

Louise Hayes

Louise Hayes: [00:00:00] Finding a way to do something that allows you to get through the, situation in a way that is connected to what you care about. , and so just trying something you've never tried before and doing something different that is meaningful to you. And young people have found all sorts of different solutions and ways to cope with this. And I think there's, there's something really important about knowing that we can do that. Just knowing that we can do that.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:00:27] That was Dr. Louise Hayes on Psychologists Off the Clock.

Diana Hill: [00:00:31] 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: [00:00:47] I'm Dr. Debbie Sorensen, practicing in Mile High Denver, Colorado.

Diana Hill: [00:00:51] I'm Dr. Diana Hill practicing in seaside, Santa Barbara, California.

Yael Schonbrun: [00:00:55] From coast to coast. I'm Dr. Yael Schonbrun, a Boston-based clinical psychologist and assistant professor at Brown University.

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

Debbie Sorensen: [00:01:07] We hope you take what you learn here to build a rich and meaningful life.

Diana Hill: [00:01:11] Thank you for listening to Psychologists Off the Clock.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:01:18] Hi everyone. This is Debbie. I have an interview today with Dr. Louise Hayes, who is an expert on adolescence. And in the episode, we talk a lot about some of the different stressors that adolescents face as they go through life. And right now, as you know, there are a lot of them. So in that episode, we talk about some issues related to the pandemic and, and how that impacts adolescents specifically.

And we also talk about some other. Just more general issues like bullying and that type of thing. Diana, what are your thoughts about the episode?

Diana Hill: [00:01:51] Well, what a treat, first of all, to have Louise Hayes on, she's just such a passionate player in the field of adolescence and is brought so much, um, sort of beautiful work of ACT to adolescents.

And I love her DNA-V model and you know, I have a sort of. Soft spot in my heart for adolescents. I think in part, because I had a, such a struggle with it myself, that was a really painful time. And I see in my current life now, how develop milestones that weren't met for me as an adolescent show up in my relationships. I know Debbie you've experienced that, maybe a few, maybe a few of my communications, the difficulties. And, and so I actually have done dedicated a lot of my career to adolescents. And we're talking about adolescents. We're talking about this span from. 12 to 24. So it's a huge developmental span. It's the time of our life when we have the highest risk of death by accident.

So no wonder our parents are freaked out because yeah. There's accidents. Um, drug use from risk taking behavior, um, from. A suicide. It's an incredibly difficult time. And it's also a time that I think what gets left out is it's a time of growth and

opportunity to prepare you for adulthood and creativity and courage. And I think it's important as we set the stage for adolescents to look at what are the developmental tasks of adolescents and what is the interpersonal neurobiology that's happening during this time, so that we can really harness. The strengths as, as the wees Hayes talks about so beautifully in this episode and, and also learn from them, keeping them safe.

She talks a lot about that. So some of the changes that are happening in the brain, I love the work by Dan Siegel, who was on our show, a number of episodes back and his work called Brainstorm. If you're a parent of an adolescent, buy that book now, like go get it because it'll save you. It saved me as a therapist.

Adolescents, you talks about these four tasks about adolescent development: novelty seeking, social engagement, high emotional intensity ,and creative exploration. And when we think about the pandemic right now and how it's impacting all of those things, and also how all the radical changes that are happening in race and, um, oppression and how the adolescents are really those 20 year olds are taking the lead and.

Big powerful, wonderful ways and making change in our country. There's upsides and downsides to all of these tasks. And how do we, as parents step out of it, right? And support, support, or service step out of the myths that adolescents are lazy or out of control, and that we need to control them and step into really.

Practicing perspective, taping, taking, understanding their developmental tasks, uh, seeing the strengths and the creativity and courage and creating a path where they can be have enough room. To grow. We have a lot to learn from them. And the best way to do that is for us to model some of that perspective, taking and empathy with them, which I think dr.

Hayes talks a lot about. Yeah,

Debbie Sorensen: [00:04:45] that's great. That's really helpful model Diana.

Thanks for sharing that. I'd also just like to let our listeners know, she talks about the DNA V model in the episode. And if you want to learn more about that model, which would actually be a great place to start check out episode 79, which we did a while back

with Louise, because she kind of walks us through the model a bit more. And you'll hear some of the terms in the episode today. Also, you really need to check out her book for adolescents. That's just coming out. It's fantastic. It's really good for, for adolescents themselves. And also. If you're a clinician, you should check out her offering on Praxis Praxis Continuing Education is one of our sponsors and Louise has a training on the DNA V model. It's an in depth, one it's on demand. So you can do it at your own pace from the comfort of your own computer. Uh, so check that out at praxiscet.com and you can go to our webpage to link to them.

Diana Hill: [00:05:39] Yes. We also are affiliates of the narrow Dharma program with her Canson, which is a great resource, as well as we're learning about our own resilience and how to have some more mindfulness and empathy, effective taking skills.

And then I also want to say just a little plug for our podcast, help us out. By making a donation on Patron. It's a value-based donation. We put a lot of blood,

sweat, and tears into this, into these episodes, and we need some support to keep the podcast going because for it to be financially sustainable, as we grow, um, we need a little bit more support to do all of the behind the scenes stuff. So check it out, check out Patron, and please make a values based donation.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:06:23] I'm here with Dr. Louise Hayes. Louise is a clinical psychologist, author and international speaker and trainer. She's known for her work using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for young people in school and clinical settings. She's the former president of the association for contextual behavioral science.

Dr. Hayes is also the author of the books *Get Out of Your Mind and Into your Life for Teenagers*, and *The Thriving Adolescent: Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Positive Psychology to Help Teens Manage Emotions, Achieve Goals, and Build Connection*. And she has a brand new book just coming out, which is a fantastic book for young people called *Your Life, Your Way: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Skills to Help Teens Manage Emotions and Build Resilience*, coauthored with Joseph Ciarrochi .

Louise Hayes: [00:07:14] You said it right.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:07:17] I had to check and this book, I'm going to get copies for my niece and nephew and for my own kids, when they're older, if you're an adolescent or know one, you've got to check it out.

It's really good self help book. Um, she's also been on the podcast before: Episode 79 on *Helping Adolescents Thrive*. If you want to learn more about her model. For working with adolescents DNA-V, go back and take a listen. It's a great episode. And, welcomed back to the podcast, Louise. It's great to have you here.

Louise Hayes: [00:07:46] Thanks, Debbie. It's really nice to be here. I really enjoyed with the last one, so I'm happy to come back.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:07:51] Okay, good. We're glad you're here. And also glad that you've written this book and that you're here to talk about it. And today we'll be talking about the book and we're also really going to focus on how adolescents are coping with the big.

Issues going on in the world today. I think that that's a really important topic because adolescents right now are facing some pretty serious global problems. Some of these didn't even exist way back when I was a teenager, some did, but some are really on the forefront right now. And there's some brand new to name, a few issues.

You know, we have the pandemic economic downturn and stress. Racial trauma and injustice, political turmoil, climate crises fires. You guys had the big fire fires in Australia earlier this year, school shootings just so much happening in the world. Louise. We talked originally about doing this episode about a couple of months back about the climate crisis specifically, and even some.

Yeah. So we had those first conversations about doing this. The world has changed so much.

Louise Hayes: [00:08:59] It's incredible. Debbie, just how much has changed in a few months. And as you read that list, I felt myself thinking, thinking, Oh my

goodness, it's a long list. It's a long list.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:09:10] It's a long list. And I feel that too, it just makes my heart heavy.

And really these issues. Are impacting all of us they're experienced on this global level, but I think in some ways, young people because of their age and their situation, they're uniquely impacted. So I'd love to hear your thoughts. We'll, we'll start broad here and they get into some specific questions, but what are you noticing in your work with adolescents in terms of how, in terms of the emotional impact of this?

Louise Hayes: [00:09:39] Well, with dealing with firstly, with dealing with times of change, um, and. When you read the list, it sounds horrific to be honest, the changes that we face right now, um, and we have always had to deal with change. Uh, humans are actually pretty good at dealing with change. And so, um, adolescence are set up to look at the world.

Like the, if you think about the adolescent developmental period, it's a wonderful period where their ability to look at things in a different way and create new ways of doing things is really primed, primed by evolution. In fact, um, and so I am hopeful even in the context of that big list. And I think, um, there is a place for seeing where we're at and also being hopeful.

And I. I'm a firm believer that young people are the ones who are going to help us drive this change. I think, um, and all the people, I was going to say old people, but older people, older,

Debbie Sorensen: [00:10:46] older,

Louise Hayes: [00:10:48] middle age it are really need to be taking a look at some of the things that teenagers and young adults have to say, because I think they're our hope.

I might add, like, I don't want them to be responsible. We're responsible too, but they have new eyes. Um, and I want just give you one little example, please.

There's a researcher in the U S called Alison Gopnik, who looks at our cognitive styles and the way development influences that.

And she has some really cool research showing that as you get older, you're more. You're less likely to accept a new hypothesis, a new idea, even if the evidence supports that new idea. So the older you are the less likely to accept new ideas, even if there's tons of evidence around to say that there's a new idea and adolescence is this unique window where new ideas are accepted and looked at.

And I think that's something that I hold hope for.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:11:46] That's good to hear. I think that's, that does give a hopeful point of view. And also there is a certain level of flexibility when people aren't just set in their ways and. I don't know, dare I say jaded about things. Like, I think that when I think about my own kids, I spend all this time worrying about, Oh, this is so hard for them.

You know, they're not with their friends, they're not at school, all these things because of the pandemic and then I'm with them and they're, they're adapting.

Louise Hayes: [00:12:17] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. They're adapting. Our ability to adapt is remarkable. We just have to make sure we're adapting to the thing that we want.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:12:27] Yeah, so, so that's helpful.

And we'll talk today about how adolescents can use that, that flexibility toward, you know, their values and, and creating change in the world to the degree that they can. I wonder, are you seeing that this is impacting. Them as individuals, there must be a lot of variation in terms of how this is impacting adolescents.

Louise Hayes: [00:12:53] There is a lot of air. Yeah. There is a lot of variation. When you say this, we're just talking about change, I guess. So, because this might be the pandemic, but this might also be, um, changes in social structural or political change or climate.

So we'll just say this as change and, um, how they coping depends on many individual factors and some are really coping very well and some are struggling. And so it's of hard to answer that question. Um, I guess meet your adolescent where they're at, or if you're a young person listening to this wherever you are. It's okay. You know, you're not worse than anyone else in terms of how you cope. So the first thing we want to do is validate, um, and. And let people know it's okay to be where you are. If you're sad about where you're at right now, um, and finding it difficult to cope that's okay. And you can get help. And if you're okay with it and you like the lockdown that's okay too.

Um, and leading yourself where you're at and finding support in that place is a good thing. I think the other thing is where you're at changes from one day to the next. I'm sure you know this Debbie I'm done. Yeah. I can do this, this is okay, I can manage these changes that are happening right now. And then the next aisle you want to hide under the blanket.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:14:16] Oh, yeah. That's exactly how it is. It's so up and down. And I think that, yeah, that's been true with all the adults that I've talked to older people I've talked to as well. Is that it's it varies a lot. Um, some people are having a tough time some days some aren't. Yeah. So no different for regardless of your age group.

Louise Hayes: [00:14:34] Yeah, it is probably quite interesting, I think is that, um, I know when we just talk about, in the context of the pandemic, when it first happened and we had to go into lockdown, there were lots of people who including, the all the psychologists that I work with in the clinic I work with, who are stressed and overwhelmed and how are we going to cope with this? And how can we do this and clients too, and young people. And then within a couple of weeks, we kind of settled into the. With whatever we had to do to manage the isolation. Um, and then here in Australia, we started to open up again and I was really stressed and overwhelmed about the prospect of opening up again.

And I spoke to a few clients and psychologists and we're all the same. We're all like, Oh, I, don't not sure I want to go back. I don't know how to go back. This is all stressful. And then we go, we start going back and it's like, Oh, I can do this. So what you're saying is this kind of wave that happens, the stress brings up. I can't cope with this. And then within a little space of time, with the right supports, we kind of get, okay, we can do this. And then going back to what we used to do before brings the same amount of stress and they
Isn't

Debbie Sorensen: [00:15:47] that interesting?. Yeah. Yeah, fluctuates and it, you

know, it does that, the new normal, it feels like as things change, it's like a new normal every single day over time.

And we do have this ability to, to ride these waves.

Louise Hayes: [00:16:03] Um, I think young people are finding that too. Um, and it gives us hope to know that we will adapt pretty well.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:16:09] Yeah. Well, let's talk about, um, the, the social aspect of the quarantine and social distancing on young people, because I think adolescence does tend to be a such a social time.

What are your thoughts on that? On. Especially during periods when things are shut down in terms of the adolescent period.

Louise Hayes: [00:16:32] Yeah, I think that's a biggie. Um, because, because one of the key developmental tasks in the adolescent period is the social aspect. You know, their life is all about socializing and they need to socialize.

And we wrote about this in the book. And as we looked across the generations, we talked about, you know, maybe in the 1950s people, um, congregate young people, congregate it in cafes or, you know, um, coffee shops or whatever. Um, and then in the. 1960s. They went somewhere else. And in the 1970s, they went to music festivals or, um, the local, uh, club.

Um, and now people socialize in different ways and young people still need that. It's essential. And one of the ways they socialize is online. Um, and so, um, they have online and they have also school and their after school activities. Um, and that's all gone. So they just have online left. What we know is developmentally, they have a need to socialize and to broaden their social world.

And it's a really powerful need. I need to do it every day, not every teenager, but a lot. And so that has kind of been stripped away from them to what they have left is online.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:17:45] Yeah. Yeah. So in the online, a lot of the online things that are still happening, it's an interesting shift because I think for a long time, it was a battle between parents and kids to spend less time on screens and social media.

And now that's all they've got and it's, it's a blessing to have it because otherwise. There would be nothing.

Louise Hayes: [00:18:09] Yeah. Yes. Um, yes, it is a blessing to have it. And yet it's also really difficult if you think about the way that you communicate with people online. Um, if you're a young person and you're using, um, a video conferencing platform, which meaning after lessons, you can see yourself all of the time.

Unless you turn it off, of course, but we don't always do that. And so if you think about where it's happening, firstly, you can see yourself all the time, which is way too much for most of us here, you're a teenager looking at yourself all the time. I've been doing tele health with people and I say to young people straightaway, turn that camera off so you can't see yourself.

Um, so that's different. And then the other thing is people don't respond to an, a digital person in the same way that you respond to a physical person, you know, it's very easy to read and fire off a text message, sounding a bit cross or, um, asking or saying something that's, uh, may seem a bit, harsh

but face to face, it's really difficult to do that. It's much more difficult to do that. So we have these different ways of interacting that alter how young people are able to socialize.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:19:24] Yeah. Yeah. Those, those face-to-face interactions are so important that, uh, yeah, there's a book about this, about it's called Reclaiming Conversation.

And I don't know if you've seen it Louise, but it's about it's by, uh, Uh, Sherry Turkle, I think is her name at MIT. And she writes about how something is lost when we don't have those face to face interactions. And that's a really hard thing at that particular developmental stage of everything's happening online to see ability to sit down and have a face to face conversation.

Louise Hayes: [00:19:56] Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. And the white, the things we say, especially if we were even removed the video and just end up with text the things we say and the way we interact is different to how we would interact face to face. Right? Yeah. It's

Debbie Sorensen: [00:20:11] hard to interpret some things over text. Isn't it?

Louise Hayes: [00:20:14] Uh, yeah, our minds just go crazy with the way that you can interpret them.

It's hard enough to interpret what someone says face to face, but at least you have their facial expression and all their non-verbals that can kind of say, Oh, they're joking or they're still friendly. Yeah. Yeah. It's very tricky.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:20:31] What are your thoughts about. Within a family as the pandemic continues about when parents and adolescents aren't on the same page, age about taking risks.

Like for instance, when things open up and, you know, the teenager wants to go out to a big gathering of friends and the parent is saying. No. Thanks. We're you know, we're staying on the safer side here. How do, do you have any words of wisdom about how to navigate those kinds of differences?

Louise Hayes: [00:21:01] Oh, that's a hard one.

Debbie, It's it's really a perennial problem that happens with adolescents and their parents is the adolescents they're developmentally ready to push that boundaries and to do those things that parents will see is more risky. Um, and it has to be a collaborative decision.

It, it depends on the age. If you're talking about a 12 year old, well, parents have a lot more say than a 17 year old, for example. Um, but I think, uh, it's a balance and trying hard to listen to each other and come up with something that's. Kind of both parties are, maybe it's not their first choice, but they're reasonably happy with is the only way that you can solve this problem.

And I think the other thing that sometimes yeah, is hard for parents and teenagers is that the difference in autonomy between a 12 year old a 16 year old is dramatic. And so there's this kind of balanced along that journey where adolescents need to keep pushing to let me do a little bit more, let me do a little bit more.

Let me do a little bit more. Um, and parents, um, say no, no, no, not that yet. And those things, those two things are essential. You can't have one without the other. They go together. The parents provide the safety and the boundaries to stop teenagers from going to arrive potty in the middle of a pandemic and the, um,

Jane, I just try to push it so that they can get their independence. Those two things are needed. So I think it honestly comes down to being able to listen to each other and, um, recognize that as a parent, it's ok to be a parent. No, it's okay to have boundaries and to decide what's okay. And what's not okay. But also your teenager needs some autonomy and agency, and they need to make some decisions as well.

There's no one who can say what's right or wrong for a particular family in this context. Yeah,

Debbie Sorensen: [00:22:58] well, you don't have an answer to what exact, how exactly people should navigate that. But I think reflecting on that tension and how that, that tension in and of itself is just part of that relationship, and it's necessary.

Louise Hayes: [00:23:11] Yeah. It's part of the deal. And when I work with, uh, young people and families, I often say the first thing we need to do is just listen to what the feeling is about and, and listen to what they're trying to say. And then from there sometimes try to work out how to come up with that shift.

I think this is an interesting, um, exercise. I see whether I'm allowed to go out and be exposed to coronavirus or whether I have to stay home. It's tricky. It's

Debbie Sorensen: [00:23:43] tricky. It's tricky for all of us. in your previous episode with us, you talked about how evolutionarily teenagers are meant to be. Leaving the nest and setting up their own lives in it that everyone's back in the nest 24 seven. And it's just not how it's meant to be. It's a hard thing about this.

Louise Hayes: [00:24:03] Yeah. That is a hard thing about this. And that social aspect means that the people that you're seeing face to face is just your family and that can get, it can be great for some families, but not for others.

For some it's just too much.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:24:13] Well, and we have also cancellations, I think, of big ceremonies that really mark important transitions in adolescents. And I, I feel loss around some of the things that happen in my life, but they're pretty minor compared to something like a high school graduation or a prom,

Louise Hayes: [00:24:36] party,

Debbie Sorensen: [00:24:37] something like that.

Um,

Louise Hayes: [00:24:39] Yeah. And by, uh, a real things to be sad about, they're real, the real losses of this experience. Yeah. Um, kids starting high school for the first time and, um, not being at high school, all of those things. Um, and I think we need to recognize and acknowledge that as an adult. Sometimes it can be easy to dismiss it as non-important, you know, Oh, people are dying.

Why are you worried about your. Graduation for example, but they are real losses. They are, um, um, getting a driver's license and not being able to go for your driver's license because you can't get tested. Those things are a real issues to worry about.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:25:23] Yeah,

Louise Hayes: [00:25:24] I think for a young person, if you're worried about those things, it's real and you're not being silly or making big things out of little things.

It's real and it's okay to feel sad about those things, right? Your feelings are valid.

Okay. Talk to someone and acknowledge it and find a way to, um, ground yourself if your feelings are overwhelming, you, um, And sharing that is usually the best thing.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:25:52] Yeah. One last question related to the pandemic. Um, we're not sure when this episode's com comes out, it will be.

The start of a new school year here in the United States. I don't know your schedule is probably different there in Australia, but I don't know what the year ahead is going to look like some mix of online and in person, it might shut down again. Who knows. I wonder about this online school thing. I think some, some young people are just fine with it.

In fact, some maybe prefer it in a way, not having to go to high school and they like that setting, but I know that some people are struggling with this, trying to learn online and do school in that format. Do you have any thoughts for parents or adolescents who are just finding that to be a really hard way to learn and really missing the school setting?

Louise Hayes: [00:26:48] Yeah, I'm seeing all of those things in the, so I've been working with clients on telehealth online and also doing some work in schools. And I, um, am seeing all of those things, uh, young people who, um, actually quite like it, the study at home and find for the first time some people saying I can concentrate, I can get my schoolwork done and I can get it done in three hours. And then I'll go couple of hours to go to whatever else I need to do gaming or something. Um, and other people failing, failing this school year because they can't concentrate and I can't get the work done by themselves. Um, and so, um, I think, yeah, we have a really important role for teachers and families here to help a young person know that all of those kind of levels are pretty much what we're going to see.

Some people will be failing school. And some people will be loving it and never wanting to go back to, um, classrooms. Yeah. I think there's a role for helping a young person know that wherever you are on that continuum, it's not your fault. You didn't make this happen. And it's the, it's the job of the people around you to help you get to where you need to be.

It's not all up to you. You don't have to take it on board as, um, a faulting. You, this is a weird system that we're in. And, uh, weird experienced that we have, um, and, uh, reaching out to parents and teachers and trying to get some help and, um, finding a way to, um, get teachers to help you get back to where you are.

I spoke to a teacher recently who, um, was talking about this and she said, you know, our job is to help kids get back to where they need to be. And so if they're struggling, we really want them to connect with us so they can, so we can help them get back to where I need to be. That's our job as teachers.

And of course not, everyone's going to have teachers that will do that. But, um, I think that's the important thing is not to take it all on board. It's not all you.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:28:49] Yeah. I mean, I keep saying the same thing to the adults. I work with go easy on yourself. So much of this. Isn't your fault. Just do the best you can hang in there.

This is going to change over time. Um, but this, this is a weird thing that's going on.

Louise Hayes: [00:29:08] It comes to what our minds do. we talk about the way

we use, um, our ability to tell ourselves what to do. It's call it as your advisor, you know that, um, and in our new book, we, we made the adviser, this guy, this young man in a suit.

You know, so he knows everything. You know, this is a picture of this young man in a suit. And so that's the part of us that tells us what to do. You need to do this and you need to do this. And that is how our, our internal dialogue telling us how do I fix this problem? How do I solve it? That's being ruled by the dialogue, in our head, by our ability to tell us else, how do I fix the problem? We call that giving yourself advice. Alright. How do I fix the problem?

Right. It makes you feel like you've got something useful to do, right? And so there's, that's, that's being ruled by the voice in your head that says, find a solution, find a solution, find a solution, right.

And sometimes that's not what we want to do. And so there'll be people who are failing school or finding school difficult who don't want to go back to school. Who would we say the same thing, find a solution and their minds will come up with a solution. Now if you flip it over, there's another part of our model that we call being able to discover and finding ways to try new things.

You've never tried before. So if you imagine one group of people being ruled by their advisor and then there's another group of people who found different ways to do things.

And that is what we call, um, being a Discoverer. Oh, finding a way to do something that allows you to get through the, situation in a way that is connected to what you care about. , and so just trying something you've never tried before and doing something different that is meaningful to you. And young people have found all sorts of different solutions and ways to cope with this. And I think there's, there's something really important about knowing that we can do that. Just knowing that we can do that.

We will always find a way to get used to it, but your advisor is not going to tell you that your advisor going to site find a solution quickly, fix the pandemic, make it go away.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:31:11] Yeah, your advisor's trying to keep you safe and protect you, but it's not always doing it in a way that is actually helpful or actually in line with those bigger prosocial values

Louise Hayes: [00:31:22] coming together, helping

Debbie Sorensen: [00:31:23] one another.

Louise Hayes: [00:31:24] Yeah. So stepping out, finding something to do, finding something to do you haven't tried before seeing what happens is it really good way to manage this? And we can add a new adviser rule that we do all the time. So we have our own rules that we tell ourselves. And so, and a new Advisor Rule is this will end.

This will end. And so that's something that I have to remind myself often. And I think finding a way to remind ourselves that it will be over and we will get past it.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:31:57] This too shall pass. That's hard to remember. Sometimes when you're in the middle of something hard, it doesn't feel like it. But having that bigger perspective is really important.

Louise Hayes: [00:32:08] Yeah. And to remember we are, we are set up to

manage change. We are good at it. We don't feel like we're good at it in the middle of it, but think about all the ways in which, uh, we've we've adapted and fit and, you know, Blocked two, three months ago, it was locking down and now it's opening up or, you know, whatever it is, we'll cope we will cope and what we want to do.

And this is the important piece in that Discoverer is we want to cope in a way that makes our world better.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:32:38] Yes. Yeah. Well, speaking of we, we mentioned earlier that we originally were talking about. Doing this conversation focused on helping adolescents with their fears around climate change. You know, you've had these big fires in Australia, so many concerning alarms about what's happening to the environment in the, on the earth.

how can we translate into that, this idea into that problem? How would you help adolescents worry about their fears related to that?

Louise Hayes: [00:33:12] Yeah, that's a really good example to talk about. And now you have fires in the North at time where you are in the U S and delicious summer comes in. Um, uh, there is a place for inside this step, this behavior that we call the Discoverer is trying things you haven't tried before to see what happens.

And there were a lot of ways to think about active hope. Um, so doing, taking some action that builds hope, um, There are ways that you can do that in the house, but outside of the home, there are some pretty incredible organizations that are giving young people ideas of how to have active, active hope.

Um, and so I don't want to talk, just talk about it as a concept. I want to talk about it as a thing that you, that people can do. But active hope is I'm not living in your comfort zone all of the time and trying new things, interacting with others and paying attention to what happens.

So, what we want to do is discover your power to act. Okay. Um, and for example, the school strikes for climate were a really powerful way that the students were able to take action and show the world that they cared about something. Um, and right now with the shutdown, they're actually school strikes for Clement happening online.

And I know that the climate is kind of pushed to the side while we manage the, um, Um, pandemic, but if you think about the small steps you can take, you can take action in your family by helping your family see that this is important to you and changing the way your family might do some things. Maybe planting vegetables is a good thing to do in the middle of coronavirus or taking action on how your family does things at home.

And it's not just about a family changing how they use their rubbish. For example, it's educating people and sharing the knowledge and ideas you have with people. Um, one good example that I want to share is that I need to mention this organization because they've done it so well. And that's Extinction Rebellion, and I'm not advocating that people join that organization.

But if, if you go on line and look at the way they have organized their social group, it's all about how do we connect in a way that makes this fun. And helps us get our message across. And that's the two things that you kind of want to think about is how do I find a way to find my people and have fun?

So whether it's craft or cooking or singing or dancing, which by the way is what this organization does. Um, it's getting with the people that are your people who care about the issues you care about and finding things to do. And when you're together, you can then build on to the next. Um, action that you want to take. So I think it's together and it can be very small actions. Um, and then, uh, finding a group we fall into away to make it bigger and to get our message across we're doing it, we're doing it. We are doing it. It's not quick. And we got it. Push down the old ideas, but we're getting there.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:36:19] Yeah. That's something that I love about adolescents are seeing them take action in this way.

And I know it's not everybody's thing. Like you said, you have to find your people, you have to find your, your thing. And for some adolescents, this may not be it. Activism is not their thing. That's okay. Um, but. I think that for those that are, it's exciting to see some of the things that young people are doing in the world, it's very inspiring.

Louise Hayes: [00:36:47] Yeah. It's, it is very inspiring. And the reason I talked about that organization, Extinction Rebellion, is because it's actually a nice model of it's a nice psychological model. So for example, one of the things they do is they make sure they cook together. So, if you were in your local group, you'll go along and they'll have a cooking day where they'll cook together so that when they go into a protest, for example, that can feed the protesters.

Um, and it's the action of being involved in cooking together. That's really important. And that might not feel like it's going to change the planet, but it's those small things that are really important. So I think if you're a young person, it's finding the things that you care about. You know, it could be just building a social group in your community.

And I don't mean just, it could be building a social group in your community that you care about. It doesn't have to be about any activism, finding a way to bring people together. No matter what that is. Um, and then, uh, doing it in small ways. I know during that time there've been so many wonderful examples of people putting notes in neighbors' letterboxes and, you know, people offering to, to get together and do things to help each other and to be together, you're singing and singing online and doing all of the things that we've worked out, how to do. That's the real heart is finding a way to do that.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:38:05] I work mostly with adults in my clinical practice. I really don't work with adolescents as a therapist. It's not my area. some adults that I work with occasionally when it comes to these things, I think they lose hope almost, or they get a little bit of an existential crisis around it.

Like. What's the point. Why bother kind of thing. Do you ever see that with adolescents? And if so, what do you, what do you say to someone who's in that place? If they're, if this is just feeling like a lot

Louise Hayes: [00:38:34] to them? Um, well, yes, of course, young people and adults are all the same that we often lose hope and feel like there is no hope. Um, so what I say to them, it's probably not much different Debbie, to what you do with adults is. The first week validate that it's okay to feel like that that that's a normal human experience to feel that there is no hope. And then we step into looking at why ways in which people have actually taken action at heart.

Yeah. I hope it's not hope is not a wish. Hope is doing something. And you know, the most important thing is the thing that you do your mind will probably tell you it's insignificant. So let's say you, um, send a text message to all of your friends every Monday morning saying, hi guys, welcome to the week.

Right. Um, and you feel like that's really just a very tall, tiny thing, but those tiny things are the keys for change in the keys for hope. And so no matter where you are, it's about thinking about something that you, you can do putting aside your mind that tells you this is not. Important enough.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:39:47] Yeah. Taking action.

Even if that pops to mind, you

Louise Hayes: [00:39:51] gotta keep going. Okay. And it's usually the smallest of steps that actually are the most helpful it's it's often not the big, big thing. And we feel like, Oh, I've got to be, you know, Greta Thunberg for example, but it's, it's actually the smallest things that change. Yeah.

Yeah.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:40:10] There was a chapter about transforming your viewpoint, cha transforming your world, and you talk about moving from a self view to a social view. Can you talk a little bit about what, what you mean by that?

Louise Hayes: [00:40:23] Yeah, um, we, if you think we have two ways in which we can look at the world, we can look at the world from a self perspective, a self referential perspective.

Like it's all about me. What I see, what I think, what I want, what's happening to me right now. Why is this happening to me? That's one way of looking at the world. And then the other way of looking at the world, these are social way of looking at the world and social view, we call it, which is just the way of describing other people.

So we can also look at the world as well. My family. Uh, care about or what my friends care about or what my school cares about. And then we get bigger and bigger and bigger. And so this idea is built on some evolutionary science that suggests and shows we are a group spaces. Um, and when we start to look at the group level, that's the area that can be really powerful in terms of our wellbeing and helping us change and, um, helping us manage and cope and feel like life is worth living. And so one thing that we want. To be able to think about when we work together is that it can be easy to think about just yourself. You know, some neuroscientists will talk about this as the default mode network of just thinking about yourself over, like self-referential thinking. And when you take that, self-referential thinking and turn it into thinking about other people and connecting with other people and doing things like you and me talking together. It's suddenly not about just what's going on in my head, but it's about you and me. And that opens up enormous possibilities. The other part of that is, we are group species. We need other people and together we do much better than what we ever do alive. So we try to build in that social view. Um, in that way, and it can also come down to really simple things like knowing that while we sit here, you have an advisor telling you what to do and that voice in your head, and you notice feelings inside your body and they're different to mine.

Being able to do those simple things and check it out.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:42:31] I mean, I think it's not, it doesn't just have a group advantage too. I think that the more we. Do that perspective shift. It's more fulfilling somehow to get out of our own problems and connect with others and look at this from this other perspective.

And I think it's, sometimes it's hard to do that because there's always a problem right. In front of us, that's happening in our own life.

Louise Hayes: [00:42:55] Yeah. Yeah. And we always feel like we, uh, can mind read and interpret the situation. Well, we don't always, but we often feel like we can mind read and interpret the situation.

Well, you know, the example that I think of is that. You know, there was often a, there's a social construct around called the resting angry face. I'm going to call it that the resting angry face, which, you know, when someone has a particular, a little facial expression and your watching them in a classroom and you think, Oh, they're not liking this.

And they look like they're grumpy, but if you go and check out what's going on for them, sometimes they're just listening and that's the listening face. And I think that's how you transform your world is understanding that what you see your, you will be set up to interpret your way. And that's not always the only way you need to check it out.

You need to check it out. I wish I could

Debbie Sorensen: [00:43:52] remember what age I was, because I remember having this aha moment. I used to go into groups when I was young and just think that, Oh, everybody's looking at me and they're really focused on what I'm doing and I better not mess up. And they all probably think I'm, you know, I just had this constant self, doubt going through my head and.

Around groups of people. And then one day I just had this aha moment that, Oh, they're probably also all thinking the same thing about themselves and it really transformed something for me. And I was, I was definitely a teenager when I had this realization because wait, they're so caught up in their own stuff.

They're not actually paying as much attention to me as I think they are.

Louise Hayes: [00:44:35] Yeah. That's a really powerful realization I'm so glad you had that. And in fact, when I, so I use the book, Your Life, Your Way a lot with teenagers, even though it's just coming out of me, we've been trying it in the clinic for, as we wrote it, we were trying it in schools, in the clinic.

And there's the chapter in there, um, on, uh, building friendships. And there's an image in there that that's called inside outside view. And what you say is as a guy who looks all cool on the outside and he's got a trench coat on and he's got dreadlocks, he looks really cool. Um, and then there's a shadow image of what he looks like on the inside.

And it's a person hunched down in a little goal. Um, and this is what we call it's an, it's an image that describes what we call inside outside view. And so what we try to do with young people is help them. Um, know that how you look on the outside and how you are on the inside. Not necessarily the same.

Most of us are going around thinking, do I look okay? And in this, am I okay, are people looking at me? Do I smile? Okay. Is my breathing okay? Um, and we're all doing the same thing on the inside, but on the outside most of us look okay. So

you can't, you can't tell, so there's a normalizing process.

Quite a lot of us are thinking about ourselves a lot of the time and worried about whether we're okay. And in adolescence that use ramped up, that is such a powerful thing in the teenage years. And in fact, it starts to come on board about late well, in Australia, it's late primary school. It's light elementary school.

I guess I use old nine years old was about when you start to see yourself in the context of other people. And start thinking about whether you're a popular person or a not popular person, those things. Yeah. Yeah. I can see once, you know, that it changes it. Sometimes I say to them, people just imagine that you go into class and everybody has a thought bubble on their head and you can actually see what's going on.

Yeah. Even if you have an idea that right now, Debbie, like I know I would be having the thought bubble on my head right now that says, is this interview, okay? Am I rambling too much? And you probably have something similar.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:46:51] Yeah. Oh, I'm botching. This I'm doing a terrible job. Yeah,

Louise Hayes: [00:46:56] for sure. So it'd be, it'd be nice if we could just imagine that, um, as we walk around.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:47:03] Yeah. Actually, if we could see other people's, we might feel a little better. Cause we'd realize we're not alone right. In our, those kinds of thoughts. Yeah.

Louise Hayes: [00:47:12] And actually it's really helpful if once you know, it, it becomes helpful because you realize the purpose of that is to help you do a good job at life.

Yeah. It's to help you do a good job at life. If you were able to get rid of that altogether, so you didn't actually care what people thought and you didn't care. What, people think I'd turn up to school in my sweat pants. And they'll probably wear the same sweat pants for days and days on end because I wouldn't really care what people think.

Um, and so there's a, there's a use there in having, um, a sense of what other people think. And as long as we can. Um, soften around that and not make it a rigid rule that we have to always be doing. What other people think or worrying what other people think then we can get free of it like you did.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:47:58] Yeah. That's such a good point that there really is an important function of that socially, that it helps us. Be part of the group it's as long as we don't buy into it too much where it gets to be a big problem in its own, right? Yeah,

Louise Hayes: [00:48:13] yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely. And we internalize that over time, so you can even live by yourself and, um, Um, have a social view inside your head, for example, where you think, well, I better not stay around in my sweatpants.

Like I better get dressed and I better do the dishes and there was no one to see that you've done that except you, but that's self referenced, but the ability to think about what other people think. Yeah. That's it, that's an okay thing. We actually need it. Probably

Debbie Sorensen: [00:48:44] doesn't hurt us to change our pants once in a while, even if no one

knows about it.

Louise Hayes: [00:48:48] That's exactly right.

That's a good pandemic question. Isn't it? When we all get out of bed sweatpants, um, we, we need that. I know I'm not a good person. If I just let myself do whatever I want. Um, I need to know that someone around me is going to say, Hey, you know what I mean? And even if they're not going to say hi inside my head, I think they are.

As long as I don't get caught up and lose my life to worrying about pleasing other people. So there's always that kind of balance. And if you make self and social imbalance, Like self is what I think about me inside my head, who I am, whether I'm what I want and socially is what other people were doing and what other people think.

And do I get along with other people? And I think if you keep those two in balance, you're probably going to be pretty much doing okay.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:49:42] Yeah. Then maybe that's the balanced to aim for. you know, in your book, you have that section on relationships, and friends. You also have a great section on bullying and how to handle if there is, if you are feeling bullied, um, other things like anxiety, managing life online, and that's huge right now, just finding that, that sweet spot with social media and video games and with the pandemic. I mean, I think that's a, sometimes even harder to manage.

Louise Hayes: [00:50:13] Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. And I'm going to give a plug for our because I, and when I say AI, this is mine and Joseph Ciarrochi. Joe is the first author on this, um, that show. And I spent two years on this book and I think it's the best book we've written.

Um, and what we wanted was, um, something that was real and usable. So. We know that most at most people don't want to pick up a self help book and rate it. Like it doesn't matter whether you're an adult or a teenager, most people don't go, Oh, I'd really like to read a self help book to that. Um, and so, and then the other part of it is that we also know that most of us are pretty time poor, and we just want to get the information that we need when we need it.

And you don't want to read 300 pages to do that. So we wrote this book with each chapter being a specific problem. So if you are a young person or you work with young people, and let's say they're getting bullied, you can just go to the bully chapter and you can read that independently of anything else.

You don't need to read the whole book. So we run it like that because we wanted people who help young people, the professionals to find something useful. And we also wanted something that was useful for young people. Um, so that's a really important part of thinking about what this is actually about how to make small messages that are useful.

And so chapters like bullying. I use those chapters all the time, actually with the young people that I work with because it's got some great strategies inside there for what to do when you're being bullied or how to make friends and how to build friendships.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:51:43] I mean, it's very well done because it's very readable, compelling, practical, fun to read, and there are such helpful tips in there.

I mentioned earlier, I'm going to buy it for my niece and nephew. I think I'm going to buy it for myself. I'm no teenager anymore. I'm the, uh, you know, I'm in solidly in middle age now. And I still think that there's something to get out of that. And I just wish I would have had this book when I was. An adolescent, it would have saved me a lot of grief.

You did an excellent job with it.

Louise Hayes: [00:52:15] Thank you. The chapter. So in the bullying chapter, for example, Joseph came up with this great idea that we call the two by two power up, um, which is kind of a bit hard to explain on the, on a podcast. But it's a way of looking at what the bullying that is happening to you is, and then gives you four ways to respond to it.

Um, and looks at those ways in, in terms of whether it increases your self power or whether it, it increases your social power. So, um, and different ways you respond can do that. For example, if you often, you know, when you're getting bullied and adult will tell you just to ignore it, That's often the stock saying, Oh, just ignore it is what an adult will say.

But if you do that, you decrease your self power, you decrease your ability to feel like you can cope with the world and you increase the bully's social power. Um, and so, but another example is if you are assertive, but still nice, when someone bullies you, if you say, you know, that's not a great way to talk to me.

You increase your self power and you increase your social power as well. Um, and so we look at these different ways and say what you want, what we want is to find a solution that increases your, uh, how you feel about yourself and also increases, or at least maintains how you look socially and how you appear socially.

So that that's the best option. And we look at the different options that sometimes adults suggest and try different ways. It's all about trying it. And the really important thing that bullying is sometimes one way will work in one situation and then another one will work in another situation. So you would have to try different things and not think that one solution one problem is always going to be the answer.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:54:06] Right. I love that, that you try different things, but you have some actual helpful strategies for what to actually do. It's not just about how to manage your own feelings about it. That's in there too, but it's also like, what do you actually say in those kinds of situations?

That's really helpful.

Yeah.

Louise Hayes: [00:54:23] Yeah. And we need to know it. And let's face it, bullying is not just with teenagers. Like adults get bullied too. Lots of adults get bullied at work. Um, and we need to work out how to, how to deal with it.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:54:34] Oh, I work with my adult clients all the time on assertive communication. It's a hard skill. Yeah.

And you also have some other things, like for instance, um, just things like procrastination. Stress and pressure and all these things that, that people are grappling with in adolescence and beyond. So it's a wonderful, wonderful contribution.

Louise Hayes: [00:54:58] Yeah. Well, um, procrastination is a really interesting one and we often, um, I'll often talk to professionals who say, how do I help a teenager to get motivated?

And so we do look at procrastination and that is a place for, uh, lots of them work with young people and helping them to change. We gave some really clear concrete strategies, um, how, how procrastination happens and how those barriers get in the way. and I think that's four barriers that we, that we talk about in terms of procrastination.

And we help young people look at the barriers. Like my advisor tells me it's too hard. Is one barrier. Another barrier is I remember, but it's something like, I, I, um, it it's too big. So we look at each of those barriers and help them break it down so that we can actually say, okay, let's try this one really concrete stuff.

Not. Although I'm making it sound like concrete stuff.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:55:49] Yeah, exactly. And this is what I'm telling you. We can all benefit from this because who doesn't procrastinate different stages of life from time to time, you know? I mean, I know there are some people out there who don't like, I myself often do. So, yeah, me too.

Louise Hayes: [00:56:09] It was a profound realization in my life when I realized that my to do list was always going to have a lot of things on it and it was okay to procrastinate over it some. And that was an okay thing. I didn't have to like power through in a way. Take it off.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:56:23] Yeah. Yeah. And not get too, too far down that hole of procrastination where you're not getting those important things done.

Louise Hayes: [00:56:31] Yeah. It's a balance. You can't drive yourself all the time. It just makes you tired. But you also, can't not do anything either because that. That takes you off of why too. Yeah.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:56:45] You offer some steps for. Increasing wellbeing right off the bat. In the beginning of your book, just some simple practical strategies, given that we're in this really stressful time in the world, and that people are doing all these really important things in their lives and doing their best to manage their lives.

What are a few tips that you would offer just to help adolescents take care of themselves right now? Yeah,

Louise Hayes: [00:57:10] that's a great thing to ask him to be. So we, um, begin with, um, talking about values and, um, Uh, we divide, uh, what you care about into six ways of wellbeing. Um, and, uh, what we know is that if people do some of these things, then they are likely to feel that life is better.

And so some of the six ways of wellbeing include things like giving to others, connecting with others. Um, self care, being active, uh, challenging yourself and being able to be here in the moment. So let's talk about two things. Self care is a really important thing and sometimes that's neglected is we.

I realize that looking after myself isn't is an okay thing. I was talking with a young person yesterday about self care. And the week before we talked about some self care things, and yesterday she was online with me and she said, I had a path and I went shopping and I bought a new ring. And I said no to some things.

And she was dramatically different for them. Small self care things. So that's

really important that we can all do. There's no boundaries in that. The one I tend to like the most is, um, giving as a way of improving wellbeing. And I come back to the social thing so often I can hear it, but the research shows that if you give to other people, it improves your wellbeing incident like depression.

For example, if you're depressed and you give to other people that helps your depression, um, But the important thing is, we're not talking about giving money or Oh, gifts. Um, we can give other people a smile or we can give them a text message, or we can give them a hug, or if we're allowed to do that. Um, and those small things actually make us feel better.

And so we frame it in, um, there's a really, I really like this metaphor. We talk about two ways of living, um, living in zombie land or living in vitality land. And we know that by vitality land is kind of a lime phrase, like we get that, but, um, we also know that lots of. People spend their time in with a place that we call zombie land, which is just doing the thing that you have to do next and going through life. One thing after another, just doing what you have to do, it's boring and dull and it's all black and shaded gray. Um, and then this place that we laughingly called vitality land is where you get to, when you just find ways to do small things that improve your wellbeing, like giving the small to someone. Saying hello. I'm working with a really socially anxious person at the moment, and they are improving.

Dave. Why is of wellbeing by saying hello to people as they walk their dog?

That's all and it's dramatic how those things can actually change. And can I

Debbie Sorensen: [01:00:12] give an example, can I interrupt for a quick example of that? Oh, so I was walking my dog just yesterday and this, I came kind of into the street. Where someone couldn't quite see me. And so we just had this funny moment where we both kind of stopped and this car didn't really, almost hit me. But anyway, we just had this kind of joke between us. Cause we both laughed and we just had this connection, this person just driving their car by. And I felt a little surge of, it was just some nice to have a little exchange like that. And it was just a funny, one of those funny little awkward moments. And then we laughed and have a good night and it just felt, I felt some of that. In that tiny little, little

Louise Hayes: [01:00:49] message of wellbeing. That's really nice.

Debbie Sorensen: [01:00:51] I did it. Like I could feel it in my heart a little bit. Just that feeling of like, Aw, that was kind of just a nice little interaction.

Louise Hayes: [01:00:58] Yeah. Yeah. And nice enough for you to remember a day or two later and think, oh, that was nice. That stuff it's that stuff. Absolutely. That stuff, which changes your life from being like a zombie to feeling more vitality.

Debbie Sorensen: [01:01:12] Yeah. People have to see the picture. If they get the book of the zombie land versus the vitality land, there's an illustration of that. And it's just very fitting. You can relate to it. Like there are days that it feels like zombie land and days that feel just this enthusiasm and engagement. Yeah. Yeah.

Louise Hayes: [01:01:30] , because sometimes as a young person, you can look at adults and think they're all in zombie land. I definitely don't want my life to be like that. Um, and you know, bought it. Doesn't have to be like that.

That's

Debbie Sorensen: [01:01:42] great. But you have to make it not be like that.

Louise Hayes: [01:01:46] Yeah, that's right. I think it helps if you bring it into your awareness and take those small steps, like smiling at the person that you've, you passed with the dog.

Yeah, I was things. Um, and the other part about the six ways to wellbeing is things like separating it out for one is challenging yourself. You know, if you're a, um, a person who loves gaming, for example, um, you're really challenging yourself all the time while your online gaming and learning and, you know, expanding your world through that.

It's a great thing to do, but that alone is not going to be enough to make a life vital and engaging, right? It's one really important part, but you need some of those other parts, like self care, for example, like we need to get out and get some sunlight. Those things. It's a balancing act.

Debbie Sorensen: [01:02:38] Yeah. The sunlight getting some rest, moving, socializing.

these are great strategies. I think really practical and important things that people can be doing that are just going to help everyone take care of themselves in the midst of all this. I'm so appreciative, Louise, thank you for coming on and talking to me today and for writing this terrific book,

I hope people will check it out. It's really a great one. And, and we'll take some of your words of wisdom. Pat beyond the interview.

Louise Hayes: [01:03:10] Um, thank you for inviting me. And it's always a pleasure to talk to you and I love your podcasts, Psychologists Off the Clock. It's one of my favorites and I really mean that and listen to it all the time because you seem to go in so many different places. It's good. Fun.

Debbie Sorensen: [01:03:24] Well, thank you, Louise. That means a lot to me. I appreciate it.

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