

Influence is Your Superpower with Zoe Chance

Zoe Chance: [00:00:00] So you say no so that you feel comfortable saying no. So that you give the other people the opportunity to feel comfortable saying no. And then miraculously, it makes them want to say yes. that was Zoe chance on psychologist off the clock. We are three 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: I'm Dr. Debbie Sorensen, practicing in mile high, Denver, Colorado, and coauthor of ACT Daily Journal.

Yael Schonbrun: I'm Dr. Yael Schonbrun, a Boston based clinical psychologist, assistant professor at Brown University, and author of the upcoming book Work, Parent, Thrive.

Jill Stoddard: And from sunny San Diego, I'm Dr. Jill Stoddard author of be mighty and the big book of act metaphors.

Debbie Sorensen: We hope you take what you learn here to build a rich and meaningful life.

Jill Stoddard: you for listening to [00:01:00] Psychologists Off the Clock.

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Yael Schonbrun: You can go to our website and get a coupon for the live trainings, by going to our offers page at off the clock, psych.com/sponsors. And we'll hope to see you.

Jill and I are here to introduce an episode about influence. I had the opportunity to interview Dr. Zoe chance who has recently come out with a book called influence is your super power. And of course, influence is something we all want in life.

We all want to be able to make a difference, to get more things that we want to be heard in this. One of our main goals in life is to have influence whether it's with people who are close to us or the world at large. And yet it's something that is hard to figure out how to do skillfully. And so her book offers all sorts of really interesting, science and tips in how to do that.

But what I want to start out by saying is that the thing I found most compelling about this book [00:03:00] is that it comes from a very values oriented perspective. So, whereas we often think about influence from a consumer. Perspective of like how people are trying to sell us things and get influence over our time and our wallets.

She really comes at it from the perspective of how do we use influence for good. How do we make the world a better place through having influence? So she teaches the skills, but teaches it in a way that's very values oriented. And Jill, I know that the values piece is, is really important to you too.

Jill Stoddard: Well, absolutely. And I think this is such a timely episode because I think we've all been thinking about influence a lot more than usual, you know, around issues with vaccines and COVID and politics. And you know, where we just feel this divide that we can't get on the same page with each other. And what.

Really compelling about this conversation with Zoe was the role that listening plays in [00:04:00] influence that like really the first step, but that you'll never

influence anyone unless, and until you first become a really skillful listener and. Um, I wanted to share an example where influence occurred in my relationship.

And I, I didn't even really realize it till after the fact. And there was a situation where my husband and I disagreed on something and there was something that he didn't want me to do that I wanted to do. And I think my normal response would have been to just be defensive to try to convince him that this was okay.

And then he would have interned on the same thing. Right. And I, I'm not sure what compelled me to do it because it was before I listened to the, to the episode. But I really sat back and tried to listen and empathize. Zoe talks a lot about the importance of empathy and to understand where he was coming from.

And ultimately. [00:05:00] He, he spoke to me from a place of values and emotions, and that kind of like cracked my heart wide open so that I was able to listen and take it in a lot more. And ultimately, um, I decided to agree with him. So he influenced me successfully and it felt like the right decision. This is not something I did on willingly or out of guilt or obligation.

Yael Schonbrun: Or even to get something from him, it wasn't transactional.

Jill Stoddard: Correct. A hundred percent. It was, you are my husband. Our relationship is my primary value in this situation. I see how you feel right now, how much pain you're in. And that matters to me. And therefore I am, I choose to agree with your stance. And then it just so happened that something else that we had been not in agreement about for over a year, A little while after this conversation, he came around.

And then decided to [00:06:00] let me go with what I wanted to do. And I know I'm being a little vague here. I just don't want to, you know, air this stuff with, I don't have Billy's permission. I didn't talk to him about it before. So, um, but he came around and kind of gave in to what I wanted about this other thing.

And like you just said, that was not the purpose. It just happened to be what happened. And I have a feeling. I an unintentionally influenced him because of that previous conversation that we had. And I didn't put it together until I listened to this episode and recognized the role of empathy, listening, and value.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, it seems paradoxical on the face of it, but this is a truth that Zoe repeats over and over again in, in lots of different, fascinating ways and backed up with science and really interesting anecdotes that to be influential.

We need to be influenceable. And it's really interesting how that works, but to be able to listen deeply, actually allows us to get heard more [00:07:00] deeply.

And there's this sort of give and take. That's not transactional, but sort of like when you enter in very fully to a conversation and you can connect with people. Forms a platform from which you can collaborate more effectively. And that requires you to, um, work together with people in a collaborative way, which means that you're going to be influenced one other challenge to listening deeply though, that I just wanted to point out because it came up during this interview is so sometimes as you're pointing out Joe, we get defensive.

And so that puts us in a position of having a hard time. Uh, listening. Another challenge that comes up a lot for me is when I'm anxious about how somebody might perceive me. And I just really love Zoe Chance's book. I love her research. I love the messaging and I got really nervous heading into the interview.

And in the very beginning of the interview, I found myself having a hard time, really relaxing into the conversation and. It's an interesting thing, as you're talking about the value of deep listening, and you're thinking I'm having a hard [00:08:00] time listening. It's sort of like if you're listening to music and you're thinking about listening to music, you're not actually listening to the music.

And so there's this. Release of ego release of the cognitive piece and a willingness to just be really mindful and inside of an experience that is really critical to good listening, that I think is a skill that we can all practice and do better at even those of us, for example, who listened professionally.

Jill Stoddard: Right. And, and I think maybe part of what you're talking about, that many humans have a hard time. Is the difference between listening versus waiting to speak. And we often wait to speak rather than really sitting back and just taking in what we're hearing and, and that's that that's a skill that takes some, some practice.

Yael Schonbrun: It does, but it is a critical skill for having more influence, which again is something that many of us want more of in our lives. So we hope that you have a chance to listen deeply to this conversation and that it [00:09:00] helps you to gain some more influence going forward. Dr. Zoe chances are writer, teacher, researcher, infatuated with the topic of influence, and persuasion and author of the new book influence is your superpower. The science of winning hearts, sparking change and making good things happen. Zoe teaches and does research at Yale and her behavior change framework

guides, google's global food policy. Her mission is to teach smart kind people to raise money for charity, to get elected to political office fund startups, start movement, save lives. Find love, negotiate, great deals and job offers and get along better with their kids. In other words, she helps people to use their super power of influence as a force for good, including.

I want to note by donating half of the proceeds of the book sales to fight climate crisis welcomed.

Zoe Chance: Thank you so much. Yeah, I'm really happy to connect.

Yael Schonbrun: I'm really happy to, to talk to you about influence because it's such a dominant theme in our culture. One thing I just want to point out is that many books on influence are about becoming better leaders. And you [00:10:00] certainly talk about this, but part of what I love about your work is how much you discuss the importance of influence in so many areas of our life, including our close relationships, like parenting and partnership.

And I'd also argue that influence is a big part of mental wellness in general, in mental illness. And in fact, some mental health disorders are defined by ineffective influence strategies.

Zoe Chance: I would love to hear about.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. So one of the really common really seen clinical presentations is something called borderline personality disorder and it's characterized,

Zoe Chance: someone with that diagnosis.

Yael Schonbrun: , and it's a relatively common presentation in the therapy office.

Complicated dating histories and it's characterized by these really ineffective efforts to influence other people that are felt as if they are, unwanted , manipulation. And I think manipulation is certainly something that we get afraid of in sort of the environment of talking about influence.

What I've [00:11:00] always kind of thought is that manipulation. Isn't a bad thing, as long as it's done in an effective way, so let me actually pause myself and back up a little bit. I wonder if you can actually share with us your definition of influence, what is it and what is it not?

Because I think that might give us sort of a platform to talk about like how to be effective in our influence.

Zoe Chance: I define influence as broadly as possible to be anything that shifts somebody's thinking or behavior. So it can be intentional or unintentional. It can be beneficence or malicious or neutral manipulative, or non-manipulative. Perceived or not perceived through words or through actions. So influence very, very broad and influence is basically power within that.

First of all, persuasion is influence through communication through words, and then manipulation, how you define this, how each of us defines this. [00:12:00] Is critically important because it determines what we're willing to do and what we're not willing to do to try to influence other people. A lot of us who I get to interact with as I'm teaching and training students, leaders of various types, a lot of us feel like we don't want to be manipulative and anything that someone.

Doesn't know is going on, that we're doing to try to influence them. We are concerned that that's manipulative. So we don't want to do anything that they're not aware of, but. Almost none of us have ever been trained in the psychology of influence.

So that means that whoever we're hoping to influence hasn't been trained in this stuff and they don't know the kinds of things that we're saying or doing might have an effect one way or the another. So I believe that the important thing is [00:13:00] just that we're not hiding our agenda from them. And as a very simple example, if we get to decide what the default is like, We're an employer and we are either giving an employees the option to choose their health insurance plan or their mental health care plan, or we're giving them a default into the plan that we think will be a good idea for them.

are nudging them to say, Hey, here's the default. And hopefully you're doing that because we think that this is best. They may not realize that our choice of the default has such a big effect on what plan they end up with. And it's huge. It's almost certainly bigger than they realize, but is it manipulative?

It's only manipulative. If our secret agenda is something that's not going to serve. If we don't care about their wellbeing, but parents, so you, so you write it and talk about parents and [00:14:00] kids, right? Like, are you manipulating your children when you use reverse psychology? I don't know. What do you think?

Yael Schonbrun: I think you kind of are. This kind of gets to the ulterior motive, you know, do you have confidence that your motive is for good, for their good and for yours? And I think that is a part that you talk about that is really critically important the. Part that I think there's many parts, but one other part that you talk a lot about, and I think this kind of feeds into a bit of what you're saying in terms of, um, having a more transparent agenda is also giving people the room to like, recognize that agenda and say yes or no, like I buy in or I don't.

And I think that you can even do that with very young kids and, and actually, and this is what you talk about a lot. It's more effective, Right Even with a very young child. And you talk about your inner two-year-old. I mean, and, and that is true. Like if you have a two-year-old, you're much more [00:15:00] likely to get their buy-in.

If you give them the opportunity to have influence back on you, right. You're trying to influence them, but if you can allow them to influence you as well, then you're not going to feel like you're coercing them because it's more of a negotiation, even with a small child.

Zoe Chance: Right to give people a sense of control, which is not the same as giving them the control. They already have the control. And even the two year old. Is deciding what to do with his or her. And I happen to have a nephew who's two at the moment. He's very strong-willed and I, I adore Whitney, but it's not easy to influence Whitney by telling him what to do.

Right. He's he has this very strong. It's not just inner two year old. He is the two-year-old, but we, we continue to have that immediate visceral reaction to someone trying to pressure us into doing something to say. Literally or essential. You're [00:16:00] not the boss of me. You don't tell me what to do and we can have this reactant or resistance or backlash, even when we actually might've wanted to do the thing, or we might see that it's a good idea for us.

We feel very resistant when we feel that our choices are restricted. So. Whitney. If you're telling him you have to go outside right now, he's going to resist going outside, even though it's his favorite thing to do. But if you put his shoes on or you like, I don't know, bring two pairs of shoes and be like, Hey, which, which shoes do you want to wear to go outside?

He'll be like those. Right. And, and parents are getting this, figuring it out. You know, we read books on parenting, but then. And the kids are the hardest people to influence.

Yael Schonbrun: I'm so glad that you said that that's so validating. I think for parents, I will also just add, I think partners are also quite hard to influence.

Zoe Chance: number [00:17:00] two, I would say absolutely number two. So I try and people like CEOs and central bankers. I even had a princess in my class a while ago. Cause I do executive education at Yale and then, um, go around. Sharing these ideas and insights and science on influence. And it's hilarious to me, how often I deliver some workshop to C level executives.

And then I have people coming up to me afterwards, or even in the workshop saying, can you help me? Influence my child, like I have this teenage daughter, I have this two year old or writing me notes afterwards to say, oh my God, my daughter, she cleaned up her room for the first time in six months, like, wow, my son actually washed out the sink before, after brushing his teeth for the first time ever.

It's really funny.

Yael Schonbrun: Wait. So tell us the secret there. How, what is the secret to influencing your child? What are the tips that you give these high-powered people that, [00:18:00] have influence in every area of their life, except for, with their children.

Zoe Chance: There's not one secret. There, there are multiple. Strategies or multiple opportunities, but one of the biggest ones is what's already come up, which is giving people a sense of agency and control. And this is equally for children, for employees, for partners. They already have agency. They already have control over their lives and their decisions and their behavior, but you're offering them that recognition.

And what you said, yell about letting them influence you. Absolutely. One of the key principles to influence that most people don't realize is that if you want to be influential, it requires being influenceable. So you're not having this transactional effort to get them to do the thing that you want. And you just see them as a means or an obstacle to your outcome, but you're [00:19:00] putting an idea or opportunity or offer out there.

You let them know. What, what your hope is, and then you acknowledge you have the freedom to make your own decision. Right. And I guess in your work on motivational interviewing, is this a big part of it?

Yael Schonbrun: Absolutely. I mean, motivational interviewing is the tenant is rolling with resistance, sort of like accepting the resistance and meeting people where they're at. Related to that. Also say that my clinical specialty is in parenting and also in marital relationships. And one thing that I'm constantly advising couples on is moving away from trying to control one another.

More of an orientation of influence of letting them know what it feels important, but also being willing to negotiate and to become a team like me and you, versus this difference that we have difference of opinion, difference of agenda, difference of outcome desired. And when you set it up that way, [00:20:00] it gets exactly to what you're saying, which is it opens you up to hearing more about what's important to them and allows them to kind of breathe a little bit more easily because they're not going to feel as if you're going to pressure them into a particular way of being or thinking.

Zoe Chance: Right or to be disappointed, right. To threaten them implicitly or explicitly with this disappointment, that's going to. Burden them with guilt, but not to say like, Hey, it's fine. No matter what, like, Hey, you do whatever you want, but you're saying, this is this thing that, here's the thing that I hope for.

And you. The right to live your own life. And I get that. I get that. You're not the boss of me. I've been divorced twice. I'm married now. And I, it took me until my third marriage to understand the principle that you're talking about. And it's

Yael Schonbrun: hard.

Zoe Chance: incredible. And I also though in finally belatedly, because I've been studying this research [00:21:00] and teaching and everything and influence for a long time, but it took me a while to apply it to.

Romantic partnerships, but I've also learned this with my baby daddy, who I'm not married to any more, but he's a colleague in my department. So I see them all the time and he's a phenomenal co-parent. And now that I don't try to tell him what to do and I, and he's the boss of obviously he's the boss of himself and has a relationship with our daughter and whatever she does or doesn't do at his house.

We have a phenomenal working relationship and we get along so much better than we ever did when we were married. And then, and I would say even with him, not just with my husband, who obviously we have lots of reasons to please each other and want each other to be happy. But with my ex-husband, we have

this gentle, supportive relationship with each other where we try to help each other be happy.

Okay. It's not just because we're nice. [00:22:00] It's because now we're smart and we've learned how to do this. And we've learned how to work together, that everything is better for all of us, if we're trying to make each other happy that make each other, but we're trying to support each other's happiness and be flexible when we can.

And there's no transactional nature to this of, I shy away from the idea of negotiate. Not because we're not negotiating all the time we are, but a lot of people think that negotiating means compromise and they think it means something like meeting in the middle. Like you get a little bit of what you want, and I get a little bit of what I want and we're both equally unhappy.

And I don't think that's the sense in which you meant it

Yael Schonbrun: I actually would love for you to say a little bit more about that because in my mind, compromise feels very positive, but you're saying that for a lot of people, it can feel, um, like an outcome that they don't want, because It means less happiness than what they would ideally, uh, shoot for.

Zoe Chance: It really depends where we are, whether we're talking about compromising on a specific issue or trading [00:23:00] off in the long run. And lots of times when people talk about compromise or they use that word, they're talking about a very specific. which case both of us are equally unhappy versus something.

Like sometimes you get to be happy and have exactly the thing that you want. And sometimes I get to be happy and have exactly the thing that I want. And we're not keeping track. We're not being counting. We're not saying, okay, I'll do this. If you do that, we're just saying, Hey, here's this thing that I would love.

And can we do that? Is that possible. And then we're saying, you know, oh, you're telling me something that you wish for. So, , even in big decisions, like where do we live? Right?

Yael Schonbrun: Right. Which is a not compromisable situation. You live in one place or I'm the one that comes up very frequently in.

the couples therapy is should we have a baby, another baby or a baby or [00:24:00] not? Right. These sort of non compromisable. Choices that we make in this.

Zoe Chance: How do you help people, couples navigate some kind of decision? Like, do we have a baby?

Yael Schonbrun: Can I just point out one thing and I, I don't know if I'll cut this out or not, but I, so I've been listening to some of your podcast interviews and talks and I love. One of the tips that you offer in your writing, but that you really put into action, which is asking questions back to the interviewer and it makes it, it makes it a more fun conversation.

Zoe Chance: Thank you.

Yael Schonbrun: It's a great question. And it's certainly a big, complicated question, but one thing that I really try to have people do is share with their partner, what feels really important about the decision, right? In terms of what motivates them to want a child? What is it about life of having a child that feels really important or about having a life that is child-free feels really important [00:25:00] once people have that sense. And this, I think actually you get at this in your book when you say, like, to get to the deeper why of what people want and listen for that. Why? Because it helps you to connect to them and in any negotiation feeling connected and like you understand, and that you are understood, helps you to be more of a team in figure.

Like, what is the best outcome for us as a, for me as an individual, but for us as a unit. And there are times where individuals are able to kind of get on board. Okay. You know, you want a life where you can take care of somebody and I want to feel more free and we can negotiate that. Right. Say, say my partner wanted to have a child and I didn't. I might agree. Okay. Let's have a child, but what I want to negotiate for is like opportunities to sustain some freedom, like on a weekly basis, I want to go do me, you know, go out and do my hobby, or be able to travel.

[00:26:00] That feels really important to me on the opposite side. If you decide not to have a child, the person who really wanted to have a child might find some ways to, um, fulfill the desire that having a child would. Caretaking really being connected and close personal relationships. And then there are times that there just can't be an agreement.

And that's always really hard to witness if the partners really loved each other. And that, that was kind of like the one thing that they couldn't find agreement on. You know, always really sad, but I do think that having that conversation about like, what is it about this kind of a lifestyle?

It feels really important to me gives you that opportunity to figure out like, can we fulfill the needs in a choice that, you know, brings each of us some part of what we want,

Zoe Chance: yeah, it's such such a big choice and it's great that some people have you there to support them in a fundamental disagreement like that. Um, And also I'll just put a holla out there to divorce is a [00:27:00] really amazing way to parent a child. If you have a fabulous co-parent partner, it's actually even better than being with your partner.

Yes. You get all this time to yourself and both of you get to experience the incredible wonderfulness of child rearing and the incredible wonderfulness of actually having freedom. Um, so.

Yael Schonbrun: The horse.

Zoe Chance: Yes, shout out, shout out to divorce. Um, and, and to working on an amicable divorce to give you this kind of incredible experience, I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Um, and what you're talking about about listening to each other is so important in any situation where there's a disagreement, that if you want to be influential, you actually, I believe, need to commit to always being the one to listen to. Because the other person who disagrees with you just literally cannot hear you until they [00:28:00] feel heard and understood by you.

So you might have this urge to share what you think, what you feel, what you hate, what you want, but they just cannot hear any of that until you've listened with that kind of curiosity that you're talking about. Yeah. About what. What are the reasons and what are your deep values and values are? What I write about aiming for in this chapter on deep listening.

When you're listening in that way, we actually actually not just are silent and letting them speak, but you are curiously and open-mindedly and generously trying to understand. What is this that they deeply care about that has them hold this perspective. You're developing empathy in yourself. And so you're connecting with them.

And almost always, you share those values too. Like what you were talking about in the parenting example, do we have a kid? Do we not? [00:29:00] Just about all of us, at least all of us who were in relationships have some value for love and connection. Right. And just about all of us, including everyone I've ever met has some value for freedom.

So we can connect to those values in each other, even if we're trying to fulfill them in different ways or even if they hold different priorities in our schema. And when we feel and can say. I get that. I appreciate that. I feel that too. I also want to have this feeling of love and connection, but to me, that's fulfilled with you, my partner and I, I, I fear losing that if we have a child and you know, your love gets directed to someone else, or we're just overwhelmed and sleepless, and we don't get to have a romance time anymore.

How are we even going to have sex with like any of this? Right. That's a, it's a so nice conversation to have, or you, you value your freedom and your. The ability to do things like hobbies and adventures, and you want to have up time and [00:30:00] like, oh my God, I want to have that too. Right. So let's figure out if we do have a child, how to have some space for both of us, I don't want to have 18 years or more of this constant micromanager and to lose all of the things that have us be happy right now.

Right. How can we figure out how to. Bought each other and spare each other to have some time to do things on our own. And how can we figure out how to have a babysitter or, you know, some kind of childcare share where we meet other people and we drop kids off at each other's houses so that all of us can do that.

Right.

Yael Schonbrun: Absolutely. So we know we're talking about this in the parenting sphere, but I think it applies to so many areas where we just feel like we fundamentally disagree with people. And it is very hard to listen to people who we feel that we fundamentally disagree with. And when we were in a fight with our partner, that certainly applies.

But that applies when we're trying to listen to somebody across the [00:31:00] political divide or when we're trying to, um, listen to somebody who, wants us to do something that we don't want to do. So the question you pose this terrific question in your book that I'm absolutely fascinated by as a, as a therapist, but how do you listen to another person when disagreement motivates you to turn inward?

And I wonder if you can talk us through some of your tips and also your empathy challenge, which I think is just awesome.

Zoe Chance: Thank you. This is exactly what we're talking about right now is the, the empathy challenge, essentially. And when we're talking about the political divide, there are a lot of people in a lot of situations that just absolutely cannot do this kind of listening that we're talking about. And it requires that.

Imagine and assume that the other person is smart and well-intentioned, and if we can't have that basic assumption, we're just not going to be able to do that kind of listening in that situation. [00:32:00] And to me, that's really okay. Just to acknowledge to yourself, here's the goal. If you want to have that person listened to you.

Certainly all along that path lies you listening to them first with this assumption that they're smart and well-intentioned, and that allows you to get curious and to be open-minded and to be influenceable. But if you're so angry that you can't do that, it's just not timely. For you to do that, or this particular person is not the one for you to listen to.

So if we're talking about the political divide, there may be some people, then let's say some people in your family, right. Who are so triggering for you, that you feel absolutely antagonistic toward them. And there's just this history, backlog of aggression and frustration. And you believe that they are never going to listen to [00:33:00] you.

And so you just don't want to listen to them. Okay? It's not your job to listen to everyone in the universe who disagrees with you. It's just your opportunity. If you want to be influential to listen to some of the people who disagree with you. So something that you might do, if you know, your, your difficulty is.

Barrier of animosity between you and a family member that a lot of us have,

Yael Schonbrun: I can think of a few examples myself.

Zoe Chance: yeah, it, it even happened in, um, 2000, I guess this started in 2016. Some researchers. Investigating. I don't know if they started it for a different reason, but they were just measuring. How long did our Thanksgiving family dinners take in the United States?

And in 2015, our Thanksgiving dinners were longer than in 2016. And the researchers were proposing [00:34:00] that these, the political animosity that so

many of us had with our family members just made it really, really hard to have a chill family, Thanksgiving dinner.

Yael Schonbrun: Right.

Zoe Chance: Anyway. Yeah. Right. But, but this idea that if there's this one person you just can't stand to, can't talk to about this issue.

Maybe you could talk to other people who disagree with you on this issue. Maybe you have a friend or a colleague, or like in my case would be students, probably not employees if you're their boss. Cause that makes it a very awkward power dynamic. Uh, but maybe. One of your friends, has their partner disagrees with you.

If you want to try to understand people on the other side of the spectrum. Talk with people that you don't already have a lot of pent up anger at to try to understand what might their point of view be. And this was really eye-opening to me when I tried this [00:35:00] myself. So the empathy challenge is just, you talked to three people who disagree with you on a particular area that you care deeply about, but it has to be three people that you can assume are smart and well intentioned.

And then you're just asking them. Educate you on their perspective. Why is it that they feel this way or think this way on that issue? You listen for 15 minutes. Then you reflect back to them. It sounds like you care about so values we've talked about already. It sounds like you care a lot about freedom.

It sounds like it's really important to you to feel love and connection and to feel wanted or important this level of fundamental values. The cool thing is that. It's not just that you're connecting with them and developing your empathy yourself by feeling these values, but that when you reflect these values back, you don't have to be right.

You could be wrong and you still are effective in [00:36:00] developing empathy, nurturing this relationship. Having them feel heard, because they're just going to tell. Right. They'll tell you. No, it's not about love and connection, but it's about me having a sense of contribution to something and someone beyond myself and my own life, or it's about wanting to leave a legacy or I don't know, whatever, all of the reasons are people might want to have, or not have the thing that they want to have, or don't have.

And then they still feel so grateful to you. They feel respected by you because you tried to understand and you cared enough to listen. And even if you didn't totally get it, it's, they're totally happy. They've just told you, it's a conversation where they're explaining what it is that they really value.

And then very, very often they will ask you they'll have this just visceral reaction of offering recipes. Because that's how we work. Right? So when we feel someone has listened to us and we've gotten to [00:37:00] share, it's just a normal part of the conversation that then we invite them. Sometimes, actually all it takes to persuade somebody is to listen to them in this way.

And I had a student, for example, in my most recent class who was listening to his cousin's resistance to getting a COVID vaccine. And in the empathy challenge, you're not trying to persuade anybody to do it. You're developing your own empathy by listening in this way. And his cousin reached out to him the following Monday to say, you know, after our conversation, I was thinking about it some more and I did some research and I just got a vaccine.

So I just wanted to let you know, and she was never going to get a vaccine while she felt like she was being attacked and she was being blamed and she was being put in a box. But once. One person reached out and just said, Hey, tell me about this. Like, what is it that you're thinking? And she relaxed that resistance that she had.

Yael Schonbrun: [00:38:00] It reminds me, Adam Grant talks about this in his recent book. Think again.

Zoe Chance: I love that.

Yael Schonbrun: gives some really great examples, but I wanted to say, wanted to say two more. Studies that relate back to this one is, uh, it's a couple study where they brought couples in to have a conversation about a problem.

And they looked at MPS. And they separated empathy into two different ratings. So one was, um, empathic effort. So efforts to understand, and one was empathic accuracy. So how well did you understand and what the researchers found is that for both men and women, they were studying heterosexual couples, empathic effort mattered more than accuracy, which is exactly what you were saying.

That we're, we feel good. Even if our partner or even if our dialogue partner doesn't totally get it. If they're trying, that means something to us, that effort

matters for that relationship quality and that relationship quality [00:39:00] is the foundation for collaboration. So even if you don't have it just right, knowing that somebody is making an effort to try to understand you makes a big difference.

Zoe Chance: Thank you so much. I didn't remember that. And I have to go back to that study because yes, exactly.

Absolutely.

Yael Schonbrun: it's a terrific study.

Um, , this second area of research that I've just found really interesting. So my parents are Israeli and I think the middle east is just like this area. That's really fascinating in terms of, you know, people wanting to have influence and being ineffective and conflict, just persisting for.

Hundreds of years. One thing that researchers have gone in and done is do these compassion building exercises between Palestinians and Israelis. And what they find is that when you actually get people in a room, even people who don't have a lot of confidence in the intelligence or the sort of, goodness of the other party, that if you get people just to just get to know each other in sort of a venue that isn't focused on working out that particular conflict, [00:40:00] that it breeds a willingness to build that empathy and to build that beneficence the benefit of the doubt for the other person.

And so I think what's so lovely about this empathy challenge is that if you're challenging yourself even. You have just a very little bit of willingness that that willingness really can grow. And, but it needs to start somewhere. So you don't need to believe that the other party is, has the right idea or is the best person in the world.

You just need to be willing to kind of open up to the possibility that they might have. Something to offer a value that there might be some goodness that is inside of them too. And so I think, you know, the empathy challenge is so nice because it sort of pushes you to step out of your comfort zone and give other people a chance in this way that we might not naturally default to, because we do kind of tend to hang with the people who already think similarly to what.

Zoe Chance: Right. Thank you so much for that. And, um, and this is also connected to this body of research that some of your listeners might know, but [00:41:00] probably most of them not on what's called the false polarization bias

and there are many studies. I have found that when somebody disagrees with us, we tend to exaggerate and even caricature their opinion.

And we imagine that they're on the far extreme end of the spectrum versus us. We have the right idea. So, you know, we're in the middle, we're not on the fringe. Right. And what happens when we're actually talking with people, actually listening to them is that we realize there's far more overlap than we imagine and research on us.

Democrats versus Republicans finds that we have a great deal of overlap, even on all of the hot button issues like abortion and immigration and gun rights, all of these things. We, we agree on a lot and it's just that we don't agree on all of it, but the media also, it contributes and maybe it's even entirely the media's fault that we have this false [00:42:00] polarization bias.

So we find when we just listened to somebody that they're not actually as crazy, typically they're not as crazy as we thought that they might be. There's another important thing here. Contributes to these, uh, findings that we're talking about, which is just simply the effect of hearing another person's human voice.

It's very different from the effect of reading something that somebody has written, even if it's exactly the same words. And there's interesting research by Juliana Schroeder and Nick Epley and some of their colleagues. Finding that when we hear somebody's voice, we humanize them and connect with them.

We find them more persuasive. We find them more intelligent and more worthy of our emphasis. Then, if we just see the words that it is, they, that they've written down. So when it's like the empathy challenge or something like this, the listening is not something that can [00:43:00] happen over email. It's not an email exchange or, you know, you read somebody's social media posts or whatever thing like this.

It's actually person to person. You will be influenced by them.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, it's such a call to get off our devices and get into person with people. There was just a recent piece in the New York times that talked about, you know, that we're always trying to optimize our efficiency and that getting together with friends and loved ones kind of goes out the window because, oh, we can do that more efficiently, you know, over zoom.

And, and I think this is such a good reason to say. Getting back together and safe ways is so important because we lose the humanity when we are just connected through devices.

Zoe Chance: I don't know that connected. W, I mean, I guess I do know connecting through devices is also helpful. Um, and we don't have the same sense of comradery that we have in actual in-person environment. And this is why we're not going to have virtual school as an [00:44:00] easy substitute for actual teachers in classrooms and things.

But another interesting piece of the research that, um, that these researchers are doing was finding that adding a video component. Increase liking and persuasiveness and the, your evaluations of their intelligence and things like that. So zoom versus phone calls. At least according to their research is not actually more helpful persuasive rapport building.

So what I would like to say is, please don't make everybody beyond zoom to connect with you. So many investors have zoom fatigue, and if you're not in the same room, if you already know each other, connecting on the phone is completely fine. And the reason for zoom would be if you haven't met somebody before.

So yeah. That you and I are connecting right now over zoom, and we can see each other and get to know each other in this way. And zoom is also helpful when there are so many people in the room, [00:45:00] virtual room who aren't speaking. So if you're going to have a conference call with 10 people, that's very difficult compared to having a zoom room with 10 people or more than that, but we could give each other some space in our lives by switching a lot of our zooms to phone.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, but can I just sort of follow up with a clarification? So it sounds like zoom and phone calls are not that different than one another, but they different than in-person. There is something added that you get from being in-person with people that you can't access from zoom or phone calls. And so it's

Zoe Chance: more liking and more persuasiveness. Yeah. And as we were talking about influence. There's um, a downside to the persuasiveness of being in-person in person as well, because people feel more pressure. So research by Vanessa bonds, and some of her colleagues have found that in across many studies, people are two or three times more likely to say [00:46:00] yes to an in-person request than we anticipate that they will be.

So we are far more influential than we think, or imagine when we go and ask somebody for something. When we're making a request for help. And that's because we tend to imagine how hard it will be for them to say yes, but on the other side, what they feel is how difficult it is to say, no,

Yael Schonbrun: Um,

Zoe Chance: we also underestimate, or we neglect how good it feels to help people.

Even though we know it feels good for us to help people. We're not perspective taking in that way when we're making a request, but also. If that person feels pressured and like, it's hard to say no, we're we are exerting a bit of extra pressure when we're making an in-person request. So what I recommend in general is first of all, see if this is a situation where you want to make it easy for the other person to say no, There are lots of situations like that.

[00:47:00] Like let's say that, um, we have a, an employee or student or somebody who is asking us for a reference for a job. You only want to reference if they're going to give you a strong reference. So some people ask us for reference that actually it's better for them. If we say. But if they come and ask us in person, Hey, can you provide a like, oh my God, who can say no to an in-person request for a job reference.

So, but everyone asking for a reference should be emailing. So it's easy to say no. And they should be making it further, easy to say no, by saying. Something like, would you feel comfortable giving me a strong reference for this job that I'm applying for? And if you get that email, it's much easier to say something like, you know, um, I'm super busy or like, actually I'm so sorry we worked together or you took my class a long time [00:48:00] ago and I, I don't quite remember enough details.

Maybe you have someone else.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah,

Zoe Chance: Whatever the reason is you can say no to that instead of they have pressured you, you said yes. And then you're not able to give them a strong reference. And that just totally sucks for

Yael Schonbrun: I actually while I was reading your book, I was in the position of reaching out for endorsements for my book. That's coming

Zoe Chance: Yeah. I'd like that.

Yael Schonbrun: And I was thinking about your advice and, and I ended up emailing people to request, you know, and I stepped out of my comfort zone and ask people who, I didn't know whose work I admire, who are very busy and well-known, and I took your advice and said, you know, would you have time to read this book?

And if you like it and are comfortable provide an endorsement. And just as you're you have this great tip of just ask, like a lot of people said yes, that I would have not expected to say yes, it

Zoe Chance: Isn't it amazing.

Yael Schonbrun: of startling. Yeah.

Zoe Chance: Yeah. And you asked in this beautiful way [00:49:00] with no pressure whatsoever. Yeah. And that's a very scary ask because if someone's really going to read your book. Oh my God. That's so much time you're asking this important busy. It's a huge ask. Yeah. I felt so uncomfortable with those asks as

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah.

yeah. I actually wanted to talk about the other side of this, that you address, very systematically in your book, which is saying no to people, asking you for whatever, you know, uh, advice or time or,

Zoe Chance: everything.

Yael Schonbrun: anything money. Um, and it's an interesting thing. To think about how being able to say no can make you a more influenceable person.

And I have to say, actually, the way that I got exposed to your work was I heard an interview with you on NPR. And you were talking about the power of saying no, and it just was so compelling to me because I actually really struggled to say, now it's harder for me to say no than to receive it. I feel more uncomfortable [00:50:00] turning people down, but I wonder if you can talk a little bit about why being able to say no is so powerful in trying to become more influential.

Zoe Chance: Let's challenge everybody. Who's listening to us right now to consider yelling at are not the boss of you. You're the boss of you, but consider taking on the no challenge where you say no to everything. I'm asking you for anything for 24 hours. The idea here is that, first of all, you find out that Yale is not unusual at all.

And being a people pleaser, almost all of us are people pleasers. And those of us who already realized that we're people pleasers are probably people-pleasing even more than we already realized. We don't notice how much our default reaction is to try to say yes to. This is part of the reason that we're also more influential than we think, because people's default reaction is to try to say yes to us.

Right. And it feels good. There's lots of research supporting that [00:51:00] contribution of time and money. Help in various ways, activates the reward network, just like sex and drugs and money, chocolate, things like that. Um, so we're giving people an opportunity to feel good, but also we have this idea that people were afraid to say, no, even if it's not conscious because we don't want the other person to feel.

We know that rejection can be very painful and our brain does process rejection, literally like physical pain. There's some really cool studies by Naomi Eisenberger neuroscientist, finding that the activation is just exactly the same between social rejection and physical pain. We don't want other people to experience.

But what happens is we're not distinguishing between saying no to this thing or opportunity and saying no to that person or relationship. So typically what is [00:52:00] helpful to practice is saying no to the thing without saying no to the person or relationship. So warm knows. So there's 24 hour. No challenge is a great opportunity to practice a warm.

No. And when you think about how we typically say no, And we're trying to not have the person feel rejected, but we're making excuses and explanations. That's not actually very warm at all. Like, oh, thanks. Uh, I wish I could do this, but, um, you know, I'm busy with this thing. Okay, but that's not reinforcing the relationship.

And so I might instead say, oh yeah, thank you so much for asking for an endorsement of your book and it looks amazing and I'm so excited for you to put this out there. I'm really sorry that. I've I have 99 balls in the air and 99,000 on the ground. Cause I dropped them.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah.

Zoe Chance: You know, I can't do it right now, but I really wish you luck and you'll feel like, okay, totally get it.

You know, [00:53:00] she's happy about me and my book. It's just totally not right for her. I might though on the other end of the spectrum express, a warm enthusiastic know in saying like, Hey, y'all. I'm excited that you've wrote a written, a book and actually endorsement requests are my nightmare. And I never say yes to these things because it's like absolute nightmare.

I don't know. It's just like a thing. It's just my thing. I hate these, but like go forth and prosper. And even in that case, you won't feel like I hate you. You'll just feel like I'm kind of this quirky, adorable weirdo. Paranoid or has this pet peeve about book endorsements. You totally know. It's not you.

So when you practicing. Everybody, every situation, you don't need to do it repeatedly with the same person over 24 hours. But each person, what you experience is how it feels for most [00:54:00] people is scary, but empowering. You're realizing, oh my God, I'm a people pleaser. And I'm saying yes to everything. And actually my time, my most valuable resource, I'm just treating it like a public good that everyone has an equal right to, which is completely insane.

And then you're also experiencing that. I didn't want this other person to feel rejected and in pain, but actually they're okay. If I said no in a warm way, they weren't assuming that I could do the thing. Like you'll yell reached out to you for the endorsement. She's not assuming that you're going to say yes.

She's just hoping if you say yes, it's great, but she say, no, it's fine. But then the further. Piece of this, the longterm benefit to you of being more comfortable saying, no, that's not apparent until you experience it. And because I've now talked about it, you will perceive this when you become more comfortable saying, no, you get more comfortable with the [00:55:00] idea of other people saying no to.

When you're more comfortable with other people saying no to you, you're reaching out in a way that doesn't pressure them and you don't have that repulsive edge of meanness that makes someone to run in the opposite direction. So you're just letting them know, like we've been talking about like, I'm not the boss of you, right?

Like here's the situation. Here's what I would love. Is there any possibility, right? Or just like you were talking about yet. Like if you have the time to read this and you like it, I would be absolutely delighted beyond belief. If you might be willing to provide an endorsement, right. This is such a gentle, empowering way of asking for something.

But then if they do say yes, They feel generous and empowered instead of pressured. And they didn't even get to feel generous [00:56:00] about it. So you say no so that you feel comfortable saying no. So that you give the other people the opportunity to feel comfortable saying no. And then miraculously, it makes them want to say yes.

Yael Schonbrun: And, and I think you're getting to this, but I'll just say it explicitly. I think when you allow for no, both from yourself and from other people, you also make space for a more wholehearted yet. Right. So, uh, yes that can come in the space of also being okay with a no tends to be a really authentic, committed, invested.

Yes. Which is what we're going for. To get somebody to agree to something under coercion where they don't really want to. And that's what happens. I see this all the time in the couples room where people just sort of say, fine, fine, have it your way, but that's not a wholehearted. Yes. That is not a wholehearted.

Yes. And that's not going to get you very far in a relationship or in the business world. [00:57:00] So allowing for the no really allows people to come in more fully when there is a yes to be had.

Zoe Chance: this is so important. And if you have coerced someone into saying yes, even if they were totally enthusiastic in that moment, because you. Put them into a state of scarcity or freaking out, or all kinds of other heavy emotional reactions. They, they can even feel like they wanted to say yes in that moment, but what you really want is them to feel good about saying yes in the long run so that you're not pressuring them through any means.

And when they say yes, Not just happy with this outcome, but they are happy to follow through. And then they're open to other ideas of collaborative. With you in the future and they're not trying to get out of it. So even in something as transactional as a sales relationship, it sucks to [00:58:00] have sold somebody, something that they didn't want.

And then you, they take a ton of your time to try to get out of this thing that they didn't want. And they will complain about you and take whatever action they

can take to take revenge in a relationship. I can only imagine that if I have said, okay, Great. Okay, fine. Whatever you want. I'm going to take revenge in some way, one way or another, and you might not know what it's going to be or when, but there will come a payback time.

Yes.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. So I'm, I know our time is just about that. So I just wanted to finish at the beautiful quote that I just love from your book, which is while the study of influence is a science, the practice of influence is an art. And I just love that because it really does. Form the platform to sort of look into the science, but also give you some motivation to really put this into practice.

And what I want to say is this book is full of really amazing [00:59:00] exercises, where you can really perfect your art. , but other than the book, which is terrific. And I recommend it to everybody, you know, whether you're looking for more influence in your personal relationships or at work, um, whether you're looking to grow a big idea and needs sort of.

The ability to connect to people to support that effort. , I recommend the book, but where else can people find out more about your work?

Zoe Chance: You can come to my website, [www dot Zoe, chance.com](http://www.zoehance.com). My name is Z O E C H a N C E. And. Things like a free newsletter with influence tips. And later in the year, I'll be launching a free online course. It's global. It's going to be translated into eight different languages. And the book is going to be translated into at least 28 different languages.

So if English is not your native language, I'm happy to help you find the book that is in your native language.

Yael Schonbrun: Awesome. Well, Thank you. so much. I really appreciated your time. Thank you.

Zoe Chance: Thank you. I've really enjoyed talking with you.

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