

Hope and Values in Dark Times

Debbie Sorensen: [00:00:00] how do I find hope in the midst of everything that's going on and to move into more, a place of,] hope, meaning like what can I do?

And maybe my actions do matter.

Jill Stoddard: when you act in hopeful ways, the feeling of hope will follow the action.

Yael Schonbrun: And like, if you sort of start by focusing on the small things that you can control and have influence on, even if they feel insignificant, it can create some momentum and, and this feeling of, of hope like I'm doing something right.

I'm not maybe, you know, changing the world from what it is, you know, in, in a day, but I'm making a contribution. I'm trying to make things better in the ways that I can today.

Michael Herold: So it's those small little, like flavors that go into like everyday things that, to me mean that I'm living my entire day with hope.

Debbie Sorensen: That was us. Debbie, Jill, Yael, and Michael on psychologists off the clock.

[00:01:00] 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.

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 Psychologists Off the Clock.

Yael Schonbrun: Psychologists off the clock is proud to be partnered with Praxis Continuing Education. Praxis is the premier provider of evidence-based training for mental health professionals.

Jill Stoddard: And here at psychologists off the clock, we are huge fans of Praxis. One of the things I love most about Praxis is they offer both live. [00:02:00] And on demand courses. So if you're really looking for that, live interaction with other people who are taking the course, you can get that.

Or if you have a busy schedule and you need something that you can just kind of click onto whenever you have time, they offer that as well.

, and every course I have ever taken from Praxis has really been of such value to me.

Debbie Sorensen: I get questions a lot from clinicians who are looking for act training or other types of trainings, and Praxis my go-to place that I send people no matter what level they are, because they have really good beginner trainings for people who have no experience.

And they also have terrific advanced trainings on different topics and just people who want to keep building their skills.

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 Sorensen: hi everyone. We're bringing you an episode with the psychologist off the clock [00:03:00] team today. Part of it, we have the three co-hosts Debbie that's me, Yael and Jill.

And then we also have Michael Harold, who is our, what's your title? Michael, who is our, who is

Michael Herold: think you just make me say that word all the time, because I stumble over it all the

Debbie Sorensen: it's hard to pronounce like strategic consultant. Okay. I

Yael Schonbrun: hard pronounce when you have an American accent too.

Debbie Sorensen: that's right. and so Michael's here to bring us the European perspective on things and also just kind of balance out the conversation. Um, and I really wanted to do this episode today because I've been just reading the news a lot and feeling a sense of, I don't know, it's just depressing and I feel discouraged and occasionally go through periods of hopelessness and wondering what I can do. And I think a lot of us have been through so much the last couple of years that it's, and it seems like it's kind of come in waves where it just feels like really hard to live in the world [00:04:00] today.

We were sort of in our last team meeting the other day, we were talking about doing this episode and we were joking around that. It feels like we're gearing up to survive the apocalypse and. You know, you're trying to be funny, but it's like, it's kind of funny, not funny. It's like, it really does feel like that.

And they think there's a little bit of reality to it that we've just been through so many really hard things. And for me personally, I've worried a lot about the future for kids, you know, for my own kids and just for all the kids and kind of what's ahead in the decades ahead. I think the world always feels hard.

I know my mom said she felt that way when I was born, which was, you know, here in the us, we were just at the end of the war with Vietnam and Watergate with Nixon and all that stuff was going on. And I know she felt the same way when I was born, but I think, you know, maybe it always feels that way a little bit, but it feels especially hard for, for me right now.

So we wanted to just have an episode, not to, not that we have the answers, but to [00:05:00] just to talk about. I think the psychological impact of that. And then also how we can find a sense of hope, how we can sort of carry on and muddle through during tough times like this and you know, how can we live consistently with our values and do what we can to make it through when the world feels hard.

Jill Stoddard: Yeah. And I think what's particularly, um, challenging about what may be going on right now is the chronicity of it that, you know, often when we're dealing with stressors, it feels like there's kind of an acute stressor and we get through that and move on until the next one comes along. And it feels like there's been a lot of tough things that have been really ongoing for quite some time.

But I think your point is good, Debbie, that if you really zoom out and look historically, you know, things do tend to get better over time, you know, however you, however you define that and you know, we do. Thankfully have a lot of science back strategies from psychology that we can use to cope and to [00:06:00]

Debbie Sorensen: Yeah, I think that's such a good point. Jill. I think one of the things that I sometimes talk to my clients is about that. I sometimes talk, uh, that I sometimes talk to my clients about is how it's very easy to just. Feel like things are normal and go about your day to day life and forget that, you know, the last few years have been pretty traumatic for all of us, just the pandemic alone, but then we have all the other things that we've been dealing with, you know, climate change and natural disasters and what hold on.

Actually, I'm not gonna get into that yet. Um, we've been through all these things over the last few years, the pandemic being a huge one, but then all the other things that we're dealing with, we can get a little desensitized to the stress of it and just think, oh, this is normal. But actually I think it's a little bit more compassionate to ourselves to just acknowledge like we are living in a really, really difficult and stressful time.

So no wonder, no wonder we're all tired and stressed. A lot of the [00:07:00] times.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah. And in fact, one of our past guests, Melinda, we Moyer who's a frequent contributor to the New York times wrote this great piece called the psychic numbing of mass tragedies. And the subtitle is stressful events can cause us to detach and disengage. And, and the article is really about how normal and natural that is, but also that, you know, the detachment can cause problems of its own.

And so that's where the psychological tools are really handy, you know, both in order to stay engaged, but in ways that are compassionate to ourselves and help us sort of, you know, stay in for the, the marathon of, you know, the ups and downs of, of what life has become.

Debbie Sorensen: think one of the things we were talking about when we were thinking about doing this episode is that we're not here to give you like simple life hacks that are gonna like, make this all go away, because I don't think we're capable of doing that. And I don't think that's the answer either, either, but I think it can help to know that it is valid to have those kinds of experiences like that.

Numbing or detachment or whatever it is that you're feeling [00:08:00] maybe to feel less alone with it and have a little bit more compassion towards yourself and to recognize, I think sometimes we almost feel like, well, what's wrong with me? I should, I should have been able to deal with this or something like that, but that it's actually, you know, this is hard stuff and that you can't really like self carry your way out of this.

You know

Jill Stoddard: Right. And I think sometimes avoidance is healthy. Like if, if you are, if you're stepping away from the news and from social media and that's because that is an avoidance move of this is making me feel terrible. And I don't wanna feel this way anymore. You know, that can be a form of self care. I think, you know, a lot of what we probably need to sort of talk about is that it's all about balance, right?

Like if you put your head in the sand and, and, and avoid a hundred percent and do nothing to take care of yourself or your family, or think about your values, et cetera, you know, that's problematic, but probably being over engaged with all the bad [00:09:00] news is problematic as well. And trying to find a balance where, you know, sometimes maybe we choose to step away and engage in other things.

You know, we all still have a life. We all still have friends and family and work or whatever it is that people are doing that matters to them. Um, and you know, that it's, it's okay to turn toward those things and not just stay. Um, what's the word I'm looking for? Like, not. Not be O over engaged, um, with the tough, with the tough stuff that's going on.

Michael Herold: I find like one of the, one of the themes that I've very much discovered over the last couple. I find that one of the themes that I've discovered over the last two or three years is this concept of, of blame and anger. That I've never felt like this before. And I don't know where it's coming from, but I see it often as a, a quick solution to the problem.

Well, there's climate change. Well, guess what? The others aren't doing anything either. Why should we, [00:10:00] why should, you know, Germany bring down all their nuclear reactors when everyone else is building them? Why should we do X, Y, and Z when it's their fault? And this, this like clashing of like pure anger, simple solution, it's your fault.

And I'm going to be angry, solved.

Debbie Sorensen: so I think that's really interesting that you say that. Cause I actually, anger does point to something. Cuz I think that there's something about that. To me, that feels like you're pointing to a true injustice that's going on. Um, but you can see where that slips into that inaction place or you can get kind of hooked by that anger to the point where it's not helpful and it kind of just keeps you stuck there.

Um, but.

Yael Schonbrun: Right. And so many of the problems that we're facing require us to come up with really collaborative solutions, like as a society, as you know, large groups of people. And if we're just engaged in the blame game of like, who's really responsible for it. , even if we're taking action, if we're sort of taking action that is, at odds or in, [00:11:00] in sort of combat with somebody else, it can kind of undo it.

So it would be so useful to be able. Kind of dial down that anger, not, not to say that people aren't responsible, but rather to say, you know, regardless of who's responsible, we need to find a way to come together and, and get to a better place. I I've said this before on the podcast, but I always think to myself, like we need more couples therapists at the top of the government, like people who can, who can do a better job of helping people to communicate across lines.

of difference. Um, I don't know. I was watching some recent news and a Senator in stuck in combative dialogue with somebody who was coming to testify for the January 6th hearings. And it was, and that the couple's therapist of me was just recognizing, like they were having totally different conversations.

They weren't talking about the same thing. They weren't listening to each other and it was so angry and it was like this video that went viral. And, you know, regardless of what side you [00:12:00] come down on, if you're not communicating with people who are talking about. Things that matter. You're not gonna get anywhere.

Debbie Sorensen: I think that sometimes too, you know, talking about the anger and blame, I think sometimes we actually, it's not just with people who disagree with us. We might have people that we agree with in general about some of the, you know, Some of the concepts that we care about, but we can get into some infighting with them about the specifics. you know, like we can almost turn. The wrong person into the, the problem or the enemy. And it's like, okay, wait, we fundamentally agree on a lot of things here.

You know, we might agree that we wanna take care of the environment. We might agree that we wanna have rights for people and that kind of thing, but then it gets into squabbling about some of the minutia. And I mean, I feel like sometimes that's not helpful at all. I

Yael Schonbrun: one thing that we know too, is, is really difficult about this time and place is that there's a tremendous amount amount of [00:13:00] uncertainty in lots of different areas of, of life. Um, and one thing that psychologists and social scientists have uncovered is that uncertainty is something that's really hard for us to tolerate.

In fact, all of our cognitive resource. Are in some form dedicated to making uncertain things more certain. And, and that's sort of like a, a hangover from pre-modern times where uncertainty could mean, you know, death, right. If you're out in an exposed place and there's a predator, that's an uncertain and precarious position to be in.

And so you wanna get to a place of, of relative safety. And so all of your, uh, brain wiring is sort of geared towards making things a bit safer, a bit more certain. And there's this really interesting study that I love to cite. And I wrote about it right. In a piece that I collaborated with, uh, Barry Schwartz.

Who's a terrific social scientist and wrote books including practical wisdom in the paradox of choice. We wrote a piece about the uncertainty at the beginning of the pandemic. And one this study that we cited is a 2016 study that had [00:14:00] participants in groups, , where they had a certain odds of getting shocked and in the group.

Of participants with a 50% chance of receiving a shock. They were more stressed than those with a 100% chance of receiving a shock. So the conclusion of this study is that it's not just the possibility of a shock that causes stress. It's the uncertainty that there's this cognitive component of uncertainty that is really uncomfortable that we wanna avoid at all costs.

And, and, you know, when things like, pandemics and, changes to schedules and, and the way that we work. Transpire. It feels very uncertain and, and that's a really stressful place to be. And kind of gets to the point that Joe was saying, it kind of contributes to this sense of chronic stress that we can never sort of relax from this heightened position of vigilance because we're always in this uncertainty.

And so one of the things that is an important psychological tool, and maybe the four of us can talk about sort of how, how we each use this is to focus on the [00:15:00] areas that are a bit more certain to give your body and your mind a chance to relax a little bit. So that for most of us, while there are components that, you know, in the past couple years have really become highly uncertain.

There's probably also some pieces that of your life that you can point to where there's some relative stability.

Jill Stoddard: Can I add something to that too? Just I think I, I wanna validate people's experience and maybe this is some input that will help people to have compassion for themselves is not only as you mentioned. Yeah. L R we evolutionarily programmed to avoid and dislike uncertainty in the last say 20 ish years, technology has really taken away the practice that we normally have to tolerate uncertainty.

Right? So like these days, if you want the answer to any question, you just ask Alexa or Siri, or, you know, assuming you have access to technology, um, if you want to buy a new product, do you buy anything before you look at the reviews? You know, we have Yelp, we have [00:16:00] five stars on Amazon. So if you're gonna go to a new hairdresser, a doctor, I mean, anything that, that in the past we used to do.

With a level of uncertainty we now no longer do. So it's essentially like these, these muscles of tolerating uncertainty have really AED as a direct result of this technology. And so, you know, this already, the, the, the sort of inborn difficulty human beings have with uncertainty, I think has become magnified as, as a result of, of technology.

And, and so like for anyone who's listening, who's struggling with uncertainty. You know, I think we're all really in the same boat as humans, and as, as people who live in this, you know, this culture.

Michael Herold: there a way out of this, like practically, because as you were saying this chill, I was thinking to myself, oh yeah, I can practice, you know, uncertainty living with uncertainty a little bit more, but then I'm going to admit that the next time I'm buying a book on Amazon, I will look at the reviews next time I'm [00:17:00] finding a new dentist.

I will look at the reviews. Right. It's because it's just so useful. Like I would, I can't see myself not finding these answers.

Jill Stoddard: Well, I think you can practice until you kind of get to a place where you, you learn that even if I, you know, get a book and it's not great. Okay. So what I read one bad book, it's not the end of the world. So you get to experience it's, it's experiential learning. Like if I practice doing things without getting certainty, I learn that probably whatever I'm afraid will happen doesn't really happen.

But even if it does, it's no big deal and I can handle it. You know, it's kind of like if I treat, take, for example, um, people who have contamination O C D you know, will practice, uh, eating off toilet seats or playing in toilet water and not washing our hands, things that are so over the top that you wouldn't really do in like real life.

But if you can get [00:18:00] comfortable with that willingness, then you'll be able to tackle anything. And that's kind of how I look at learning to tolerate uncertainty is finding opportunities to practice like reading books, you know, kind of just. Picking one out of the blue or a restaurant, it can actually be kind of a fun adventure.

Just go to a random restaurant that's down the street and see how you like it. And it may be amazing and you may love it and it may be terrible. And that's okay. And then, you know, once you start to practice that you don't have to keep doing that. Right.

Debbie Sorensen: Feel like it's a little harder though, when you're talking, it's one thing, if you read a bad book, but I mean, the things I'm afraid about happening, you know, the I'm like, well, I don't know what to expect with the climate change with, you know, is democracy about to crumble here in the us. It's like, that's a little bit of a different scale, but I think it's still what to me, what, where the overlap is, is that it's just this feeling of not knowing what's ahead and maybe it won't be good, you know, maybe it will be stuff that [00:19:00] is a big problem.

I may think some bad things have been happening, you know, in my opinion, they're pretty bad have been happening around the world with, you know, wars and droughts and that kind of thing. Um, but I think that that feeling of like, not knowing what's ahead is something that we have happening here and now,

Jill Stoddard: certainly.

Debbie Sorensen: where I think the overlap is.

Jill Stoddard: Right. And then eating at an unknown restaurant, isn't gonna make you feel better about the unknown around climate change. What it does allow though, is what we tend to do is try as hard as we can to get certainty and areas where that backfires. Right? So for example, if you take the climate change example, then people may end up, you know, diving into Google and, you know, researching, researching, researching, researching to try to get answers, to try to get a greater sense of certainty.

And what often happens is it opens an even bigger can of worms and results in even more uncertainty and more anxiety, you know? So I think this is kind of going back to what I think [00:20:00] Yale was originally saying is like recognizing, you know, where are there places where maybe we can have a little more certainty and control and in the other places where that's not the case, we have to learn how to practice willingness toward uncertainty rather than trying to clamp.

Down and get more of it. Like I used to have. Do you remember those water, snake toys? It's just a little tube that's filled with water and if you squeeze it really hard, it shoots out of your hand. I don't know if they have these in Europe, Michael, but these were toys we used to have as kids. And I had these props in my therapy office as a kind of experiential learning that the harder you try to grasp onto certainty or control, which really go hand in hand, the more it evades you and like really we have to hold these things really lightly.

And if we can engage in these kind of practices of learning, how to allow, you know, kind of get comfortable being uncomfortable, allow uncertainty, then it may make it a little bit [00:21:00] easier. It's it doesn't make climate change any less terrible, but it makes your ability to tolerate the uncertainty around it a little bit more, um, practiced.

Yael Schonbrun: It reminds me of your health anxiety episode and, and the conversation that you had with Karen Lynn Cassidy about, um, that health anxiety is often really a, an existential fear of, will I live or will I die? And, and when will that be? And, and if you're a parent who's having health anxiety on behalf of your child, it's sort of, you know, projected onto them.

How do I make sure that my child is safe and, and you can't like, there are certain things that are just not possible, but our anxiety wants so badly for us to make that outcome certain. And yet, because it's an impossibility, it's, you know, that, that metaphor, that water snake, Jill, that you were describing is so apt because it's like the harder you try to hold onto it, the more slippery it becomes, the more anxious you.

Debbie Sorensen: Well, and actually I could see, and maybe this is a good segue to talk a little bit about [00:22:00] hopelessness and hope because I could see how being able to sit with uncertainty is actually probably important for hope, because I think if you need absolute certainty, Know, you could get so caught up in that, that you're not doing the things that actually matter.

You know what I mean? Like you could sit and, and try to resolve your uncertainty about some of these things, but then, you know, you could also instead say, okay, uncertainty is just part of this, but what can I do to help move things forward? one of the things I've been noticing sometimes I think is feeling discouraged around being able to take action and kind of asking myself a lot of questions about, you know, is this all hopeless? Do my actions matter? Um, sometimes it feels a little bit

insignificant like my little teeny tiny thing I can do in the world is small potatoes compared to, you know, some of the big, huge problems, like some of the things happening at the global level, the political [00:23:00] level, you know, some of the things major corporations are doing and politicians to kind of keep their, their power and profits going.

And I think sometimes it's like, you can get a little Bo down in that feeling of like, well, what's the point, or even like blame ourselves when we're not taking enough action. And I think sometimes this is all part of just, um, well, hold on, let me see it. It becomes this perceived, inability to change our circumstances.

Like, oh, there's nothing I can do. Um,

Jill Stoddard: of like a, why bother? Like, what's the point? Why bother which, and that's that's so ho that's hopelessness, right? What's

Debbie Sorensen: That's hopelessness. Exactly. Just sort of believing that things are always gonna be like this or worse and there's nothing we can do. And so I've been trying to look at the opposite of this. Like how do I find hope in the midst of everything that's going on and to move into more, a place of,] hope, meaning like what can I do?

And maybe my [00:24:00] actions do matter. And I actually wanted to just kind of share a little bit about some of the reading I've been doing that hope. Isn't the same thing as wishful thinking, right? Wishful thinking might be like, wouldn't it be great if all this stuff just got better spontaneously or, you know, somehow, maybe this isn't so bad after all, but hope is actually grounded a bit more in reality, but it's kind of an active process of thinking my actions do matter.

And you could look at hope as an action instead of. You know, a feeling like that feeling might even come and go, like maybe you do have moments of feeling discouraged and hopeless, but you can still continue to take action over the course of time. Um, and that, that, that piece about taking action actually matters a lot.

It's kind of cyclical. Actually, once you start to act hope grows, and the more hope you have, the more likely you are to take action and to feel like your actions do matter.

Jill Stoddard: love that [00:25:00] that makes so much sense. And it reminds me of, you know, I talk to clients about this all the time with respect to motivation. You know, we, we often wait until we feel like doing something, but if it's something sort of aversive, you're gonna be waiting forever and that really you have to act.

And then once you act the motivation follows, and that's exactly what this reminds me of. Debbie. I've never really thought of it in that way. Is that when you act in hopeful ways, the feeling of hope will follow the action.

Yael Schonbrun: And I think that kind of fits back to what we were talking about with the uncertainty. And like, if you sort of start by focusing on the small things that you can control and have influence on, even if they are, you know, even if they feel insignificant, relative to the bigger picture of the things that you worry about and start to take action in those small ways, it can create some momentum and, and this feeling of, of hope like I'm doing something right.

I'm not maybe, you know, changing the world from what it is, you know, in, in a day, but I'm making a contribution. I'm trying to make things better in the ways that I can today.

Jill Stoddard: [00:26:00] Yeah.

Debbie Sorensen: If you want a really inspiring and hopeful read, I've been reading the book of hope, which is, uh, by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams. And she has that message throughout, right? That it is this active process and that your actions do matter. And each of us can do our part and. Hope is a way of engaging with our problems.

She describes it as like a survival thing that we have kind of wired in. Like we can't survive without hope because we have to sort of keep going during difficult times and Brene brown. Oh wait, actually, Michael, can you let me

prompt it to you? Can you talk about, so Michael, I know that you saw, um, Michael, I know that you saw Jane Goodall in person in Vienna a few years ago, and that you have a really amazing story about seeing her.

Michael Herold: Oh, it was, yeah, it was amazing. It was just so heartwarming. And, um, I think she talked about the hope, for sure. [00:27:00] Like that was the general theme of the talk. I think the talk was called the five pillars of hope, but I might be mistaken. But the thing that I remember most about her was that the moment she, she entered the arena, this was a huge venue.

Thousands of people. And the moment she stepped in, everything became quiet and peaceful. And then she started talking and, and in this huge hall, she had this soft voice and you could hear a pin drop, not because it was a, a stern teacher, but it was. Person just exuded peace and love and, and hope. And it was really, uh, it was a, it almost felt like a two hour meditation sitting in there and being filled with hope.

And, and she, I mean, she dealt with a lot of tough things in her life. I think her, uh, first husband with whom she was very close, um, died early. Um, all the, you know, animals she saw suffer and, and receding in their population and, and still she [00:28:00] carries this idea of no, there's, there's hope we can, we can, we can make this, we can make this happen and also such a fun person.

So a side note off topic, um, as the talk was over, um, there was this opportunity to like line up and get a book signed, get it photo taken with her. And, and so my friend and I we're, we're lining up and this entire hall is like, Totally silent, a hundred people in line, and we're like all the way back thinking, okay, this is gonna take an hour until we get there.

And I look at my friend and I, and I say to her, we should be screaming like chimps right now. And my, my friend looks at me and she goes like, ah, I hate you for saying that because now I can't back out. So we're in this totally silent room and we go, oh, oh, oh. And we're just having fun. And then a second later, like Jane Goodall is up on stage and she turns to us and she yells back in Chimp sounds so I had no idea what the conversation was about. [00:29:00] it was just, but this, this, um, this lady with, uh, this, this flare of let's have fun with this as well. Like that was really mind blowing to experience that, how she can carry all of those things together. Hmm.

Jill Stoddard: She's such a model of perseverance too, because I know she also faced immense sexism. You know, she started working in this field at a time where there were literally zero women doing what she was doing and you know,

yet here she still is. She didn't give up. She didn't let the, the naysayers discourage her, or she may have felt discouraged.

She may have felt a hopelessness, and yet she found a way to, to keep going. And you know what a beacon of hope that is at least to see

Debbie Sorensen: She also, you know, I think perspective taking is really important too, in those moments when you just feel so consumed by all the doom and gloom, and she lived through world [00:30:00] war II, obviously the cold war, all the things, again, like Michael mentioned with the animals being poached and the environmental changes over the course of her life.

And so she offers that wisdom around, you know, she's been through many, many difficult times, both personally and around the world. And I think sometimes those voices have a lot of wisdom. People who have been around long enough to have seen some of these cycles come through the world,

Michael Herold: I, I find that that's the change that we can do as well. And Debbie earlier said that, what can I do? Like, what's the impact that I could potentially have as a single person. But I find that where someone like chain Goodall of course, is like millions of an audience that you can immediately reach. Um, we can reach.

10 15 people every day. You know, sometimes I find that, uh, just doing my groceries with a smile on my face maybe makes like one or two people's days, just a tiny little bit [00:31:00] better. Uh, when, when winter comes up, I have this like fluffy hat that is like the, in the shape of a cow that I wear every time when winter comes up and EV the first week, every winter, I'm like, why are people smiling at me all the time?

And then I see my shadow and it's like these horns and a big head. I was like, ah, yeah, that's, that's fine. And I feel like it's those small, those small things that cascade down, I smile, someone else starts smiling. Someone else starts smiling. And, and, and, and that's more. And that that's really that's really, I don't wanna say that's more than enough, but I think that that is well worth doing, not necessarily the smiling, but bringing, bringing that what we care about into the world.

Debbie Sorensen: Can we post the picture of you with Jane Goodall? You have a selfie with her from when you saw her in person. Can we post it on her show notes?

Michael Herold: Totally. Totally.

Jill Stoddard: also post a picture of you and your cow hat?

Michael Herold: How many pictures do you want of, should I just like upload my photo library?[00:32:00]

Debbie Sorensen: so I have another example of a small scale day to day thing that I did just the other. So we were ordering burritos for dinner, which is our go-to thing. When we don't feel like cooking and I don't eat much beef, but occasionally I do maybe like once a month or so, and I haven't had beef in several weeks and I was looking at the menu online and I was like, oh, a steak burrito. Sounds good to me. And since I haven't had beef in a while, I put that in my online order. And. That day I was reading the Jane Goodall book and there's a lot about the environment in that book. And I stopped and I thought, hold on, I know that beef has a big environmental impact and I'm trying to move more toward a plant based diet in general, mostly for environmental reasons and less.

Meat and especially less beef. And so I asked my husband to change my burrito from a beef burrito to a chicken burrito. And I told him why. And then he changed his from a chicken burrito [00:33:00] to a vegetarian burrito. And so by making that small, tiny step in the direction of a better environmental choice, I inspired him to do the same thing.

And I was thinking about how it's really not a big deal, one burrito, right. But if I order burritos once a week, and I changed my order to something a little better for the environment. Every time that would be 52 burritos a year. And if my husband did it too, that's 104 burritos a year. And maybe by telling the story on the podcast, someone's gonna hear it and is gonna think about what that when they.

When they order a burrito tonight and we'll make a better environmental choice. And so these things they're small, but they do add up. And I think it's really important to just pause and think about the small choices we make and the small things we do. Because they can make a difference. It's maybe it is a small difference, but it's a difference, nonetheless.

Jill Stoddard: I think this is a really important point because going back to what you were saying before about people almost feeling guilty that they're not doing enough or the right thing, like [00:34:00] there are so many ways that we can make the world a better place and it doesn't have to be through marching or writing letters or, you know, doing these.

I don't know, like what, what people think of as like social justice, warrior, activism type work. If that's your thing, amazing. Like get out and do it. If that's what's values driven for you, but not because it's a should or it's the thing you think you're supposed to do if wearing a cat cow hat and making other people smile is like bringing some light into the world.

That counts and that's doable. So I think part of where we feel hopeless is the magnitude of these issues, right? And that, that piece of like, what can I do as one single person? And yet, you know, we can influence the other people in our world in really small ways. And I think finding those ways for each individual person and then letting it count is is really important.

Yael Schonbrun: I think it also brings up this other point where [00:35:00] it it's easy to feel guilty when you recognize how many people are suffering so much. If you're in a place of privilege and you're not suffering in a given moment, like, you know, we're here and we're in America and we're not close to the war zone and it can feel like downright shameful to, to like say I'm having a hard day.

When you think about the kinds of suffering that other people are enduring. And I think what Jill and Michael are sort of pointing to is like there's value in, in feeling okay. And trying to spread happiness and warmth and connection, um, that we don't need to feel guilty about being okay. We can sort of be grateful and appreciative and try to spread that.

And, and at the same time, recognize that we are privileged as sort of a, both and.

Jill Stoddard: And don't have to feel guilty about feeling not okay. Even if we're not in an actual war zone, right. Everybody suffers in different ways every day. And that all counts too. Right? All of our feelings are valid. I sometimes say to clients, you know, who have this exact issue is like, [00:36:00] if you lost an arm, you wouldn't say, oh, I'm not allowed to be upset about it.

Cuz I have another arm, you know, that would be ridiculous. Right. Be like, because it could always be worse, but that doesn't mean that your feeling and suffering aren't valid and I think self.

Michael Herold: Mm.

Debbie Sorensen: And self-compassion. I also do think though, you know, Y's point about privilege is really an important one. And just even having some of

the choices we're talking about is a privilege, you know, like you can't always choose, but I think from that place of privilege, it's also important to recognize that, you know, you can use that privilege to take action maybe in a way that somebody who's like in the middle of a war zone or directly impacted by some of the political events, like very, very directly impacted, um, Just may not have the bandwidth, you know, maybe someone who's been through racial trauma recently, isn't in, you know, I'm gonna fight for racial justice mode right now.

And [00:37:00] maybe then some other people can help carry that load. So I think it's both, it's like, you have to sort of pace yourself and recognize like you can't do it all. It's impossible, but what's my part. And what can I do? And what's the piece that I wanna kind of take on right now. And maybe right now, I can't, you know, I'm going through a divorce, so this is not the time for me to be, you know, do I need to take care of myself right now?

You know, maybe next month is the time I can do a little bit more. Cuz I think it is something we have to pace ourselves and look at this as like a longer process.

Yael Schonbrun: Also wanna share a story of a friend of mine. Who's Ukrainian, whose parents and grandparents are, are in Ukraine. And it's obviously a pretty terrible situation, but she showed me pictures. Her parents are living in the basement. It's this tiny place with her grandparents, but she, and, but she was telling me about their day.

And she said, you know, they have a hard time, but also she, my mom tells me every day about how much she's enjoying growing her little garden. So they get out every day to kind of check on the garden and find those [00:38:00] pockets again, where, where they can have some control, some stability, some, some positivity, and really embrace that.

It doesn't make what they're going through. Okay. Not. By any stretch, but it's sort of, you know, we, you gotta work with what you have and make the difference in the ways that make sense and do it flexibly and so the more you can connect to your values, to self-compassion and to sort of check in about, you know, do I need a break?

Do I need to sort of let this go? Do I need to have a cry? Do I need to take some action? All of those kinds of self reflective questions can really help to orient you to what is gonna make the most sense to, to do in a given moment.

Debbie Sorensen: So there are a couple more things I wanted to say about hope to go kind of going back to some of the reading I've been doing. So again, I

think we can look at hope as an action, and it's also really important to take a look at hope as something that isn't either a fixed trait you have, or don't have, it's not all or nothing.

It is something that can be learned and cultivated, right. So if you're feeling [00:39:00] hopeless right now, you know, you can kind of, I mean, I hope this conversation is part of this, right? Like you can actually kind of work on that. You can kind of work toward hope and cultivate it in your own life. And I think there's a lot of good reasons to do that, including, you know, hope is associated with all kinds of outcomes that you probably want, like things like productivity and academic achievement are associated.

With high hopefulness. And so our community wellbeing, physical health and life expectancy. And so, you know, there's a lot of good reasons why you might find it helpful. And researchers have identified for main components that are essential for hope, um, realistic goals, having a pathway to achievement. And I think it's really important to acknowledge that that can be sort of a, a flexible pathway.

You know, it's not like a point a to point B kind of thing, but just being able to kind of have ways to take action and have a direction it's also about having a sense of [00:40:00] agency or like confidence that we can move along those pathways that we can do things. And then also having support along the way. I mean, I think this sense of having community and having social support and having resources, um, is really important as well for just being able to take action.

Jill Stoddard: I think too that there can be a bit of like an emotional contagion, you know, like when you're with people who are particularly negative, you notice that this sort of finds its way in.

Right. Um, and so finding community. Where there is more hope, or you can be the person who starts kind of the hope movement in your own community. But at least I know for me, when I'm around people who are particularly hopeless and negative, that starts to affect me a lot more. And that it feels important to be spending time, you know, like listening to a podcast like this, talking to you guys, um, you know, you, that, that, that can be something to, well,

Michael Herold: And [00:41:00] also, um, to your down and also to your, um, breakdown of hope in these four categories or those four necessities for it. I find that to me, feels like, uh, a goal oriented approach. I think the first one was

actually realistic expectations and I've recently, uh, replaced one of my core values with hope, because I realized how that, how, how I long to have hope.

I actually have a tattoo on my arm in one of the, one of the lines symbolizes hope for me. And so I made hope a value again. And so I'm living hope with many small things that I'm doing that are not necessarily towards a goal. I could have hope when I'm making dinner and I'm just opening YouTube and be like, Hey, I hope there is some funny, like Saturday nightlife sketch there or.

I might be playing a video game and just bringing a feeling of hope, Hey, maybe this time I'll, I'll get a high score or this hope of going [00:42:00] out to a restaurant and saying, Hey, uh, maybe I, I, I meet a new person there. Maybe, maybe I start a great conversation with someone. So it's those small little, like flavors that go into like everyday things that, to me mean that I'm living my entire day with hope. And that is, yeah.

So we, we talked about a distinction between self care and, um, doing something, taking action. But what wasn't clear for me yet was how do I make that distinction? How in this moment do I decide whether it's time for self-care or taking action, right? How do I make that distinction?

That decision.

Debbie Sorensen: were you gonna

Yael Schonbrun: such a great question.

I think that the, that to me, it's all about being able to sort of zoom in and zoom out. Like we all know that it's important to take care of ourselves and to take care of our community and build to a better world. And in a given moment, sort of seeing like, you know, depending on [00:43:00] which value I prioritize right now, am I gonna be better positioned to like, stay in the race for longer?

That's kind of how I think about it. .

Jill Stoddard: Um, what I think about is function and cost. So if the behavior is avoiding social media news, whatever the case may be, what is the function?

Is this just here to make me feel better? And if so, that's not necessarily bad, you know, it's only bad if there's a cost. And so kind of going back to, I guess what I was saying in the beginning is like, if you're constantly putting your head in the sand, because you're unwilling to feel anything, and that is taking you away

from something you value that something matters to you, then that's when it becomes problematic.

Debbie Sorensen: There are a few voices. I really like on this one is Devon Price who came on our podcast. Think back in December and talked about the laziness lie. And Devon has a lot about. Getting burned out with [00:44:00] activism and how sometimes it's like, we take it on as our responsibility and we go down this massive rabbit hole with having to read every article and take it all on as our problem, but that you can really easily fizzle out on that.

It can be really exhausting and that we have to take care of ourselves. Um, by just being aware of that, that we have to live a life too, and that we have to, you know, kind of not, we have to sometimes make a conscious choice not to do that. And also the work of Trisha Hersey from the nap ministry and rest is rest as a form of resistance and how, and I think she writes specifically about black people in the United States and how, you know, sometimes one of the best things they, that people can do is to care for themselves by choosing not to take that on.

Jill Stoddard: Mm-hmm

Debbie Sorensen: know, let other people take it on so that I can rest and refill my bucket and live my life. And I think those voices are really helpful. I [00:45:00] think, especially for people who maybe have a tendency to take it all on and then fizzle out.

Jill Stoddard: Well, and I would think about the function of that too. So there's the function of putting your head in the sand and totally avoiding everything. There's also the function to overdoing it, overdoing it, overdoing it, overdoing it. And what is that about? Is that a way to get certainty? Is it a way to get control in an effort to try to feel less anxious?

And is there a cost? Right. So it's always like, whatever it is we're choosing to do, what is the function and what is the cost? And can we find a way to make choices that are really based more on values rather than just desperately trying to and less.

Michael Herold: Actually. Question that we touched upon a little bit, but if you're up for it, I'd like to dig a little bit deeper into this, um, to, to abuse you all as my personal therapist for free here in this, in this session, um, the idea about news consumption. So for me, there is a, a need to be up to date with all the

things that are [00:46:00] happening right now from, you know, COVID restrictions to the current energy and gas crisis in, in Europe.

Like making sure I still have hot water tomorrow. Um, making sure there are any like safety measures I need to take in regards to COVID. Can I still go out? Can I travel? Can I cross a border and so on? So I do take in news and it feels like it serves a function. , but there's also this apparent cost that comes with it of just bringing me down.

Like I wake up, try, like, let's listen to the news, let's see. What's what's out there. And then I can already feel how my energy level goes down a little bit because it's like, ah, no. And then I tend to go into a talk show or listen to this podcast and listen to this. And, and with every piece I take in, I feel more informed, but at the same time I feel more and more negative.

So where would be the, the balance to strike here? Like what would be some, uh, rule of thumb to apply here?

Debbie Sorensen: Well, I don't know if there's a rule of thumb and I I'm curious what [00:47:00] Yale and Jill think about this, but I do talk to my clients about this and I think about it in my own life. And I think. I think it's, I think the question is, you know, for me, it's like, I do wanna stay informed, so I don't wanna ignore the news, but I have to, first of all, be aware of that.

Some news sources are part of the problem, some feed, the fire of fear and stress and anxiety. You know, there's some that are so extreme. They're like conspiracy theory levels of, you know, they look like news, but they're really not. So I think you have to be discerning about the sources of news and how much, and also how much bandwidth I have.

So I, I actually have an example that when there was a couple months ago, there was a school shooting here in the us, another one and the one in Aldi, Texas, it was elementary school children. And that particular week, you know, my kids had the end of school coming up. One of my kids had a birthday party coming up and I read the headlines.

I listened to [00:48:00] some. News radio, but I just decided for myself, there were so many articles and so much discourse around it. I just made a conscious choice to myself. I don't have the bandwidth to go down that rabbit hole this week. So I had stayed, I would say minimally informed on it, but I made a conscious decision not to get into the whole thing because I, I just couldn't that week.

And I think maybe if it would've happened two weeks later, I might have digested more news about it, but I just, I couldn't do it. And so I think it really kind of depends, but I, I think you have to be aware that it's very easy to get into a place of it taking over your life in an unhealthy way. It's like, can you just, you know, skip a day or can you just skim the headlines and not go down a huge rabbit hole with it?

Cuz you know, when people watch cable news 24 7, that's not always a healthy behavior. I'm aware that my choice, that my ability to [00:49:00] choose not to watch that coverage is privileged because if I lived in that town or if that was my kid, I couldn't turn away from it the way that I did. And so even knowing that I maybe felt a little bit guilty, like, oh, what if that was my kid? I wouldn't wanna turn away.

But I think that still it's like, does it really do those people any good for me here in Denver to be, you know, watching or to be reading the news about it for five hours a day, it doesn't actually help them.

Jill Stoddard: Well, I think Michael you're doing it exactly right? Because to me it sounds like it's values driven. Like there, there is a, a, a need and a desire to be informed about everything that you just mentioned. But when we pursue things that are values driven, that doesn't necessarily mean we feel good. Right. So like, that's not necessarily the best measure of like, should I, or shouldn't I be doing this?

Like, oh, it makes me feel worse than when I do this. So I guess I shouldn't do it. That's like lots of things we do that we value are hard and painful and [00:50:00] you know, so, so it sounds to me like you're making those decisions in, in just the right way, which is like, it matters to me to be informed and I'm gonna do that.

And I'm not gonna just consume, consume, consume, consume in an effort to try to get certainty and feel better. I'm gonna do what I need to do to be informed, and then I'm gonna not do anymore. And that's what I would certainly recommend to, to clients too. And if people don't value being informed, then they don't need to be like, right.

Values are all personally, freely and personally chosen.

Yael Schonbrun: they, you know, they often relate to the context of your life. Like Michael, you are probably pretty likely to cross need to cross borders more often than Jill, Debbie and I. So you may need to stay informed on certain news

policies in a way that we don't. And I think it really is just about psychological flexibility.

It's sort of like figuring out what you need to do to, you know, live the life that you wanna be living and show up as the person that you want to most be. Um, given, given the [00:51:00] context and I think. You know, often we do need to know bit about what's going on in the world to make sure that we, and those and our loved ones are, are safe and, and that we can contribute in a helpful way to our communities.

And there's probably diminishing returns for most of us at some point. And so that's, you know, when we might choose to desist in news consumption, when, you know, at that point that we recognize and, you know, it might change, you know, depending on whether it's an election year or if there's a recent event or if there's a recent event, but you have a lot of other things going on.

And so I think that's where the flexibility to kind of move between the values and then what kind of actions you're taking really can be helpful and, and sort of being willing to sort of shift things around as need.

Jill Stoddard: The other thing I've observed. I think, you know, social media in the news really get our bad rap because this is where we get all of our bad news. Right. And it's easy to blame this for making all of us feel terrible, but there's an upside to being informed, which is, I don't [00:52:00] think I would know nearly as much about climate change.

If it weren't for Greta Thrunberg being in my Facebook feed or, or whatever the case may be. Um, seeing all of the women's marches, the climate marches, you know, there's actually some hope going back to the topic of hope that can come from social media and news con consumption and that you see. The actions that people are taking and that it, it at least like, I feel less alone when I see, wow, there are all these other people that are mobilizing and that are active and that motivates me to wanna do similar things.

And, and so I think, you know, it's, it's a bit of a double edged sort of course, but it's not all, it's not all bad. And instead of fully vilifying it, we can also, we can kind of look to this as a little bit of a source of hope too.

Debbie Sorensen: back to that social contagion idea. You were talking about Jill. It's like when other people around you are taking action, it can inspire you. So [00:53:00] absolutely you can give that.

Yael Schonbrun: A great point though. I mean, that, that's sort of like the function of the behavior is like, if you feel guilty to be curious about the function of the emotion, but also the function of the behavior that would be associated.

Jill Stoddard: mm-hmm.

Michael Herold: so since we talked about reliable new sources and new sources that feed on fear and, you know, getting people riled up, what if, um, you have loved ones in your life that are on the other kind of news. In, in my own life, I feel there are many very close family members that, that seem to be on, on that train.

And I find it increasingly difficult to talk to them. And those are really close people. Those are people that I would call like every other day, just to have a, you know, a lengthy chat and hear how they're doing. But now I feel like I don't even want to pick up the phone anymore because I know I'm going to be like, I, I, I, you know, I, I went off [00:54:00] telegram because I got like so many videos from family members and they asked me like, did you watch it?

What did you think? And I, no, I, I didn't, I don't have the bandwidth for that. And for me, it oscillated in the first couple of months of like, Taking that information in and having a conversation and it went absolutely nowhere to the point where then it was the, yeah, I don't even want to call, I don't want to have a conversation.

This is not, you know, this is not what I'm looking for on my Tuesday evening to a mutual agreement of, let's not, let's just start talk about this. Let's just talk about the things we agree on, which makes these phone calls suddenly, like, how are you? I'm doing good. How are you? I'm good. Okay. Talk again next week.

That's kind of the, the stuff that's left and, and I know that not talking about those controversial topics is a, a certain solution to the problem, but I, in myself, um, I, my, one of my other core values is integrity and I have [00:55:00] this, um, need in myself. Tell them, like what I know about certain things and, and conspiracy theories and, and why this video, like where the fault and that are the, the critical thinking applied, like where this falls apart.

And I feel like with my family, there has been a going back through my, uh, now almost long life. Um, there are so many things where these conspiracy

theories came in and I, as a kid, I always found them like really interesting that the, that, that they're aliens visiting and that these metal plates heal you.

And that there are these tapes you can listen to and suddenly you'll get a girlfriend. And all of that stuff was really like amazing. Um, but, and, but I mean, I can, I can smile and laugh about those things now, but with the current situation in the world, like we're talking about real danger to my family, at least I think there's real danger to them.

So there's still this integrity piece in me that wants to say, Hey, look, I was talking with you about aliens, but when it [00:56:00] comes to global pandemic and me as a, a person of high risk, like I need to talk with you, but that never ever goes anywhere. So, yeah, I, I, so what if, what if, what I just said were a question, let me put it like that.

Debbie Sorensen: I feel like This is a question for our resident couples therapist. Yeah.

Yael Schonbrun: Yeah.

Jill Stoddard: Debbie.

Yael Schonbrun: well, I, I think this is such an important question and it's a really complicated, not easy one to answer. There's definitely no recipe for this of like, here's how to get through to somebody who you think is sort of, you know, off the wall in their beliefs.

And it's dangerous to allow them to continue to believe what they believe. I actually recently had this conversation about rethinking delusions with Victoria Shepherd. And I, I feel like on that episode, we talked about this that, you know, it can sometimes feel like people are holding onto what feel like pretty crazy delusions, even though they don't have a diagnosable mental health disorder, but it can [00:57:00] kind of feel that way.

But what's interesting is even, you know, in her book where she talks about what are, you know, serious mental health disorders, she talks about the value of really listening deeply to the function of the delusion. Right. Kind of gets back to this, this important word that we keep coming back to, which is like, what's the function of it.

The other thing that I'm thinking a lot about, Michael, as you asked, the question is an episode that I recently did with Zoe chance on having influence

and what she talks a lot about is. How important it is to listen first, right? That we're much more likely to get to a position of, of being heard if we start by deep listening and part of what is involved in deep listening that she talks about, and that we talk a lot about in the couple's world or the couple's therapy world as well is to listen for what's important to that person.

So not whether like you dispute the facts, but why it is important for them to kind of hold onto that story. What about that story is meaningful for them? So for example, you know, on one side of the aisle, you might [00:58:00] say, you know, people are really worried about their individual rights and other people might be really worried about, um, remaining compassionate for people who are, who are being overlooked or, or abused in some way.

And so really listening to the core of like, why that story is being held onto so tightly and to. Really validate that that importance can make sense, even if the facts don't make sense. And this is sort of like the agenda is like, if you can connect with somebody and really help them to feel like you genuinely get where they're coming from, there's probably gonna be a bit more room for them to be willing, to get curious with you.

And sometimes you don't even have to say your point. It just relaxes them enough. and one study that kind of relates to this is a study of couples where they brought couples in to a lab at Harvard university to have a conflict conversation.

And what they were looking at is, is the impact of empathy, but they didn't just look at empathy. As one [00:59:00] kind of form of empathy, they looked at empathy in two ways. One is empathic effort. So how hard you tried to step into your partner's shoes and the second is empathic accuracy. So how accurate were you in understanding why your partner felt the way that they did?

And interestingly, what mattered more was empathic effort. So really trying to understand where somebody is coming from is much better for a relationship than knowing exactly why and, and understanding all the details and the nuances of, of their argument effort to try to listen and understand really matters a lot and is really good for relationships.

And when you have a strong relationship, that's leverage to have a more bidirectional, conversation. But I will say at the end of the day, you know, people hold onto their beliefs strongly. And, and I think we cannot force someone to think differently. And the harder we try. The less likely we are to succeed.

And I think that's a truth that is important in couple's [01:00:00] relationships and in political disputes. And sometimes I think just even accepting, like, we're not gonna agree, but we can still collaborate. Can be helpful. Yeah. therapy

Jill Stoddard: snake again.

Michael Herold: I, I still try to picture all these patients like squirting that water snake in your office and like there's water everywhere. And the next patient comes in and goes like, what happened here? So you had like,

Yael Schonbrun: would

Michael Herold: oh, oh, okay. That's much less fun.

Yael Schonbrun: be more effective the other way.

Debbie Sorensen: I think that like all act informed podcasts, we must end on a note of values. because I think that one thing, this has come up multiple times in this conversation, and I think it's sort of a hopeful takeaway actually is to really, you know, they always say, we always say, wait, what is [01:01:00] it? We always say, we hurt where we care and we care where we hurt.

Right. And so to me, I think one of the things to think about as we're talking about the pain of the world is, you know, what does your despair tell you about what's important to you? You know, if you're finding yourself, checking the news and feeling horrible, feeling, having moments of hopelessness. I think the question is, what does that tell you about what's important to you?

What matters to you? And then how can we translate that into action? You know, we've talked about small actions, little things you can do in your day to day life. We've talked about bigger actions, like political stances and hard conversations you can have with people. But I think it's really important when we look at all of everything that's happening in the world, that we use that as a chance for reflection and to think, you know, and one of the ways that we make meaning sometimes out of difficult life experiences is by asking ourself that question, right?

Like, what is this teaching me about [01:02:00] myself.

Jill Stoddard: And sometimes that big red neon arrow, that's saying, this is what matters to you. You know, we move away from it because it hurts, but

really it's telling us we're exactly where we should be. And that it's something that we should consider leaning into.

um, you know, another thing that I think about that's relevant, that's related to hope. Um, and, and just the way that like small things matter is this metaphor I love, and I've said it on the podcast before, but I think it's just so relevant to what we're talking about today.

And probably we have some new listeners who haven't heard it before, which is this idea that when life hands you lemons, you're supposed to make lemonade, but how do you do that? If you don't have any sugar. And right now it feels like there's just no sugar. You know, I heard this first from my colleague, Hank, Rob, who said the best, sometimes the best you can do is hope you don't squirt the, squirt the juice in your eye.

But I like to think about how all in, in, in our daily lives, there are these tiny little moments that can be a grain [01:03:00] of sugar. You know, whether it's your dog greeting you when you walk through the door, whether it's your kid giving you a snuggle, um, you know, the first cup of sip of coffee in the morning, a beautiful sense that, you know, these small moments that are like little granules of sugar that add up to, to give us sweetness and it's not gonna fix climate change and it's not gonna give people equal rights, but it is a way that we can try to get through our days, like not just surviving, but kind of am like showing up for these small moments.

And like that's where, that's where we get get the sugar. I love that. So

Yael Schonbrun: we can in situations that are sometimes.

Michael Herold: Beautiful.

Yael Schonbrun: Quite tragic and, and really kind of unfathomably hard. And he writes forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess, [01:04:00] except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, but you can always control what you will feel and do about what happens to you.

It is this spiritual freedom which cannot be taken away that makes life meaningful and purposeful.

Debbie Sorensen: well, so wise, and again, this conversation came from me being at a point of. Despair about the world recently. And so even just doing this

research on hope and talking to the three of you and hearing some wisdom from psychology and from different examples and people who are out there in the world has helped inspire me.

So we hope we hope our listeners feel the same way.

Michael Herold: I think

Debbie Sorensen: we.

Michael Herold: solved it.

Jill Stoddard: What [01:05:00] laughter is also great medicine.

if you love to nerd out about books that offer wisdom on living well, join our psychologist off the clock book. We meet the second Thursday of each month at noon Eastern standard time in the us.

All you need to do is email us at off the clock. psych@gmail.com with book club in the subject line, or you can link to us through the offers and eventsPage@offtheclocksites.com. We hope you join us for some book, love and fun. 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 and purchase swag from our merge store. By going to our website

at off the clock, psych.com/march

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 [01:06:00] only, and is not meant to be a substitute for mental health treatment. 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.

psych.com.