

Secret Life of Secrets

Michael Slepian: [00:00:00]

That's what makes secrets so difficult, even if we don't have to hide them.

They're still in our minds and we're still living with them and maybe we're living alone with.

That was Michael Slepian. And on psychologist off the clock. .

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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.

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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.

Debbie and I are here to introduce an episode about secrets. And it's an interesting topic because all of us have secrets and I got the chance to talk with a researcher.

Who's come out with a book called the secret life of secrets. His name is Michael Slepian. He talks about how common secrets are, and also the costs that they have. So, Debbie, I wanted to start our conversation by asking you for your deepest secret

Debbie Sorensen: Oh sure. Yes, no problem at all. Okay. well, I will not reveal my deepest secret, but my reaction, I think, is very telling about what that evokes in us, right? This idea of. Sharing something that we tend to hold [00:03:00] so privately and the emotional impact of that.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, right. And, you know, secrets are something we keep because we're protecting ourselves from something, you know, whether it's, um, from the judgment of others, whether it's our reputation, whether it's from, a fear of failure. If somebody knows that we're really interested in achieving some goal.

So we hold these secrets because. They protect in some way. And so when I sort of like push you to share your secret with our entire podcast audience, it is very normal to have that reaction of like panic. Like I'm gonna, I'm about to be exposed.

Debbie Sorensen: Yeah. And, you know, I was thinking as I was listening, because there's some really interesting ideas and food for thought about secrets

and why we have them and the impact of them, you know, the emotional weight. And you even talk about a research study related to that. Feeling of it being a weight that we're carrying around.

And I was really thinking about it through the lens of shame and [00:04:00] guilt and moral emotions, both in terms of why are we keeping this secret in the first place? There's something about it that we don't wanna reveal to others for some reason. Um, but then also how. We talked in our moral injury episode that we did a few years back with Lauren Borgess and Jake.

Farmsworth my colleagues here in Denver. Um, we talked to them about moral injury and I think our instinct, when we feel shame are worried, we feel like we've done something that we. Don't feel good about later something embarrassing or something, you know, that we feel guilty about. Our instinct is always to hide, right?

Like we don't wanna be banished from the group or shunned because of what we've done. And so we really do tend to hold these things in. And I just love in this episode, that conversation about. Why are we doing this? What's the impact of it? When should we [00:05:00] relieve some of that by sharing our secrets?

And when shouldn't we so much to think about there.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah.

And I wanted to take a moment to talk with you about secret keeping as therapist. I mean, cuz. You and I, as private practice clinicians, part of our job is keeping secrets.

And for me, it gets even more complicated in couples therapy,

And I wonder what are strategies Debbie that you use when you're carrying around a heavy secret that a client has shared with you? What are the ways that you have developed to, to help manage that burden?

Debbie Sorensen: Well, what's interesting. I think about that is that. In some ways it is easier, maybe not so much with couples therapy, but I think I mostly do individual work and I think having some guidelines around that, some ethical guidelines that I'm familiar with, I mean, of course, sometimes it's complicated and I will seek consultation with colleagues. You know, you have to keep information [00:06:00] private, but you can say, Hey, I'm grappling with this situation.

What should I do? And there's cases where you maybe need to think about safety or something like that. Um, but I think to me, yeah, consultation, when it's. When it's a gray area, but then also just being familiar with it. It actually takes the load off a little bit. I think for me, it's often, actually much easier in my role as a therapist to keep secrets and to keep information private because I know the guardrails and I think being really familiar with that is helpful in my personal life.

It gets way more mur. because you're in situations all the time where it's like, I'm just a private citizen, you know, a friend, a family member, there are no guard boils. So you have to make harder judgment calls, so I guess my, my advice on this is actually pretty similar though, personally and professionally, is that when you're feeling really conflicted about it, or you're unsure what to do with certain information, it really.

Can't hurt to get [00:07:00] some support, you know, never worry alone, I guess.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah.

Debbie Sorensen: What about you? What do you do? How do you handle that? Right.

Yael Schonbrun: um, I similarly feel that the guardrails are helpful and I really rely on my peer consultation group,

Debbie Sorensen: yeah. And I mean, I think that people who aren't therapists who are listening might not know this, but I think that one of the reasons why privacy and confidentiality are so important is so that people have a space where they can come. And talk to us about these really hard things. Maybe there's something that's really terrifying or shameful or traumatic, but if you thought your therapist was gonna go bla it all over town, you would never, you know, and so I think it's like recognizing that what we're doing is actually really important is that we're giving people that sort of neutral, safe space where they can do that because that's what people really need is like a nonjudgmental place where they can talk about these hard things and therapy can be a really good [00:08:00] starting.

Yael Schonbrun: , having a safe place and a safe way to come clean about your secrets is so important and also understanding that there's a reason to do so that there's so much value in. Confiding secrets to, to people, even the ones that you've held back for a long, long time. And interestingly, Michael, the author

has this terrific terrifically, powerful story that I think will, um, be so touching for, for so many people that he shares at the end of the interview.

Debbie Sorensen: I found that story really touching and meaningful and actually very inspiring as a reason why sometimes it really is, even though it can be so hard, why it really is important to open up even about a secret you've been keeping for decades.

Yael Schonbrun: So we hope you all get a lot out of this episode on the secret life of secrets.

Yael Schonbrun: Michael Slepian is a psychologist and faculty at Columbia business school, where he studies the psychology of secrets [00:09:00] and how keeping secrets affect social and organizational life. He's here to discuss his new book, the secret life of secrets.

Welcome, Michael.

Michael Slepian: Thanks for having

Yael Schonbrun: well, I'm really excited to talk about secrets, cuz it is one of these things that we have most of us experienced a lot of, and your research confirms that most of us carry around a number of secrets and I was gonna suggest, and, and I think you dropped the suggestion early on in your book that maybe all listeners can think of an important secret that they're carrying as we chat about the secret life of secrets.

And in that way you can kind of bring it to life for yourself. But I wanted to ask you this question, cuz you write in your book and I'm gonna quote that psychologists have long been interested in how people form relationships and connect with one another. But why we hold back from others and the consequences of not letting other people into our inner worlds has largely been overlooked.

And I'm curious, why do you think it's been overlooked?

Michael Slepian: so psychologists have long been interested in things like deception and you. Things like [00:10:00] that, that are related to secrecy, but those kinds of things aren't holding back in the same way. And so when people have studied secrecy before it's often brought two people into the room, had one

person instructed to hide something from the other person, and then instructing the other person to ask questions about that.

Very thing, that kind of situation. Might push people into deception or to sort of dodging questions, but it presumes a very, very specific situation, which is that you're in a conversation about something related to your secret that turns out to not be very common. And so the most prototypical experience people have is they're just thinking about this thing that they're holding back from other people, and that's kind of what's at the heart of secrecy.

And we haven't thought about secrecy in that way really before my research.
Yep.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, it's, it's sort of this whole new world and. Hoping that we can talk about a lot of your research findings, cuz they're really, some of them are really counterintuitive, [00:11:00] but before we get into that, I wanted to sort of, you know, start with some definitions, and, and maybe we can even start kind of with what you're pointing to, which is that secrets are different than deception.

They're also different than something that we keep private. So how, how do we distinguish between those, those kinds of, Ways of not sharing information or, or sharing , non truthful information.

Michael Slepian: right. So this is where the definition comes in really handy. I define secrecy as the intention to keep information from one or more people. And so. I study secrecy as an intention. And if there's all kinds of ways, you could keep a secret, um, you might not have to do anything to keep a secret because it just never comes up in conversation at all.

And so it's important to not conflate secrecy with what we do with our secrets. Um, it turns out that we very rarely have to hide our secrets in conversation anyway. You could tell a lie to keep a secret, but you don't have to. If someone asks you a question related to your secret, you [00:12:00] can just slightly deflect.

You can ask a question of your own, introduce a new topic, a conversation you could say, I'm not gonna answer that question. What there's, there's all kinds of ways. You can answer a question without telling a lie, which is, you know, saying something that's untrue and then privacy. I think of privacy as. A reflection of how close you need to be to someone to share something with them.

And there's, you know, certain topics that we need to be really comfortable to talk about, for example, sex or, or money. You know, these are things that people just don't tend to talk about in everyday conversation. You kind of need to feel comfortable and that it's okay to do so. And you're in the right place to have that kind of conversation. Privacy. If someone is less private, they don't need you to be very close to just tell you a bunch of things, but it's different. If the reason people don't know this thing about you is you're specifically intending to hold it back. That wouldn't be privacy. That would be secrecy.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. So there's something. [00:13:00] That sets secrets apart, and it is this intention not to share it. And what your research reveals is that intention that sort of distinguishing feature has a strong impact on our wellbeing. So I wonder if you can share some of what you've learned through your work about how secret keeping really impacts us.

Michael Slepian: This is again where the definition comes in really handy. So if secrecy is an intention to hold back information, sometimes you might need to act on that intention. And if you're in a conversation and someone brings up something related to your secret, you're gonna immediately notice that because this is the whole point of having a secret is.

To conceal it if you need to do so. And so you're gonna be on the lookout for ways to conceal the secret so that if ever someone says something related to the secret, you're, you're ready. You know what to say? You know how to keep the conversation moving. Because that's the whole point of having a secret you're prepared for these moments, but that increased sensitivity to anything related to your secret will mean [00:14:00] that you're sometimes thinking about the secret, even in moments when there's no need to hide it.

And actually that turns out to be quite common. We, uh, you know, a secret that's currently. A secret that's pressing and, and currently important to you. You might think about 20 times in a week, even if you never have to hide it in conversation. And so your mind will continually return to the secret. And because our secrets are things we tend to feel alone with or ashamed for, or inauthentic for keeping, we can feel bad about the secret, just when our mind wanders to him.

And this can happen quite a bit. It turns out to be where most of the harm of secrecy.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, it's so interesting. And, and just to sort of make this point really explicit, I mean, secrets are inherently interpersonal. It's like

something that you're keeping from someone else. And it has an impact not only on sort of how you feel about the relationship, but on how you engage in the relationship.

And, and therefore can have sort of like this ripple effect on how somebody then is able to relate to you because you're not [00:15:00] sharing this important thing that is on your mind.

Michael Slepian: Right. Especially in a romantic relationship, if there's some big conversation, topic that you're avoiding, your partner's gonna eventually notice them. And that could hurt the relationship if they feel like you're not being fully open with them.

Yael Schonbrun: well, so let's, let's actually dive into that. I was gonna get there a little bit later, but this is such an interesting and relevant topic. And actually one of the reasons that you connected to me, because I had in some years ago, On a study on infidelity, which is sort of the classic case of, uh, secret keeping in romantic relationships is when you engage in an extramarital affair.

And I'm in addition to my research background, I also am a private practice clinician and I specialize in couples therapy. So infidelity comes up a lot. And I always like to tell couples that it's like a two level problem. So one is. One partner who's engaged in infidelity has broken the marital contract, right.

You've agreed to be monogamous and [00:16:00] you've broken that contract. But the second part is the betrayal of information sharing, right? So you can say, I'd like to change the contract and break the contract, but if you have an open conversation, it's so different than if you do it without sharing that information and having it be a transparent, uh, shift in, in what you've agreed to. So when it comes to secret keeping like infidelity in relationships, I think most people think, well, it would be more dangerous to share that information than to just keep it to myself. What, what have your research findings revealed that might be surprising to people?

Michael Slepian: So this is the hardest version of this question. I think that there is when you're thinking about whether you should reveal a secret, I think this is the, it can feel like the most consequential version of, of this choice and when people are deciding whether to do so. At the end, you know, at the end of the [00:17:00] day, because it's such a complicated decision.

I always advise people don't make that decision alone. That's kind of your instinct. Nobody knows about this. Nobody will find out about this. I'll, I'll

figure it out on my own, how to handle it, but it's too complicated. Um, like you saying, there's these like two different levels of the problem. And so questions I ask folks to, to consider when they're struggling with this question is, you know, why do you want to reveal the secret? Is it, you know, are you trying to. Uphold the contract in, in the way that you're talking about or is it you're just trying to make yourself feel better? Cause of course the risk is you're just making yourself feel better by finally getting off your chest.

And now you don't have to like live alone with this thing anymore, but it can make your partner feel a whole lot worse. I, I think another really important question to ask besides why do you wanna reveal it? Is. Is this a one time thing? I think if it's not a one time thing, I think you have to reveal it.

I, I think that's a [00:18:00] problem. That's not gonna go away on its own. If it was a one time thing, it starts becoming more attractive to consider keeping it a secret forever. Um, and then the final thing you want to consider is would your partner want to know. And I ran a study where I had, um, a relatively small study, but just, um, 300 people with competitive relationships.

And I proposed this scenario to them. Imagine your partners traveling out of town in a total lapse of judgment. They're, they're like drunk and, and they cheat on you and they have never done this before and they would never do this again. Would you wanna know? And I expected a much smaller number than what we found, which is 77% of people said they would wanna know. And so I don't know if this makes it, if, if this makes it any easier for anyone, but I think these are the issues you wanna be thinking about.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, well, and it relates so much to the [00:19:00] couple's therapy context because if a couple is there in, I mean, my assumption is that they're there to work on the relationship. And often when there's been infidelity, it's like a sign. that something is a little bit broken or, or a lot broken as the case may be.

And it's hard to work on something. If you don't have the information about what's going on, right. You, you need to know what it is that you're working on. What is it that's broken? What is it that needs to be amended? And, you know, I think you give all of these really fascinating examples. Some of them, you know, about infidelity.

That have nothing to do with infidelity where we keep secrets, because we're afraid of the consequences, but actually it's through consequences and, um, making amends that we often get to a much better place. And that I think is, is

such an important part of what your research reveals, which is that when we share, we often get to a better place.

Michael Slepian: Yeah, there, there's a story that I share [00:20:00] in the book. Uh, about this woman who she's like really confused about like what her partner is doing. He seems like so diff he seems like a different person. All of a sudden, it just seems so closed off. And much later after they were no longer together, she realized he had been cheating on her.

And that's why he was so closed off. But. If the way that you need to keep the secret means you're just gonna shut yourself off entirely. That's gonna really damage the relationship because if you, if your partner feels like you're keeping something from them, they're gonna feel like you're excluding them from their life and that's really gonna hurt.

Yael Schonbrun: Some of the most powerful cases of couples therapy that I've worked with are those who come in. And sometimes they haven't even shared the fact of infidelity yet. And it comes out through therapy. I actually had one, couple that it was only two years into the couple's therapy, that one of the partners finally disclosed.

I, and I even had no idea. So not only was. That person keeping it a secret from their partner. They were also keeping it a secret for me. And I wanna [00:21:00] talk about sort of the role of secrecy and therapy in just a moment. But once it came out, it was like this pivotal moment and they were finally able to really, Dismantle the, the problematic marital foundation that had been built and built such a healthier, more flourishing relationship.

And of course it doesn't always work out that way, but there is that possibility when you have the courage to, to come clean and confess. And we'll talk about sort of, um, what some of the helpful strategies are to getting to that point a little bit later. Um, but I wanted to ask about this other study that you wrote about in your book where you.

Asked folks who had cheated and some of them had confessed, some of them hadn't and some of them had sort of selectively confessed. And I wonder if you can share sort of what the differences in wellbeing are for those who confessed versus not.

Michael Slepian: This is gonna, this is a ridiculous answer. So I have this data cuz I know what you're talking about. Um, I [00:22:00] haven't looked , I haven't looked at the relationship between that and wellbeing, our relationship

quality, but I, but I have the data. I would suspect that the, the folks who've confided in at least one person, maybe it's not their partner.

Um, Are better off cuz that's what it looks like in every other domain. And so I really think a good stepping stone for someone who's trying to figure out how to handle this is just talk to someone else about it and, and start there.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. So talk to a third party. That could be a first step. And, and that, that's a really nice segue to talk me about sort of the role of therapy. I mean, in a, in a way. So you're an experimental psychologist. So you might not in the therapy room, be at the receiving end that certainly through your research, you're at the receiving end of a lot of secrets.

Um, but in a sense, you know, people who are therapists are sort of paid secret keepers, and we're not the only profession that, that does this. You, you give some example of, um, people in the legal profession who have to keep secrets [00:23:00] and, and sort of the burden that, that takes. I'm just curious. Um, you know, in what ways do you see it professionally being a secret keeper as being hazardous?

And in what way is it a gift and what does secret keeping mean for wellbeing when you do it for a living.

Michael Slepian: mm-hmm so I haven't studied in the sense of therapists, but I have studied it in the sense of a more corporate environment where you're keeping secrets on behalf of your workplace, intellectual property and things like that. And I find that. That kind of secrecy can feel really different. It can feel really meaningful to be keeping a secret on behalf of your workplace.

If you feel like this secrecy supports the mission of, of your role or the, of what your team is working on. So if it feels like, you know why you're doing it, and you feel like it's, it's valuable to the organization, people will feel a sense of status from having access to this privilege, access to this information, and they'll have a sense of meaning. but at [00:24:00] the same time, if there's something really big going on in your life and you can't talk about that with your friends, your family, or your spouse, that can also feel really isolating. So secrecy as a profession, there is this taste of this other version of secrecy and, you know, maybe there's something to, can you import that into personal secrets?

I'm not sure, but then it also is like a personal secret in that you can feel isolated with it.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. I think that for, for a lot of professional secret keepers, they there's sort of like these structures that get built in to help people manage it, like peer consultation groups and, and things like that. Um, and yet it, it can still be like one of those things that like, when you have a secret, when you've met with a client, who's shared something that feels really.

Dramatic or traumatic or provocative. And it's kind of on your mind that it can weigh on you. Um, if you don't have, you know, another sort of sanctioned person that you can share it with. And so that is sort of one of the hazards of, of being in [00:25:00] a business where you have to kind of hold people's secrets.

But of course, you know, in all of our lives, there are. Secrets that we have to keep. And maybe you can talk a little bit about the number of categories and then like the average number of secrets that people hold.

Michael Slepian: So I, when I first started studying secrecy, I wasn't trying to understand secrecy itself. I was interested in metaphor and this secrecy was just one example. People have this way of talking about secrets as if they weigh them down and they can be heavy and weighty. And so that's when I first got involved in secrecy, just studying that metaphor.

Yael Schonbrun: Can I actually have you share that study? I love the, the hill study

Michael Slepian: yep. So the, so the original question I asked 10 years ago was, you know, people talk about secrets in this curious way as if they weigh them down as if they feel heavy. Does that reflect something deeper? Do people actually think about secrets in that way? Is it more than just the linguistic expression?

and to find out I had people come into the virtual lab, you know, this study's conducted online, think about a significant secret or a small one. [00:26:00] And then we ask them to make judgements that we know actually vary by being physically encumbered. And so if you're fatigued or carrying something heavy or out of shape, if you, if, if physical activity is more difficult, In any, for any reason, the world around you will look more challenging to interact with because it is so a distances will look farther.

Hills will look steeper and sure enough, when participants were thinking about secrets that really preoccupied them, they judged Hills as steeper distances, as farther tasks as requiring more effort. So in that moment, it was as if the secret.

their resources to interact with the world around them because the world around them, all of a sudden seemed more challenging to interact with.

And when I first started presenting that research to people, some people thought it was very interesting. Some people thought that's not secrecy. You can't study secrecy by just having someone think about a secret. The only way to study secrecy is to bring two people together in a room and have one person hide something from another [00:27:00] person. And so that was the point at which I realized. Actually, we don't know anything about secrecy because people have this assumption of what secrecy looks like in the real world, but no one's actually examined what it looks like in the real world. Um, and so when I first started setting secrecy, for real, the questions were the most basic questions you can ask.

What are the secrets people keep? How many do they keep them? How many secrets do they keep? And then when a secret is on our mind, what does that look like? How often do we actually have to hide our secrets? How often do we find ourselves thinking about our secrets? When we don't have to hide them? There was no answers to any of these questions.

When I first started this research and. So then I started asking those questions and the first step was asking people what's the secret you're currently keeping asked a couple thousand people that question, and then just looked at the themes that emerged in the responses. And with 38 different categories, we could really comprehensively cover what people said they were keeping secret.

And we [00:28:00] know that this list is fairly comprehensive cuz when we give it to people and say, You know, are you keeping any secrets from this list? 97% of people are keeping at least one of the secrets from the list. The average person is keeping 13 secrets from that list at any given time. If we ask someone open-ended, what's a secret, you're keeping 92% of the time, it fits one of those categories.

So as isolating as having a secret can feel, we actually all keep the same kinds of secrets.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, so it feels like you are alone. And the only one who has that kind of a secret, but it turns out that it's much more common than you might think. And what are the most common kinds of secrets?

Michael Slepian: Mm. So the most common secrets that people keep, um, the very first one is a lie that you've told. So there's like this significant lie that

you've told, and you don't want people to find out about that. So you're sort of holding that. Back another common secret is romantic desire while single there's family secrets that are [00:29:00] common, um, violations of trust ambitions.

That's another one I find quite interesting.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. So can you say a little bit about ambitions? What, what kind of examples come to mind as, as sort of, um, you know, really personifying? Like what are ambitious secrets?

Michael Slepian: Yes. And so it's, some of these ambitions are relatively mundane. Like someone wants to lose weight. Um, the common ambition has actually wanted to write a book. And so for, for whatever reason, I think, well, I think there is a specific reason. I think people are, don't wanna tell people about these ambitions because they know there's some chance that they won.

That they won't achieve that ambition. And so I think it's partly embarrassment, partly trying to protect your pursuit of that ambition without other people's discouraging you or saying you're not gonna make it or whatever it is. Um, but at the end of the day, all these secrets that we keep, we're trying to protect something.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. And so what would the advice be like, [00:30:00] say, say somebody had a secret ambition to write a book or to lose weight. What, given your research, what would you advise them to do?

Michael Slepian: It's a great question because, and maybe I'll be saying this multiple times throughout the interview. There's, it's been really high on my list to study that, um, to study specifically secret ambitions, because I think it's so interesting. I do think like with anything else, if you could find someone, you feel comfortable sharing it with.

It will feel good to talk about it. Um, you know, it could be something, especially if we're talking about something that other people commonly strive for, they might have advice that might be really useful. Um, it's really hard to achieve these things on our own often. And so other people can be a great help.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, I'm also just thinking about the social accountability piece that you might have a secret desire and by keeping it secret, it makes it less likely because you, because you're not holding yourself accountable. In fact, what research shows is that when we. Tell somebody that we wanna lose [00:31:00] weight or that we're committing to a diet or, or that we're committing

to other kinds of habit change that we're much more likely to see it through in part because of that social accountability.

So it might be partly advice and it might be partly the social pressure, but if there is an ambition that feels secret that you really do want to achieve, , it really might be helpful to share it.

Michael Slepian: that's a great point.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. Are, are. Situations where you find yourself thinking like secrets can actually be quite useful. And I'm thinking about, um, a parent child relationship, like, you know, many parents keep secrets from their kids, and I'm not just talking about like eating ice cream after they go to bed.

But like, you know, whether you've done drugs and if your child asks you when they're still young, you know, should you tell them? Um, and so this kind of gets to a broader question of what are ways that you can assess whether secrets are good or bad to.

Michael Slepian: Yeah, that's such an interesting example because cuz it's so easy to [00:32:00] think of either choice being the right choice. Um, you know, at least for when you were talking about kids at the very least, I think you wanna somehow. It's still a sense of a healthy relationship with secrecy and privacy, especially as they get to their teenage years, um, to let them have that privacy that they will soon be desiring.

Uh, but at the same time, you want them to come to you with any concerns that they have, or if they're struggling with something. And so, you know, the, the question of like, should you reveal something? That then might make it normative for your child to then try that thing out too. Like drugs. I just don't know.

I mean, I guess you could say like, oh, I did in college and hopefully for your situation, that feels far away for, for your, for your child or something. Um, but yeah, it's tough.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, well, and your, your, your answer gets to this other really important point, which is, you know, we wanna encourage our children to have [00:33:00] private lives and. You know, there's some research that suggests that, you know, parental over involvement and monitoring really interferes with that in a problematic way.

Cuz uh, private lives are where we get creativity and we get to know ourselves better and we develop, um, our own, , solutions to problems. And so having private lives, internal mental worlds that belong exclusively to us is healthy and wonderful. Um, and yet. Want to encourage our kids, not to keep secrets that are gonna weigh them down and, and burden them.

And, you know, one example might be, if there's been, uh, sexual abuse, right? You wanna encourage your kids not to keep that secret. And in fact, some adults who are engaging in that might. Deliberately tell a child, keep this a secret. And so what are some guidelines that you might share that can help ourselves and our kids understand the difference between the right to privacy and then the dangers of keeping certain kinds of secrets.

Michael Slepian: I think what you want to do is yes, instill this sense of right to privacy, but also a [00:34:00] sense of routine disclosure. Um, so like when they get home from the day, like, The ideal norm is that they tell you what happened that day. Like just mundane stuff. Um, I had this class today who was hard, or it was, you know, I had a test, it went well, whatever it is.

Um, so that sharing becomes habitual. And so I think what you want is sort of healthy, just mundane sharing to be going on their right to privacy, but also to really instill the sense of, if there's anything you're struggling with, that's something you should bring to me. Yeah.

Yael Schonbrun: And I love in your advice in, in your book that you offer the advice that if you are, um, considering sharing a secret to start with somebody who who's high in compassion, who who's sort of a trustworthy person, and maybe in the reverse side, if you're wanting your child to be able to share with you to really embody that.

And so if they share something that feels a little bit [00:35:00] vulnerable to be really careful about, you know, remaining high compassion, rather than. You know, it's very easy to drop into shaming when we see our kids doing things that we're concerned about. And so to be careful with that, so that you can establish that habitual routine of like, you know, being a person that they can come confide

Michael Slepian: Right. And if you respond really negatively, the risk is that the child says, oh, wow. I will never do that again. I'll never open up again like that because it, it didn't, it just made things worse.

Yael Schonbrun: in. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I think too. I mean, one thing that I think about, uh, with. Teenagers, especially is, is sort of just being patient and sort of providing that opening that when they're in a mood , and, and there is, you know, that brief moment where they're willing to share, um, to sort of, you know, try to be at the ready, but also to be flexible with yourself that if you drop the ball that you can, whenever you are ready, own it and say, Ooh, I didn't respond.

Well. I just want you to know that I'll try better the next time, so that you establish that kind of open, um, [00:36:00] nonjudgmental non shaming communication.

Michael Slepian: Yeah, I think that's exactly right.

Yael Schonbrun: I wanted to think about the, the other direction is when you feel like this is again in the parent child domain, but I think it could also be a partner partner question. So sometimes you might Snoop around if you suspect that your kids are up to some.

That your kids are up to something or that your spouse or partner might be engaging in infidelity. And so you kind of Snoop on, on the ly in secret, but then what happens if you find out something that you didn't wanna know and you lose trust in that person, but also you don't wanna reveal that you've done something that feels kind of, imoral kind of wrong.

So I'm just curious about your thoughts on both trust, how to, how to build it. And then on snooping pros and cons

Michael Slepian: Yeah, so I think snooping, I, I think you wanna avoid it if you can, because really nothing really good comes from it. Uh, because if [00:37:00] you have this information that you're not supposed to have, that's just gonna drive you crazy and potentially admit that you've snooped and, and now everything's made more difficult.

Um, I, I think it's so, one thing to know is that the research shows that how much we believe our partners are concealing from us is mostly based on how much we conceal from them. That people don't really have an overly accurate sense of how much people are holding back from them. There, there is a small relationship there.

So there is some sort of kernel of you can. Notice if they're, you know, a little bit distant or, or something like that, or, or seem to have something on their

minds that they're not telling you, but you shouldn't put too much stock in that suspicion because it's mostly based on other things that may not be leading to an accurate judgment.

And so really what you want to do is, [00:38:00] is. How can you Roach this topic in a way that doesn't involve a violation of privacy? , in a way that doesn't seem confrontational? I don't have the, I don't have the answer there. Um, you know, they say they just got back from a business trip. You can ask like, oh, what happened on the trip?

You know, how, how was it, what did you do when, you know, how did you spend your evenings? Uh, but ideally asking it in a way that doesn't, that just sounds normal.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. Yeah. And I, I'm just sort of thinking that, if, if it is like a partner situation where you're not having trust, I, I think it can be useful. Disclose that and not keep it secret. Like I'm feeling a little bit mistrustful. I don't even know if it's anything that you've actually done, but can we talk about trust and, and sort of, you know, the things that we sometimes hold back from one another and you know, if there are things that we both are feeling secretive about, Could we maybe bring them out into the open and work on this relationship because it feels important to kind of [00:39:00] just, you know, this is sort of under the name it to tame it category of, of strategies in, in clinical psychology, where if we bring it out into the open, it becomes something that you can work on together as a team with your partner.

Michael Slepian: Yeah, I think so. I think adding more secrecy into the mix is not gonna make things better. It's gonna make things more complicated and, and less, less good.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. And I imagine the same thing goes with kids. You know, if you're concerned about your kid engaging in behavior or, or sort of being at the receiving end, like I I've spoken with peers who have, uh, children that. Veering into teenagehood and they're worried about their kids either bullying or, or being bullied and feeling uncomfortable, sharing it.

And so, you know, there's this temptation to sort of look through the texts, you know, look through the social media and find, sort of dig up information so that we can, as parents be more protective. , but what your research shows is that that's actually not the best strategy because it not [00:40:00] only creates a situation where you might have to keep a secret, but it can also really damage the trust.

And in both directions

Michael Slepian: Right. And this is why I think it's so important to have these sort of routine. Mundane disclosures and just like casual chatting about things that don't matter so much. So there's that default of we can share with each other. So if there is something big that we need to discuss, it seems more viable as an option.

Whereas if you're not having this sort of friendly casual chats at all, now it's really, really difficult to talk about something you're struggling with.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. Yeah. You have this quote suspicions of secrecy whether right or wrong are not very good for a relationship. And I, I think your research is in the romantic domain, but I, I really do think it's true about the parent-child relationship as well. That trust in both directions really breeds a much healthier, more open, and, and loving, trusting relationship.

Michael Slepian: yeah.

Yael Schonbrun: And yet you don't [00:41:00] necessarily advocate sharing all your secrets. And in fact, you have, you offer this coping compass for, um, having secrets in ways that aren't gonna be as damaging for your wellbeing as they otherwise might be. And I wonder if you can talk through, uh, that coping compass, but also, you know, how to decide whether or not to disclose a secret.

Michael Slepian: Right. So, you know, could we all, are we all better off with one viewer secrets probably. Um, but that doesn't mean you should reveal every single of your secrets. You know, certain there's a class of secrets that most people agree. Are totally fine to keep. And that's white lies. You know what we call white lies, where if you're, you know, someone asks you how their outfit looks and it's too late to change for, for some reason you're like out and about.

There's really no, no reason to say something not nice in that moment. Um, most people think it's, it's kinder and, and more compassionate to, to hold that truth back. If all that would come out of revealing it is, is needlessly hurting someone's feelings. And [00:42:00] so. When it comes to the secrets, you know, when it's not something so simple as that, you're trying to decide whether to, to talk about it or not.

At the very least you could start thinking about what is this secret that I'm keeping. And I don't mean the content, you know, what is, what experience am I having with the secret? Because there's different experiences we have with our

secrets and they have different implications for what we should do if we're trying to go it alone.

And normally just talking to a trusted, other. Is a great option if it seems available to you because when we choose to be alone with something, we often develop really unhealthy ways of thinking about that thing. And it's really easy to interrupt these like dis these thought loops that, that get us nowhere by breaking someone else into the conversation, but maybe you're not ready for that yet.

And so. The things you could ask yourself, essentially, these three questions. We find that of those 38 categories of secrets. A question I get a lot is how [00:43:00] do the different categories of secrets compare to each other, but that's too complicated of a question because each secret needs to be compared to each other's secret.

There's too many comparisons to make. And so one thing that you can do when you have that kind of question is say, is there some larger. Way of thinking about how these secrets relate to each other. Um, if we wanted to, if we wanted to compare the different categories of secrets to each other, what dimensions would we use to do so, and it turns out that people think about their secrets with three in three primary dimensions.

Um, and these are these dimensions come from the participant data. I, I didn't just make these up uh, and so. The first one is how IOR is the behavior that you're keeping secret. And the more imoral that secret will seem to you, the more likely you're to feel ashamed of the secret. Then the second question is how much does the secret involve other people?

If the secret doesn't involve other people, if it feels really individual, if it feels really [00:44:00] personal, that secret will feel more isolating to keep. And then finally, do you have, do you know your reasons, do you understand your reasons for why keeping. Why you're keeping this a secret and for plenty, it's like, yeah, it's super obvious.

I'm trying to not get in trouble or whatever it is. But then there's certain experiences that it's not as clear cut. You know, if it's an experience, say it's like sexual orientation or an experience of trauma when people feel like they don't understand their reasons very well for this secret, they, it can feel.

Like they lack insight into the secret. They can feel really uncertain of what to do. And so the good news is, well, the bad, the bad news is that a secret can hurt

you in three different ways. But the good news is it very rarely hurts you in all three of those ways. Um, it turns out that 95% of the time, when I tell people about these three harms of secrecy, there's one of them where they're like, yeah, I'm not experiencing that harm and that's sort of your lifeline. So for [00:45:00] example, you feel isolated, uncertain, but you don't feel ashamed of the secret. That's great. You know, you can feel like the secret is not wrong to keep, and maybe it's really difficult to keep, but you're not doing anything wrong.

And that really helps a lot going forward. Or maybe you feel like. You are ashamed of the secret and you are feeling isolated with it, but at least you understand your reasons for having the secret. That definitely offers some clear ideas for what you can do moving forward. You know, maybe that kind of secret, you're not ready to tell your friends and family, but maybe you can tell someone removed from it all about it and get the help that you need.

And still sort of also have whatever goal you're achieving by keeping the secret achieved as well. And then finally, Maybe you do understand your reasons and you do feel ashamed, but you don't feel isolated with the secret. Um, you know, maybe the secret involves another person for example, or maybe the secret is protecting someone.

And so just remember someone that you care about and just remembering that and remembering [00:46:00] the good that you're secret keeping could do or remembering that you do have someone you can talk to about this also can really help move, move forward.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, it ki to, for me, it kind of gets to this underlying question that comes up so often in psychology, which is what is the function of this secret. And once you can. Like is the function. To avoid conflict is the function to protect your reputation is the function to protect safety. And once you understand the function and knowing that secrets have a cost, you can decide, is it more worth it to keep the secret or are there ways that I can.

Disclose it or confide it to some trusted person that can alleviate some of the weight, the burden of the secret, but also can continue to protect the relationship or my reputation or my safety.

Michael Slepian: Yep.

So other things to think about is that people report that confiding a secret usually goes far better than they expect it to. We have this sort of worst fear in our mind. [00:47:00] But that's really rare. It turns out that it's very rare.

Someone responds very negatively to confiding a secret in someone to just telling a third party about the secret.

The average experience people have with confiding a secret is one that

Yael Schonbrun: Well, and I love that cuz you, you, you. In your book, that at the end of every study, you include a blank space for participants to share experiences. And that folks often write about how valuable it was to reflect on their secrets and to share them through this study. And that really does seem to provide a, a really nice piece of advice for, for what to do with secrets and, so let me back up and just ask this question.

I mean, if you are somebody who's carrying a secret and you're recognizing that it's pretty burdensome. But you are not feeling ready to share it because you're so afraid of some of the consequences. What are, what are some things that you can do to first, you know, get more ready to share it and then to actually share.

Michael Slepian: So, one thing you can do is [00:48:00] try journaling, but this comes with some strings attached. Um, for some people who don't bulk at that idea of sort of putting their thoughts, their feelings into words, the, the thing you wanna know about journaling is. The way to make it useful and helpful is you're trying to recreate what you would normally get out of a conversation with another person.

So journaling, you wanna try to use as a space to challenge your counterproductive ways of thinking to find a new perspective, to think about something from a different angle. If what your journal becomes is just a place where you rehash the past and you rehash your, your regrets and how bad you feel.

Now, the Journal's just become a written record of harmful rumination, which will not only not help it could hurt. And so, you know what you're trying to do it. It's, it's really easy to get this in a conversation because someone cuz anyone is a different person than you are. And so they'll have different experiences and different perspectives to draw on and will offer a perspective that you.

[00:49:00] Instead of it before, because you're stuck in one way of thinking about it. A lot of that is really easy for another person to provide, but if you're not ready to have that conversation yet you could start imagining what that might look like. And, and what are other ways of thinking about this that could come out of a conversation?

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, I just wanna add cuz you know, there's some of what you're suggesting fits directly into some of the exercises that we do in cognitive behavioral therapy. And one of the common questions that one might ask is what's the worst case outcome, which is what your mind is already going to. You know, this person's gonna leave me.

My life is gonna fall apart. My reputation will be ruined beyond repair. So you already kind of have that worst case outcome in your mind, but then to unhook from that, you can ask yourself, but what's the best possible outcome. And the best possible outcome might be, you know, the person will know me better and love me, you know, and, and understand me more and it'll help our relationship in ways I never imagined.

And then what's the most realistic, which is usually somewhere in between, but it does through these [00:50:00] three questions. What's the worst, what's the best. And then what's the most realistic can help you. In a similar way that journaling can in this way that you've described to put a pause on that unhelpful rumination and instead engage in some more helpful kinds of thinking that can help to prepare you for actions around the secret keeping, um, that, that feel productive. um, and then, you know, the advice to, you know, find a third party person who is compassionate is a great one. And a therapist is a great place to start. What are other tips that you might have about how, you know, how to sort of, um, move forward

Michael Slepian: Yeah. So talking to someone of course can be really helpful, but what will make it more likely to be helpful is choosing the right person. And so we've already been TA thinking some about, you know, the idea that someone's compassionate, someone's nonjudgmental someone who will be kind and empathic.

Um, But there's other things you could look for in a confidant [00:51:00] that prove to be helpful. So for example, people like to confide in people that they say is assertive. Um, someone who's going to push you to do the thing that, you know, you need to do. Other things to look for in a confidant is that they see the, sort of the morality of the issues.

Similarly, as you might. So someone who has a general similar orientation to, to the world as, as you do, we find in our research that when someone. Reveals a secret to you that you find to be highly morally objectionable. You're more likely to pass that secret on to a third party, essentially as a form of punishment.

And I don't wanna scare people off from. Revealing secrets for this reason. Um, it's, it's still pretty rare that someone betrays your confidence, but it's more likely if they're totally, totally scandalized by what you've told them. And they, they think what you've done is wrong. And so you wanna try to find someone who won't be scandalized by what you're telling them.

And then finally you all, one thing that's worthwhile considering. [00:52:00] By telling this person your secret, are you entangling them into the problem now, do they have to keep the secret on your behalf? Do you know all the same people in common is the secret about someone they know the risk is now. They have to feel very burdened by this secret too.

And so if you feel like you have other options that also may be someone to, to spare and, and choose someone else.

Yael Schonbrun: Those are really great guidelines and important things to be thinking about. And it raises this question in my mind. So if somebody were to tell you a secret and please keep this a secret, Michael, would you share it with your wife or not?

Michael Slepian: Yeah. So I, I think most people assume that when you tell something to them and they're, if they've been like married with this person for like years and years, that there's a good chance. It would. Get to them. I think if you're revealing something to someone and you really don't want anyone else to know it, I think it's totally fair and reasonable and, and not weird or awkward, or I think it's [00:53:00] totally fine to say, Hey, could you keep this between the two of us?

Can you not even tell, um, you know, and say the partner's name I've been in this situation before where someone said something to me that was very personal and this is a very private person. And it was like a really big deal that he was opening up to me at the time. And like, we. We were like talking about this thing all night long and I got home and my wife was like, oh, what, you know, what why'd you, why are you home?

So late? I was like, oh, you and I sort of explained that we were having a, sort of a more serious chat and. My wife was like, oh, tell me what it was about. And I was, I was like, no, I just, I, it was such a big deal for him to open up to me. I, he didn't have to say it. I knew he wanted me to not tell anyone.

And so I think if you're in this situation, your partner's just like, why aren't you telling me this thing? If you, you feel like no, it's really important that I keep to

this person's wishes, cuz I know it was a really big deal that they opened up to me. So I think the default is it does get passed on, [00:54:00] but.

Whoever you are in the, in the three party thing, you know, scenario we're thinking about is to understand that sometimes it doesn't have to happen and sometimes that's the best for everyone.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, I love the way that you handled that with your wife though, because it's almost like you partially shared this secret. You were as transparent as you could. While still protecting your friend. Like you let her know there is something that you can't share with her. And there's a reason it's because you're trying to honor, you know, his trust in you.

And in fact, that could breed even more trust between you and your wife, cuz she might know, you know, Michael is somebody who will keep a secret when it really matters. But you know, will be honest about keeping a secret, if that

Michael Slepian: Mm-hmm yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yael Schonbrun: I'm also just curious about the process of writing this book, because you revealed a lot of really personal parts of your own life, including a secret that your own parents kept from you for a long, long time. And then I, as I was doing some research, I discovered that you shared some other [00:55:00] secrets through other interviews that you've done.

And I'm just curious what that process has been like for you.

Michael Slepian: The first time I did one of these podcasts and sort of like the very first thing they asked was like, so you opened this book with this like huge secret that you learned. What was that like? And I was just like, oh my God. like, I just wasn't ready for that to be the first question. And I just, it really threw me, um, And so I, I felt it was important in writing a book about secrecy to sort of walk the walk a little bit.

Um, if I'm advising people the, the importance of opening up and, and sort of making yourself vulnerable, I think in, you know, especially when we're thinking in the real world, making yourself vulnerable, sounds like this. Terrible thing, but it's this kind of amazing thing, because when you do that, people recognize that you've done that and they recognize that what you've done took some courage and they'll respect that and appreciate that and say, wow, I realize, I understand that was probably hard for you to tell me that.

And, and it's this profound act of [00:56:00] intimacy to share something with someone that you wouldn't just tell anyone, but yeah, it's, it's. Been really interesting. Another thing that I thought a lot about when writing this book is even secrets that are out there, you know, now we talk about them or that we can talk about them still.

It's pretty common not to talk about them. And so I talk about the secret in the book, um, of learning that my dad was not biologically my father. Um, I was born by donor conception and I didn't know this. My twenties. Uh, and so there there's, there's a lot of stuff going on there, and. So I wrote about that story for the book. And then I realized, oh, I had extra questions to ask my parents. And I wanted to ask them these follow up questions of what it was like for them to have the secret. And when they started deciding they would tell me the secret.

Um, when they, you know, I asked all these questions that. I could have asked a decade ago and I never thought to do [00:57:00] so. I think we can get so used to thinking of something as, as the kind of thing, we don't talk about that even when it's not a secret anymore, we still avoid talking about it. And I just learned so much from my parents by interviewing them for the book.

And I just couldn't some of the things I couldn't believe, I was just like, oh my God, I just, I, we could have talked about this way sooner.

Yael Schonbrun: One of. Lovely questions that you asked your mom is when did she decide to tell the secret? And can you share a little bit about what she told you?

Michael Slepian: Yeah. So this is what I'm interviewing them for this book. And I asked my mom, when did you start considering cuz she, it throughout the course of the interview, mine with her. Throughout the course of me interviewing her, I learned that she sort of was wavering a lot on this secret, especially as my brother entered his teenage years.

And I'm, you know, in my older teenage years or in my early twenties. And it wasn't that they, it wasn't as initially presented to me that they just planned to keep the secret forever. And that was the end of the [00:58:00] story that, you know, there was some difficulty there and there were times when she considered revealing it.

And so I then asked her, well, when did you first start to consider revealing the secret. And I could not believe her answer. She said, well, when did your first

paper on secrecy come out? It, it was my own research that had changed her thinking, and that's just wild.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. What was it about your research findings that motivated her to come forward, to disclose to you the secret that she'd been caring for so long?

Michael Slepian: She was talking about my very first studies on secrecy. Those hill slam studies we were talking about before. Just the sense that a secret is something that can weigh you down or, or burden you. She started to realize, oh, wow, this is actually not a healthy thing for me. And that was the, and that's when she started to decide, oh, actually, maybe.

Not only might it be better for me to not be holding onto the secret? Maybe everyone would be better off with the[00:59:00]

Yael Schonbrun: and it does really sound like. Her revealing it, you know, lift released a burden that she'd been caring, but also brought a lot more closeness and opportunity for you to know each other and know yourselves, you know, in a very obvious way, a lot more deeply.

Michael Slepian: Yeah. And, and I learned that one of the reasons they thought to keep it, um, keep secret that my brother and I were donor concede was that if we were to find out, we would feel somehow less connected to my father's side of the family or not biologically related to them. And, you know, I learned my grandmother was an important person in this story.

She really didn't want us to know because she didn't want us to feel. Any degree of distance from, from my father's side of the family. And I wish I had a chance to tell her this. Um, but when I learned all this, it didn't make those relationships less meaningful for me. They made them. More meaningful to know that they were, they were not based on this sort of like [01:00:00] genetic obligation or whatever you wanna call it, that they treated us as, as their grandsons, just as much as if we were biologically related to them.

And so that just made those relationships more special to me, not less.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, I love that. And as I was reading your book and your story, I thought a lot about Danny Shapiro's book inheritance, and I was so excited that you went on her podcast. It was a great interview.

Michael Slepian: That's great. It's I didn't realize it was already out yeah.

Yael Schonbrun: yeah.

Michael Slepian: Yeah. I, it was, it was fascinating to have that conversation of someone who had a similar experience. And in fact, this experience is crazily common, and I, I think that's going to change with time, you know, I think before, you know, genetic testing is changing everything and I, so I don't think, I don't think parents are gonna keep that secret anymore for that reason.

Yael Schonbrun: But as you write, and as you, as your research shows, you know, a lot of the times secrets aren't discovered because, you know, they just don't come up and yet they still burden us. So even when [01:01:00] it's not.

Gonna emerge on its own, um, through genetic analysis, it's still, I mean, I think that, you know, all your research really points to, like there is value in sharing, right? There is tremendous value, both at a personal level for your own wellbeing, but also relationally.

Michael Slepian: right. And so even if it's a secret that you don't need to frequently conceal in conversation, and my family's secret fits this mold, it was very rare. We were having a conversation with, you know, with my mom or with my dad where. it touched on the issue involved in the secret where, which would mean we're asking about, you know, who's inheriting, which traits from their parents.

Um, did we have conversations like that? Yeah, but like very, very infrequently. And so even though it wasn't a secret that they had to hide, it didn't mean the secret wasn't there. It was still always there, even if they didn't need to hide it in conversation. And that's what makes secrets so difficult, even if we don't have to hide them.

They're still in our minds and we're still living [01:02:00] with them and maybe we're living alone with

Yael Schonbrun: There's something so isolating about having to carry something like that on your own. Um, and, and where, where is your secrets research going next? What, what's sort of like the main question that you're gonna be exploring in the near future.

Michael Slepian: So the end of the book is kind of the preview of what's to come in the future. At the end of the book, I talk about research. That's not published yet, and that we're still actively. Pursuing. And so research on positive

secrets is still, there's a lot of work to do there. Um, understanding the role of culture and secrecy there's even more work to do there.

Um, and then what happens when we're keeping secrets in other domains of life, when we're keeping secrets on behalf of our workplaces and, and, you know, for our jobs or, or whatever it is, how those different contexts influence or secret keeping. And so I, I'm gonna be kept busy for years to come by, by answering these questions or trying to.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah, it's a fascinating world that you've opened up. I, I think that this research is it's so personally [01:03:00] relevant to pretty much everybody . So I'm, I'm so excited that this book is available and I'll definitely be following your research. Um, yeah. So where can people find out more about you and your.

Michael Slepian: Yep. So you can find my website@michaelslop.com. Just my name. You can go to keepingsecrets.org, where you can actually take. The survey with the 30 different categories of secrets and see which ones you're keeping and see how that compares to other people of your gender and age. So we let you play around with the data after you take the survey on that website, or you can look up the book, the secret life of secrets.

Thanks.

Yael Schonbrun: I highly recommend the book. It was, it was a fascinating read. Thank you so much, Michael, for taking the time to join me today.

Yael Schonbrun: Hey psychologist off the clock listeners. I'm going to guess that if you are listening to this episode, that you love to geek out about books in psychology.

Katy Rothfelder: So if you are a fellow book, nerd like Yale and I, and all of the people around you are tired of you talking about [01:04:00] books. Then you can join us once a month to really take a deep dive into the books that we're going to be reading to you.

Yael Schonbrun: So if you want to join us , all you have to do is send an email. With the subject heading RSVP to off the clock psych@gmail.com. And we'll send you information for upcoming meetings of the book club.

We hope to see you there

Debbie Sorensen: thank you for listening to psychologists off the clock. If you enjoy our podcast, you can help us out by leaving a review or contributing on Patreon.

Yael Schonbrun: You can get more psychology tips by subscribing to our newsletter, and you can find us wherever you get your podcasts. Connect with us on social media by going to our website

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Jill Stoddard: We'd like to thank our strategic consultant, Michael Harold, our dissemination coordinator, Katy Rothfelder, and our editorial coordinator, Melissa Miller.

Debbie Sorensen: This podcast is for informational and entertainment purposes only, and is not meant to be a substitute for mental health treatment. [01:05:00] If you're having a mental health emergency dial 9 1 1. . If you're looking for mental health treatment, please visit the resources page of our website off the clock.

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