.

I'm delighted to connect.

Jill Stoddard: [00:08:08] So you had one of the most popular Ted talks that was called the gift and power of emotional courage. And you recently participated in a zoom Ted conversation about coping during this pandemic. And I reached out to you hoping we could continue that conversation with a slight twist.

, many of our psychologists off the clock listeners are helpers themselves, so whether they're mental health professional or other types of. Healthcare providers. and you know, I think we've all heard a lot of conversations and read blogs and articles about how parents or couples or, you know, just people in general might use.

Different psychological principles to cope with what's going on. But I was hoping we could talk a little bit about how the people who are really writing those blogs and articles and teaching these concepts, , you know, how we might be able to use the principles of emotional agility. , or a lot of our listeners practice

acceptance and commitment therapy.

So emotional agility and psychological flexibility are very similar. , and we talk about that a lot on the podcast. So, I want to talk a little about how we can use these principles to help the helpers. And I think there are three maybe layers to this. So I'll, I'll kind of outline for you what I think the layers are, and then maybe we can look at them one by one.

So first. How do we give the best care now that we are on zoom instead of in person and when we as helpers are going through the same thing at the same time? So that's kind of the first layer. The second is how do we function at our best at home in our roles as spouses and parents and friends and roommates. When it maybe feels like there's not a whole lot left to give at the end of the day after helping throughout the day. And then third, and maybe most importantly. You know, if we want to be successful at that first and second layer, how do we then care for ourselves when there's like really nothing left to give?

Susan David: [00:10:08] So thank you. I think these are such powerful and important questions. I think both for us, I mean, certainly in my context, um. Married to a physician and he is in the midst of all of this at the mass general hospital in Boston. And we are homeschooling two young children. And I think that these are, you know, real, this is a real experience that is.

It's tough because we are simultaneously trying to live the experience and process it and help others to process it. So, you know, I think that one of the , experiences that I am suggesting and that I think that a lot of people are finding helpful, and of course this aligns so much with our work on act and beyond is. This firstly idea of a gentle acceptance that without gentle acceptance, it's really difficult to get anywhere. You can't rebuild a city when it's still under bombardment. And of course, as we know, one of the paradoxes of human beings is that gentle acceptance is a prerequisite to change. And you know, what do I mean by gentle acceptance?

It's again, as we know, enact not this idea of passive resignation, but rather an openness to the idea that it is what it is. It is what it is. This is not something we invited. It's not something we are asking for. It is what it is. And I think that for all of us, you know, even when we work in the space, just reminding ourselves of the.

Is what it is, is really powerful because I've been thinking so much that in times of COVID, our suffering becomes directly proportional to us trying to control what isn't controllable. You know, we try to control our , you know. Tightness of expectation about what experience our children should have, or we are often trying to control whether our neighbors are, you know, wearing an N 95 or a different type of masks.

You know, there's so much or all, you know, what one politician or another politician is saying. And I think there's real power in turning this idea of willingness and gentle acceptance in on ourselves as care providers. Because this is key. But then of course, the second part of this is. His routine. You know that even within the context of recognizing what we can't control, there are many activities in our own life that we can start shaping in ways that our values concordance.

And you know, Lisa Feldman Barrett's work on really our body resources. This

idea that it becomes very difficult to navigate our. Environment when we ourselves are under-resourced and the basic building blocks of our own resources are things like, you know, these are these fundamentals that we work with our clients around, but getting enough sleep, good sleep hygiene, moving technology out of the bedroom.

, not engaging in. Autopilot connection with comparison on our phones, but really exerting a level of intentionality around this. And I know that this, again, is what we work with our clients around, but I think being. Kind and compassionate. But examining how we doing this for ourselves is critical because, you know, stress and burnout is real at the moment.

, I just launched a podcast with Ted called checking in and this past week I spoke with, , Steve Hayes and, you know, stress and burnout. But also loneliness is real. And loneliness isn't just the experience of being physically alone. It's often also the experience of lacking meaningful connection with ourselves.

We can be in a crowd or we can be so busy, but we lack connection with ourselves. And that is, , ground in which, , stress and burnout become absolutely fertile. Right.

Jill Stoddard: [00:14:48] Well, I think these are such important points. And one thing I've been thinking a lot about is this idea of, you know, I think for a lot of us who are helpers or even some of our listeners who are the people who listen to podcasts and read, self help books, the people who are really interested in personal growth have maybe gotten pretty good at emotional agility.

. And. We're not used to feeling like we're back at the beginning of a learning curve. And you know, it sort of makes me think of if an athlete sustained an injury of some sorts, that they don't just go back out onto the field or the pitcher of the court and play at the same level they were playing before the injury.

They need to rehab and they need to practice and they need to work to get back to that level of performance that maybe they had been used to being at for quite some time. And I think that that may be happening with us. Um. You know that we need to really remind ourselves that we just need to get back to the basics for a little while and that we can't be expected to perform at the same very high levels.

We might be used to when we're in this context of a, of a pandemic or Bernay Brown and her very first episode of her new podcast talked about the FFT and. You know, F is a curse word, but we'll say friggin first time and how, you know, the first time anyone does anything, they're not going to be very good at it. It's going to feel awkward and uncomfortable and it will take practice until it becomes smooth. And you know, this pandemic situation is an FFT for everybody. And to be able to go back to those basic building blocks, it seems simple, but I think it's really a necessary reminder.

Susan David: [00:16:28] It's really important and you know, it's particularly important in the context of, again, the narratives that we have in society right now, which is really interesting.

That in the shadow of so much. Trauma, death and uncertainty. There are these memes floating around on social media that, you know, if you don't use this as an opportunity to build your side hustle, or, you know, if you don't use this as an opportunity to, you know, learn Mandarin or a new language that somehow.

This is not about, uh, the fact that there's a pandemic, but actually it's about the fact that you are weak or lazy. And so I think there's so much that really invites people and it doesn't matter what profession we are in, it is inviting us and conspiring to try evoke a sense of self criticism. And now is not the time for self criticism.

Now ease the time for self compassion and for recognizing that even as therapists, maybe even, especially as therapists, because we giving some much of ourselves that they needs to be more space. For us to be able to reconnect with these building blocks because there is so much this idea that there's the shadow of death and uncertainty, but we've got to be bolding and achieving and, and, you know, looking for, for, for silver linings.

And that this is all purpose right now. And I think we need to move away from that.

Yeah.

Jill Stoddard: [00:18:17] Well, and I think in line with that, in addition to that kind of meme, like, you know, use this as an opportunity to learn Mandarin or whatever it is. There's also a lot out there about, um. Practicing gratitude, but also like giving back.

You know, giving back makes people feel better. And of course we know that's true. We also know that, , you know, post traumatic growth after a traumatic event is really predicted by making meaning of a trauma. Um, David Kessler just came out with his new book that kind of officially names a six stage of grief , in terms of making meaning.

. And so that's something I've been wondering about is like how do people make meaning when they might still be on this just roller coaster of thoughts and feelings and feeling like they're just barely surviving.

Susan David: [00:19:05] Yeah. And I think that's real. You know, people have described to me that they are barely making it through the day, and then sometimes it feels like.

Other people have managed to find their purpose and are volunteering and it's, you know, there is the sense of feeling less than in the process because you are struggling. And I think that, you know, there's just so much power in. Just being, there's just so much power in just being in. Yes. If that being is inviting you into a space of writing or listening to a beautiful piece of music or connecting with something that evokes a sense of ore and connection and humanity.

That's powerful. And of course, if you want to use this opportunity, or even if you have to use the opportunity to reinvent your practice or to rework how you doing things, there's a gain power in connecting that back with your values of, you know, why is it that you're trying to do that? I mean, for me it's been really interesting because I do a huge amount of travel for my work, and of course all of that.

Travel has gone, and on the one hand, that's hugely challenging. On the other hand, I genuinely find it exciting because it's allowing me to think about a trajectory that maybe would have been a few years in working out the technology and how do I do this is now, you know, not a luxury that I have. I need to work it out fairly quickly.

But I think if I engage in that as a, as a half to goal, you know, I have to do this. I

have no choice. This is terrible. You know, we know from an emotional agility perspective that, you know, what does this do for us at evokes a sense of, resentment and pressure and the emotional labor that is involved in those have two goals is more likely to create a sense of burnout for us.

Because. There's this feeling of I have to do this thing. I feel like I don't want to do it, but it's being forced upon me. And so some of the experiences that people describe as being really profoundly important in this journey, or just reconnecting with their, they want two goals. Their value of bringing their work maybe to more people than would otherwise have connected with it, , their recognition that the need is so great and yet probably in one of the most profoundly important times in history, we are. Not needing to persuade people of the importance of mental health. This is something that is being recognized from businesses to coaching practices to therapy and beyond.

And so for me, what's been really powerful is starting to reconnect with those values, and those wants twos that then give me a sense of impetus two.

Reinvent and recreate. , and I think this is that sense of alignment with the self that allows us to move from a state of absolute mental exhaustion into a sense of.

Connection and coherence, and it's ultimately connection and coherence. That's gonna help us to move through the situation effectively as healthcare providers and as carers.

Jill Stoddard: [00:22:57] Absolutely. And I think, you know, with the values, when we're talking about the qualities we want to embody, the qualities, , of the actions we take, rather than, you know, kind of outcomes and big goals, that that becomes something that can feel more manageable.

You know, it's almost what you decide to do is almost less important than how you decide to do it. And, you know, you talk about tiny tweaks. , I also liked you interviewed, James clear for the podcast. And he talks about the two minute rule. you know, sort of giving an example, I'd love, I wrote down this quote, he says, every action casts a vote for the person you want to become.

And I just live. Right. And that's so great. I loved the way he put that. And you know, the two minute rule was an example of, you know, if you have some big goal or habit that you want to develop a reading 32 books a year. Just read one page. If you, if your identity is that of a writer and you want to write a novel, then you know, just write one page and that reminded me of what you call tiny tweaks. Or I have a book called be mighty. That's an act book. And I talk about it as the me. I want to be in this one moment and even point out that the word me sits right in the middle, right inside of the word moment. And I think when we can really break it down to those, you know, the showing up for the small moments and being the person that we want to be.

You know, embodying those valued qualities. It can make, , decisions about how we're going to be during this pandemic time feel quite a bit less overwhelming.

Susan David: [00:24:33] Yes, yes. And I think there's, I love that quote of his, and there are these two different aspects to it. The first is, the being aspect, which is the idea that, you know, there's so much out of our control, but we can control or we can manage to some extent, how we connect with people, how we

respond, how we listen.

There's so much that we. Henan body. we can also think about how we can create values aligned. Changes in our environment. So if we working, you know, without any structure, tar day, and if home and work have completely morphed, then it becomes up to us to creates a sense of values connected. Habits and boundaries in our work.

And so, uh, you know, what this might mean in an everyday aspect is if you come home from work and you value your time with your children over dinner. And yet you find yourself bringing your cell phone to the table every dinner time. Then a values connected, tiny tweak might be what we call piggy-backing this idea that you automatically put your keys into the particular drawer, and now you put your cell phone into the drawer as well.

So what you're doing is you are starting to create values connected. Habitual changes by using what we know about how people actually create a new habits in their life. And so I think in COVID times, those same principles apply because there's a blurring where we are more likely to bring our computers down to the kitchen table and to be having dinner while interacting with our children.

And there isn't that sense of. Habits embodying our values. And so even thinking about, you know, what is. A small tweak that we as care providers can make in our lives that embody who we want to be, can actually be profoundly important. It can be the difference of a, you know, normally my spouse comes into the room and I'm busy working and I just continue my work because now working home are the same.

Versus actually taking that moment to get up to hug the person and create a sense of intimacy and connection. It can be the power that is in deciding that between six and 9:00 PM. That is no longer our work time and that this is the time for connection with our families. So these are things, again, that we know about in our practices, and that we would be inviting our clients into the space of architecting.

And yet we now in this beautiful moment, in many ways where we have become our client, we have become our client, and we have become the person that we are now able to experiment on a little bit. And this is really powerful. And you know, by the same token, what a lot of clients are talking about is. Yes, they in struggle, but in many ways, they've been preparing for this moment all of their lives.

Jill Stoddard: [00:28:14] I've heard that from many of my clients. Those exact words,

Susan David: [00:28:17] yeah. Day's been preparing for it.

Right. And so there's this something so. Exquisite about that. So gorgeous. So intimate. Such a place of sharing where we now have a glimpse into our clients' worlds, literally through zoom and what we're seeing, we're getting to meet their dogs and their children, and there's.

Beauty in that. And there's beauty and becoming our own clients. And I think there's such a remarkable sense of humanity that invites us into the space and that if as care providers, we just open ourselves up to, the wonder of that, this beautiful idea. I've got this. Emotional pyramid of needs that are posted on social media and that people really seem to be connecting with.

but within that, one of the things that I talk about is that, you know, often when things feel really tough, we know from act that just perspective taking, you know, being able to be an observer in your process is so helpful. And so there's sometimes this beautiful idea of imagining that if you weren't in.

The most terrible tragedy possible, but that you were actually in a comedy, that this perspective taking that happens there and you know in some ways. We can bring that light to our own lives right now, that never in a million years would we have imagined that we would be our own client, right? Because of course we are, but only intellectually.

But here we've become our own client very practically. And that's with our clients. We are in this exquisite, messy, tough moment. Altogether

Jill Stoddard: [00:30:18] and right. I mean, when, but together.

Yeah, and when we teach and talk about compassion and self compassion, we talk about common humanity again, kind of more at an intellectual level.

And now we're all really. Truly experiencing that. No, we are genuinely in this together. and it is kind of an exquisite moment in that way. And I think it's pretty uncomfortable for many of the helpers because we're not accustomed to that.

You know, we may. No the experience or have experience with anxiety or depression, but we're not having a panic attack in the room while our client is also having a panic attack and what's happening with this pandemic feels more like that.

And so, it's new and uncomfortable. And what a wonderful learning opportunity and an opportunity for connection as well.

Susan David: [00:31:09] Yeah. I, you know, had an experience recently. One of the interviews for the podcast was Kristin Neff and she walked us through, self-compassion exercise and.

Again, this is the bread and butter of our work. You know, we do it. We know it, we love it. We preach it, and I went for a walk and I was listening to. This podcast recording that I had recorded with Kristen. And so none of it was new to me. And yet she, you know, invited the idea of a touch of, you know, whether it's creating a fist in front of your heart or, just even soothing, you know, your shoulder, how we respond to touch.

And. I was out there walking and it literally brought me to tears because of that experience, which is that we are often on the giving and, but I think the real power that we can move ourselves into in this moment is to also allow ourselves to be cared for and allowing ourselves to be cared for. Is a choice that we can make as providers.

You know, because I think that often as providers, we create a sense of distance. It's like, Oh, I know this stuff, or, gee, this feels familiar to me. And so we moved to a very intellectual level with the material. And so allowing ourselves to be cared for is also about letting go of that judgment or a sense of, Oh, this all, you know, I know all this stuff.

And really creating a sense of openness and connection. Yeah. With ourselves.

Jill Stoddard: [00:33:11] Absolutely. I mean, I know whenever we do. Self-compassion exercises or compassion exercises in general, people often have the easiest time expressing compassion to others, and the hardest time. Giving it to themselves or accepting it from others.

And when I've done different kinds of trainings and work, I find that that is difficult for clients and consumers and much more difficult for therapists. It's really interesting. Yeah. so I want to go back to what we were talking about a little bit with, James clear and.

Tiny tweaks and these kinds of things that we can be doing differently because it also made me think about something else that you talk a lot about, which is pain really being assigned post of values. But you know, when we're experiencing emotional distress, it's, it's a sign. Like if we're feeling lonely, for example, it might be telling us what we're missing in terms of connection with other people.

and so this doesn't mean move away from the feeling of lonely, but look toward it to try to understand what it is that you need and what this pain is telling you. And what action do we need to take. In order to move toward. And so when you were talking about, having more structure, you know, six to nine is the time that we put our computers away and we make time for connecting.

And I think that structure is important. I also think that , it can become something that goes overboard if it is applied as a very rigid set of rules. So, for example, right, like, if I'm lonely and that means that I need to connect more. Well, I, how am I supposed to connect? I have to shelter in place in my home.

And you know, zoom isn't the same. Zoom doesn't count. You know, we can kind of apply these rules about how we think things should be or should be done, and that this is a time and place where we have to really work to be creative and flexible to find. Those workable sorts of solutions, you know, kind of, and that may bring up new pain.

You know, it kinda stinks to be on zoom and not be able to hug my friends. Right. And that's a pain that we need to make space for and still be willing to try it anyway.

Susan David: [00:35:26] Yes. Because it's, again, this difference between having structure. That is helpful versus structure that sets up expectations. That'll basically disappointments waiting to happen where we become so tightly focused on the task.

That we lose sight of the objective. And you know what I mean by others? We all know that, , when leaders are trying to manage their work, they often become very micro-focused. You know, are you doing this? Are you doing that? They become so focused on the task that they struggled to go into a meeting and say, what is the objective here?

The objective is to actually connect. The objective is to understand. Women teams really at, you know, we become so tight into the task and the same happens when we are trying to set up structures is we become so tightly focused on the task that if your child doesn't want to be with you between six and 9:00 PM that night and they don't actually want to go on a bike ride, then we can.

Move into the space where now I feel rejected and where I've got this thing that I'm now dealing with. And so I think it's a bothness. I think there's a bothness.

There is this ability to, recognize that the structure is helpful. But the structure is not serving as a proxy. it's merely allowing us to connect with our values.

but as soon as it takes on a form of rigidity or avoidance, or, Something that we are owned by, rather than us owning it, then we've lost sight of what it is we're trying to really do here. So I think that is this idea that we can be in the moment

and really face into our loneliness and our sadness.

The grief, the distress that we are experiencing, and then also flexibly recognizing that there's some things that we can put in place that can be helpful to us, but that those things that we put in place. Don't become the solution. You know, , they aren't the solution. They just a vehicle they are one of many different vehicles as to how we can get the connection or get the, , kindness or get the intimacy that we might be needing from our family during that particular time. As an example.

Jill Stoddard: [00:38:06] Yes, absolutely. And I think, I love the way that you say that and that we're always kind of asking ourselves, you know, what is this in the service of. You know, is this, am I adhering to a rigid set of rules because that's making me somehow feel safe and in control, but as having a cost to my relationships?

Or is this really in the service of my values in this one moment and that we're making choices in a very intentional way, moment to moment, and that those may change. You know, from, from day to day of six to 9:00 PM worked tonight, we still have to be, you know, agile at six o'clock tomorrow. And be making intentional choices that are values driven.

Susan David: [00:38:50] Yes. It's fascinating. I was recently speaking with someone who described to me how, you know, she had this idea that being a good parent was about helping her children with structure through the experience that she wanted to provide a sense of routine with them. But then went on to describe how they were having so many arguments because she didn't feel that her kids were taking homeschooling seriously and so it was really just beautiful and also fascinating that the objective that she had gone in worth was now being undermined by the very structure that she had imposed.

And this need to just really pull back and say, is what we doing. In the moment working. And I think within that is also this power of letting go. Letting go.

Sometimes we can actually care too much. We can actually fuse with caring too much, you know, caring too much about what we're doing at a particular point or what things look like, or you know, what our goals are.

We can care too much. And sometimes there's a fusion that comes with that. And just making sure. Choices around softening into ourselves and softening into the moment allows us to be more effective.

Jill Stoddard: [00:40:14] There's a great exercise and I cannot, for the life of me, remember who I learned this from and I feel terrible when I can't give.

Credit. So if anyone knows who to credit, please let me know. But is, you know, if you take your hands and hold them out in front of you as if you're holding onto something and you imagine that what's in your hands is whatever this thing is that you're really struggling with and holding onto. Like, I must have a structure for my children, for their homeschool and hold and hold and hold and hold.

You know, eventually our arms get really tired and they hurt and. that it's this kind of experiential way of practicing letting go. Like if you just let your arms drop and notice how that feels and how the tension in your arms kind of releases.

Because, you know, I use this word all the time, let go.

And sometimes it's like, well, but how, how do I do that? Exactly. You know, people want more rules and structure around how to do this, you know? And I

think that that's a really cool experiential exercise that sort of embodies what it feels like when you are letting go

Susan David: [00:41:16] agree.

It's so powerful and, with that asking question, because letting go often feels like if I let go of this thing, it's scary and I won't have.

A lot, you know, I'm gonna let go of structure or I'm going to let go of, you know, my expectation that I see X number of clients every day. You know, there are lots of things that we often need to just let go of and they didn't go feel scary. And so it can be really helpful too. Also, practically and intentionally ask yourself, if I let go of this.

What do I then open myself. Up to bringing into my life, because I think this is the Juul aspect. The letting go is also about recognizing that you're inviting something else in.

Jill Stoddard: [00:42:09] Oh, I love that. And I think that's true of vulnerability in general, and every time we step out of our comfort zone. we're letting in some new opportunity and to have that willingness to feel uncertain and vulnerable in order to kind of move forward in that way is difficult, but is it's where the magic happens.

Susan David: [00:42:30] Yes. Yes. And being, and being explicit about that. You know, you can't control it. But being explicit about naming it, I think is very powerful. Yes.

Jill Stoddard: [00:42:40] Well, Susan, I know we are running out of time here. I want to thank you so much again for coming to talk with us today. I know this is going to be a very, , helpful and useful episode for our listeners. We really appreciate you taking the time.

Susan David: [00:42:55] Thank you. And I'm so grateful truly to all of the amazing people who are. Out there, you know, caring and giving. And there's just such enormous, connection and power that I think people who are caring for others is bringing to the world right now. I think this is the, the glue or the catalyst that is driving so much forward.

So thank you to everyone for all you are doing. Thank you.

Diana Hill: [00:43:26] Thank you for listening to Psychologist Off the Clock. If you enjoy our podcast, you can help us out by leaving a review or contributing on Patreon.

Yael Schonbrun: [00:43:33] You can find us wherever you get your podcasts and you can connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Jill Stoddard: [00:43:38] We'd like to thank our interns, Dr. Katherine Foley-Saldea and Dr Kati Lear

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