

Is Your Work Worth It? with Christopher Wong Michaelson and Jennifer Tosti-Kharas

[00:00:00] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** we tell people things like, do what you love and the money will follow. Find your calling.

Love your life.

I mean, these are actual book titles that exist. We have Steve Jobs making this Stanford commencement speech in 2005 telling people the only way to do good work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it, keep looking, don't settle. We have put a lot of cultural pressure on people to find their callings

[00:00:25] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** I actually think that human beings are made to work in some way, and so even if, we get technology to do all the work for us, I think that we'll still make work. We will make work in the form of finding ways to make new games for ourselves to play. Caring human to human is a kind of work that will never be replaced.

[00:00:52] **Debbie Sorensen:** That was Jennifer Tosti-Kharas and Christopher Wong Michaelson on psychologists off the clock. We are four experts in psychology 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, a clinical psychologist practicing in Mile High, Denver, Colorado, and author of Act for Burnout, Act Daily Journal, and the Act Daily Card Deck.

[00:01:26] **Emily Edlynn:** From America's Heartland, I'm Dr. Emily Edlynn a clinical psychologist based in Chicago, Illinois, and author of Autonomy Supportive Parenting.

[00:01:34] **Michael Herold:** Calling in from Vienna, Austria. I'm Michael Herold, ACT coach, confidence trainer, and author of an upcoming book on being a better conversationalist and making friends.

[00:01:43] **Jill Stoddard:** And from coastal New England, I'm Dr. Jill Stoddard, author of Be Mighty, The Big Book of Act Metaphors, and Impostor No More.

[00:01:50] **Emily Edlynn:** We hope you take what you learned here to build a rich and meaningful life.

[00:01:54] **Michael Herold:** Thank you for listening to Psychologists Off The Clock.

[00:02:02] **Debbie Sorensen:** Everyone, this is Debbie. I'm here today to talk about some philosophical questions about work and the role of work that it plays in our life with my two guests, Christopher Wong Michelson and Jennifer Tosti-Kharas who have written a fabulous new book called Is Your Work Worth It?

And I'm here today with Michael to talk a little bit about what's ahead in the episode.

[00:02:25] **Michael Herold:** Yeah, this was a, this was a really good episode. I find this topic of job, career calling, uh, a really intriguing one. And I think, uh, since, since you wrote a fabulous book on burnout, you must know a lot of, like, is this something that contributes to, uh, people struggling with burnout as well? Maybe not being able to make the distinction or not, uh, being in the right category that they would wanna be in.

[00:02:53] **Debbie Sorensen:** Yeah, I mean I, I'm not sure if other therapists who work with adults experience this as well, or if it's just because I specialize so much in working with people with burnout and chronic stress and anxiety, but I have these kinds of conversations with my clients a lot, who are really grappling with a shift in their understanding of work. A lot of them, they're thinking, you know, I've jumped through all these hoops my whole life and here I am really stressed out and unhappy and burnt out and anxious and depressed and all these things. And, and they're kind of questioning some things about their career and about their work life.

And I love this conversation because it's with a philosopher which is Christopher and an organizational psychologist, which is Jen, who are

[00:03:41] **Michael Herold:** Very interesting mix.

[00:03:42] **Debbie Sorensen:** It's an interesting mix. Yeah. And they're both doing work I think that's, that's really quite fascinating in terms of work satisfaction and where work fits into our lives.

And so I think with burnout one, I, I actually write this in the book, that one silver lining can sometimes be that it forces people to make a change or to, to do some personal growth work, right? That you might not otherwise do if you're just satisfied with your career and doing fine. And I think that this book and this interview provide a lot to think about and, and often when someone comes to me in that place, they're, maybe they're thinking about changing job or careers, or at least changing something about their work life, right? Their work life balance, or how they work, or how many hours they work or something like that. I really encourage people to think big, to think philosophically about their lives, and get into some existential thinking around their work and what their work means to them and that type of thing, and where it fits into the big picture of their life.

[00:04:45] **Michael Herold:** What would be some questions to ask oneself struggling with in in that domain?

[00:04:51] **Debbie Sorensen:** That's a great question. I, I think I ask a lot of values questions. I ask a lot of questions about, you know, what's important to them and not just related to work. Often I'll, I'll talk to people about their history, about work and, and how did they get into the the line of work that they're in and why?

Um, I ask a lot of questions too about their current situation, you know, what's the context? One thing I'm trying to help people explore is the difference between, you know, I really care about my work and I'm in a situation where, you know, maybe I'm too stressed out or there's a problem with my workplace culture and I need to do something about it, or. Is this really not a good fit for them? Is this not what they want out of life? I think I, I want people to reconnect with a sense of vitality and having a meaningful life You know whatever that looks like for them. And so sometimes for me, when I was burnt out, this was the case sometimes.

People actually do really have a meaningful career and a good job. They're just kind of going through a rough patch and they're going through a stressful patch, and if they can make certain smaller changes in their life and and how they're interfacing with their work, they can actually come out of the other side of burnout and, and be in a better place

[00:06:12] **Michael Herold:** So not quit. Quit your job and become a DJ

[00:06:16] **Debbie Sorensen:** Exactly, but some people do. And I know, Michael, that you've had some career changes yourself in your life, and I'm sort of curious your thoughts about the interview as well.

[00:06:25] **Michael Herold:** Well, so I, I was really lucky that with all the different jobs that I had chosen for myself, and I've lost count on them I started, my first job was in video games. I wrote my thesis, my computer science thesis on drama in video games. Then I switched over to, um, making 3D computer graphics. Then I fell in love with making computer animations and Saturday morning cartoons.

And then I realized that has kind of like burned out. That candle is kind of like a little bit done for me. Like I've fused this up and I found something much more meaningful and I became a public speaker, and then I became a coach, and all of those transitions were more or less on purpose. Like I knew I wanted to flip and I knew where I wanted to go, and at the same time, all the time I fall into one of the predicaments that comes with having a calling that you three talk about as well in the interview is that when you have a calling, the payment or the work conditions might be questionable. And I've certainly had a lot of situations in my life where, uh, talking about a salary increase, what immediately led to, yeah. Well, you know, there are a thousand people that apply for your job every week. It's like, hmm, we could, you know, pick, pick someone else.

Not in that, those exact words, but there was certainly a, a certain sort of penalty, a lot of beauty to living, to working in my calling, but also a, a finite financial penalty.

[00:07:55] **Debbie Sorensen:** Like an undervaluing it sounds like,

[00:07:58] **Michael Herold:** Yeah.

[00:07:59] **Debbie Sorensen:** Yeah.

Being paid your worth because you're thinking, oh, I'm so lucky to get to do this. Maybe then you don't get paid well enough or don't get, yeah. Adequate

[00:08:07] **Michael Herold:** Look, we, we won this award. We'll celebrate it. And then yeah, what, why this is, this is good enough, like you won an award, you should be happy. Uh, we're not gonna give you an increase in your, in your salary.

[00:08:18] **Debbie Sorensen:** so one of the things that, that we talk about in the interview is, you know, what would you do if you have to, if you don't have to work? You know, is it better for us to be working? And if you were in a financial situation where, you know, you could retire earlier or you didn't have to work, Michael, what, I'm just curious, what, what are your thoughts about that for yourself?

[00:08:37] **Michael Herold:** Oh, yeah, when I heard that part, I was reminded of something I've been telling myself for a long time now, and that is I'm really happy that I have to work capital letters in half. I have to work, um, in order to pay my bills, because if I would win the lottery or Merry Rich and be a trophy husband, which is still one of my aspirations, but I, I do, I do recognize that if I did not have to work.

I would probably get so avoidant that I didn't work and that I would be miserable if I don't have to. I'd probably spend my time with all the leisure things that I talk about all the time on the podcast thinking that this would be really brilliant, and I know in my bones I know that I would be miserable, and so I'm really glad that there's this mix of get the hours in and you love your work and you get paid for it, and you treasure your leisure time and doing things in there.

[00:09:33] **Debbie Sorensen:** It's so funny 'cause I think there's such a grass is greener phenomenon here where it always sounds so nice to just have all this leisure time and to never have to work again and to be able to just rest all the time and have fun. But I do think that sometimes, you know, I've seen people go through retirement or be between jobs and they have that sense of unfulfillment and so it is interesting 'cause I think.

That's often the case, right? If left to our own devices, maybe, maybe it wouldn't be so good to, for us,

um, to, to not work. It's, but it's an interesting question. I think,

[00:10:04] **Michael Herold:** Yeah.

[00:10:05] **Debbie Sorensen:** Well, I'm planning to recommend this conversation to clients that I work with who are struggling with existential questions about work and who are putting a lot of thought into work in their life.

And so I hope that you'll feel the same way when you listen to this conversation.

[00:10:22] **Debbie Sorensen:** I Have two guests with us today. Christopher Wong Michelson is a philosopher with 25 years of experience advising business leaders in pursuing meaning and providing work with a purpose. He earned his PhD from the University of Minnesota and has worked as a consultant in a business ethics press practice at Pricewaterhouse full-time.

Faculty teaching corporate ethics at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania faculty at NYU's Stern School of Business, where he still teaches and on one of the largest business ethics faculties in the world at the University of St. Thomas. Welcome, Christopher.

[00:10:59] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** It is great to be here, Debbie. Thank you.

[00:11:02] **Debbie Sorensen:** Thank you. And my other guest, Jennifer Tosti-Kharas is a professor of management at Babson College. Her research on meaningful work work as a calling and employee sustainability efforts has been published in top journals, covered in international news outlets, and recognized with best paper awards by academic publishers. A former management consultant

jen works with both companies and individuals to craft meaningful careers and appreciate the risks and rewards of work as a calling. She holds a BS in economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and a PhD in management with an emphasis on organizational behavior from the Stern School of Business at NYU.

Welcome, Jen. It's so nice to have you here too.

[00:11:44] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** Thank you so much, Debbie. Happy to be here.

[00:11:46] **Debbie Sorensen:** Well, you both have a lot of credentials. So many that I had a hard time

condensing your bias down, but, which is pretty amazing. I think you both have a lot of experience. Um, and together Jen and Christopher have written the brand new book called is your work worth it? How to think about meaningful work. And just to orient our listeners a little bit, this is a book that's kind of in investigation into the purpose of work and what it means to us in our lives. And

the book explores really important questions about work. Like, you know, should you work for love or for money? How much should you work and when should you work? And what kind of mark will your work leave on the world? And so reading the book, I think it's a really terrific book and I think it'll help our listeners think more deeply about the role of work in their lives. And I hope the conversation today will as well. So to kick things off, I'm really intrigued by the story of how the two of you came together. 'cause you're from very different backgrounds. Um, Jen, you're in organizational psychology and, and management and leadership. And Christopher, you're in philosophy and business philosophy. So. I was wondering if you could tell the story of how the two of you came together to write the book.

[00:12:58] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** You know, I think that the story of how we came together is very similar to the story of the complementarity of our disciplines. So psychologists typically study how the world works, how people actually behave, philosophers stereotypically study how we ought to behave. And after the September 11th terrorist attacks. I think everybody in the world was really kind of reflecting upon number one, how can those lives that were lost prematurely, how can we honor them in some way? And also, what does this mean for how I should live my life? And Jen and I, we didn't know each other at the time. We were both living and working in New York City. We were reading like many people, the New York Times Portraits of Grief, um, which were brief biographies of victims. And I remember thinking when I was reading them that these are not only accounts of lives well lived, but also lives that we can learn from. And so I was a new academic at the time and I was thinking in some way I want to use these portraits in a study for how we can make our work and lives more meaningful as a way to both learn from and honor the lives of victims. But I didn't know how to do such a study, and it wasn't until a few years later when I met Jen and I described this idea that I found the person who could do this study with me.

[00:14:40] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** Yeah, so Debbie, you mentioned that Christopher and I both have a shared institutional affiliation, which is NYU, and so Christopher is still on the faculty there. He was on the faculty at the time that we met, and I was a doctoral student, and my advisor, Amy Reky, um, is a, you know, kind of a pillar in meaningful work research and, and research on the meaning of work.

And so I was working with Amy and Amy Organi, started organizing this very small conference of scholars mostly in organizational psychology and organizational behavior, but some outsider, she cast, you know, kind of a wide

net to include um, anyone who is just very squarely studying what does work mean.

And so Christopher and I met at this small conference, and in part because I believe Christopher, you were sort of industrious enough to seek out Amy, you know, also at NYU Stern and sort of make this connection that they were both looking at the same thing from very, um, you know, kind of different, different angles.

And, you know, I like to joke. So philosophers, they're just asking these big questions and they'll just get hung up on questions like, what is meaning, what is work? What is, you know, I mean they could just go on and on sort of endlessly, whereas psychologists we operationalize, we try to, you know, break things down so we can actually study them and study associations.

We go out and, you know, sample based on real people. And so we did this study that Christopher mentioned on, um, the portraits of grief at, you know, at in the New York Times after 9/11. And I just realized, you know, Christopher's never worked with data before on any level. Like forget about, you know, qualitative, quantitative, all these splits that we tend to make within, within applied psychology.

But, you know, he's never worked with data, period. He's never written up a method section. I mean, just things like this are make, I think our collaboration so much fun. And there's just a lot of learning on both sides continuously. And to me that's like the joy of an academic career. So this is just, I mean, interdisciplinary work I think is just, um, provides such rich novel insights and is just also so much fun to do.

[00:16:51] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** I have learned a lot about data since working with Jen. Um, but there's a reason that philosophers are sometimes called armchair philosophers. You know, sometimes the ideas that we get come from our heads. One thing I've also realized working with Jen is that philosophers are really good at asking questions, but not necessarily at answering them.

And psychologists have to answer questions, and I think those diverging approaches and complimentary approaches are reflected in the book. Every chapter title is a question. Are there a lot of answers, maybe not answers that are true for everybody, but hopefully with these questions, we help people come to their own answers.

[00:17:32] **Debbie Sorensen:** Yeah, I think that's what I love about your book. You weave them both together. You also bring in, you know, popular culture and art and history and all these really fascinating examples. But it's, both, right. There are some, definitely some psychology concepts in there. And then also just some really deep questions that I think I could relate to them in my life and in the world around me. Um, you don't necessarily give people the answers or a how to guide, but just a way to think through some of the big questions that I think are really important as we're all trying to navigate work and life and, and kind of pull it all together in a meaningful way. wanna ask a little bit more about September 11th, because there are two big historical events that were. Kind of woven in throughout the book September 11th and then Covid, which I think both really did change a lot with related to work here in America at least and beyond, I'm sure. Um, starting with those portraits of grief from September 11th, because I mean, some of those stories that you told in this book I think were really touching and beautiful. Um, could you just say a little bit about why those were relevant to this, book, a little bit more about that? And then just kind of a few examples of some of the things that you learned related to work from, from looking at those.

[00:18:53] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** Let me start. So I still remember where I was, literally when Christopher proposed this project, he said, um, I wanna study the portraits of grief to better understand if work was mentioned in these, you know, tragically completed lives, but they're completed lives. It's really a, a symbol of what was most meaningful to these lives in the eyes of those who knew them best.

And he said, I just wanna see what if work was mentioned? How was it mentioned? What role did work play, if at all? And I thought, that is so brilliant. It just instinctively made so much sense to me because here you have an account and it is within a full life. It is looking back. And of course it is doubly mediated through the eyes of those who knew the victims best.

And then again, through the New York Times journalists who put the portraits together. But it tells this sort of, uh, cultural account, you know, it's an individual story, but collectively they tell this cultural account of what is important to these lives and not just, and so again, this is a real disciplinary bias.

Typically when I talk about meaningful work, I'm talking about the, through the eyes of the people doing the work. Very, you know, I'm in, I'm in the head of the person doing the work like a psychologist would. So I often say things like, well, work meaning is made very idiosyncratically, very subjectively.

You know, I could have an objectively meaningless job, but it is meaningful to me. And so studies have found that in zookeepers and hospital cleaners and, you know, this work is deeply, deeply meaningful despite. Externally, we might see something different. Um, and Christopher is always the one to say, but there is some kind of an objective or a, maybe it's a societal or a cultural lens on what makes work meaningful.

Meaning I may think my work as a terrorist is a calling from, you know, my higher power. But I don't think, I think we wanna stop shy of saying, therefore that is deeply meaningful work that does good, good in the world and good in society. Right? We would wanna actually lessen people's own, you know, inner desires if they are in fact counter to a, a peaceful society.

Um, so because the 9/11 portraits are through the eyes of others, they're certainly not substitutes for what people felt about their own, you know, their own work and their own lives, they might look very different, in fact, from how those people would've answered. But we believed they had such a unique lens that you almost never see as to what is appreciated by others about our work.

What legacy, what impact. You know, we talk in the book at length about legacy and you know, sort of ultimate impact, ultimate benefit of the work. Um, you know, those with whom we're close have a really unique investment in our work and we almost never hear from them, you know, what is the value of that work to them?

So we just, you know, loved this idea of looking at the portraits to see what is this memor, you know, this memorialized, um, legacy of these victims' work. And so then we just, we, as soon as we got started with that, we set out to coding them and we actually tried to apply the job career calling framework.

I'll say just briefly for listeners who may not be familiar with it, when work is viewed as a job, it's primarily a means to an end. Often that end is a financial end, like making money, earning benefits, providing stability for one's life. Um, when the job is a, when the work is a career, it's a means to a different kind of end, in this case advancement, either within an organizational or occupational structure.

So picture the typical, you know, career ladder going somewhere. Um, that's what a career is more about. And then a calling. Work is the meaningful and into itself. Often benefits society is deeply meaningful to the person who is doing it. And so it's really more this intrinsic, you know, satisfaction, fulfillment from the work itself.

And when we look at those through the eyes of individuals themselves, we get one story that very often pits them in a hierarchy. Like a calling is the highest work, meaning we can have and the noblest, and then a career, and then a job. And a job is sort of like, I'm in it for the money. You know, it's, it's a, sometimes it, it can't be avoided, but it's not necessarily an end to be aspired to or held up as a cultural ideal.

However, when we look at these third person perspectives through the portraits on work, we see a very different story. And I'm actually gonna like invite Christopher into this conversation. Um, he is much better than I am at remembering the individual portraits and there's specifically one that we often reference, um, that I'd love him to talk about.

[00:24:13] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** So just to provide a few examples of jobs, careers, and callings in action. We expected from this study that there would be a lot of stories about firefighters living out a calling a, a higher calling to save the lives of others, possibly at the expense of their own. Interestingly though, what we didn't expect to find that we did find as well was firefighters with jobs who were counting the days to retirement and planning to retire early, to take on a, a second career and, um, live in part off of a generous pension. We also expected financiers who loved making money and competing, but similar to the first responders, we also found financiers who were in it for the comradery, for the companionship of their coworkers. And there were some family members who tragically were interviewed for these portraits who said, well, at least they died with the people they loved.

And they said that about both traitors and firefighters and others. I think another surprise was that among administrative assistants, there was often a career orientation whereby rising up in one's career included working on a higher floor for a more prestigious firm in the World Trade Center. And maybe for those of us who haven't worked in clerical positions like that, that, helps us to appreciate how advancement can be part of any kind of occupational hierarchy. I think the portrait that Jen is talking about though is about a guy who was a delivery worker for a restaurant in the World Trade Center. His name was Juan Ortega Campos, and he was described in his portrait as just a delivery boy to the suits to whom he was delivering the food. But, and I'm paraphrasing to his family back home in Central Mexico, he was a brave adventurer who called home every day came to America to send back money to build a dream. And so he was the very picture of success to his family. And I think the way that that portrait is written suggests that we often look down upon the work of somebody who is just working for money at a job that may not require special skills or education, but the way in which this portrait portrays the work of one ORT

Compost and what it meant to his family showed us that the right job can be just as heroic as a calling. And by the way, I just wanna say one more thing, which is that the poetic nature of that portrait, in so many of them, that's not our work. That's the work of the New York Times journalists and the family members that they talk to of these victims.

[00:27:28] **Debbie Sorensen:** I think that those were so touching to read about in your book. It made me wanna go back and read the originals. Um, which you said they're in a book now, is that right? They've

[00:27:38] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** They have been published in book form. Yeah. And they're also archived online.

[00:27:43] **Debbie Sorensen:** Because I remember reading some of them back then, at that time that they were coming out. But they do, they capture the complexity. And I think one thing that stood out to me is how, for some people work was a big part of their story that was published. And for some people it was barely mentioned because they were focusing on other elements. And I think that's the reflective of how work for some people is so important. It's just probably one of the main things in their life and for other people, you know, they might work, but it's not necessarily gonna be the story of their life in the way it is for someone else.

[00:28:17] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** That's exactly right. In fact, in nearly every portrait, because the vast majority of victims had died at work, their workplace was mentioned, but in somewhere around two thirds of them that mention of work was just about it, and the rest of the portrait was about the rest of their lives. And so in our coding process, we considered those to mention work incidentally, and it was really a minority of the, of the portraits that actually we subjected to the job career calling analysis.

[00:28:53] **Debbie Sorensen:** Now, turning the conversation toward COVID, which was more recent, and in some ways to me personally, feels like it started a million years ago, but it was four. And so I think we're still kind of really in a sense in the immediate aftermath, just in terms of how it's still affecting our lives and the world. Um, but I'm really curious because you do mention many, many things about Covid, and this might be a big question, but you know, if we were gonna fast forward 20 years from now ahead, what do you think some of the lasting effects of Covid would be in terms of the world of how we work?

[00:29:33] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** It's such a good question and I agree. I feel still sort of, uh, like I'm, I'm in Covid and I can't believe how quickly we seem

to have come out of it in some regards. So I'll find myself at like a big, you know, mass event, a sporting event or a concert or something, and I'll think, wow, it all went away and now it's like all back as though it never happened.

And yet I think we see these immediate vestiges in the big one that I talk about a lot, um, is not wanting to return to the office. So this notion that if our work did not require five days in the office, people don't want that anymore. And we've seen that it's possible. And so once people got a taste of it, I mean, just these negotiations about two days a week, three days a week but I get to choose which days, you know, I mean, this is an immediate legacy. Um, of course, you know, given the topic of the book and where sort of Christopher and I, live with regards to these things, um, it's hard for me not to see the lasting, like 20 years impact of covid, maybe in, in two ways that I'll talk about

um, I think the first was there's a lot of fear about what's called in a blanket term, the future of work. And it usually looks like worrying about things like automation, um, self-driving cars, you know, what's generally called is technological unemployment. So a AI of course. So ai, you know what if AI comes and now it can.

Teach all my students and write all my books and you know, do I have a job anymore? And then what comes out of nowhere, while we're all sort of worrying over here about the typical future of work things, this virus comes out of nowhere and it's immediate and it's unbelievably catastrophically disruptive.

And it almost just feels like no one saw it coming. So I just think our consideration of what are the existential threats to the workplace? And there's the ones we know and there's the ones we have our eyes on and are worried about, and maybe we're more worried a little more about those and maybe worried a little less about, um, these mundane things or perceived mundane things.

I might put like natural disasters in this, in this bucket where, you know, things are happening at sort of this higher rate. They're unbelievably disruptive, but we sort of like. We're, we're thinking about one thing and then another thing's happening. So I, so I hope there's been a little bit more of a broadening in terms of what has the potential to disrupt our work and being sort of prepared for it both logistically and also somehow personally and existentially.

Um, and then the second thing that I think was so interesting was around this conversation that we discussed in the book around essential work. What, what work is deemed essential And just this simultaneous realization that much of the

work that was the most essential in, in the Covid pandemic, um, is that which we do not sufficiently recognize and protect as a society.

So we're cheering on the healthcare workers who are, you know, putting their lives at risk. Every day. But it was really salient during the pandemic and we're, you know, thanking, bending over backwards to thank, um, delivery workers who, you know, went and shopped in the stores for us and then delivered us our groceries at home, or delivery drivers or people working in those stores as cashiers.

You know, we all did our sort of lip service to how essential their work is. But I'd love 20 years on that. We not only sort of kept, you know, and again, I, I feel things are already sort of backsliding and we're back to just like demanding our deliveries the next day and we're impatient with our wait staff and things like that.

But, you know, there was, to the extent that there was this nice side of covid, it was this sort of recognition of the shared humanity of. Of everyone that sense that we're all in this together and that part of, we saw people putting their very lives on the line to perform essential services and we felt so grateful for that.

And I'd love to see some of that gratitude both. In terms of societal recognition, but also maybe a little bit like putting our money where our mouths are, because we also saw, um, we saw a great resignation. We saw people, especially within the healthcare industry, the education industry, the services industry, you know, food service, um, resigning on mass to say.

We have not been sufficiently compensated for our efforts. We have been putting up with, um, really substandard working conditions. And so it's never okay to allow that, right? The, the pandemic shines a spotlight on it. But how did we get to this place where so many people were working in, you know, just conditions or for salaries that are unsustainable?

And so when we talk about this conversation, um, that I'm a part of as, as I'm a careers research about sustainable work, sustainable careers, you know, it doesn't just mean a career I can find meaning in or meaningfulness in over the, the span of my life. Of course, that's part of it. But you know, what work can we as a society sustain and protect?

Because we don't want to lose it. It is that essential, even if it's not always glorified or sufficiently recognized.

[00:35:00] **Debbie Sorensen:** Hmm. Yeah. Well this is actually a great segue into talking about,

you know, this, this idea of. Work being a bit of a social construction, even down to what we think of as work. And as a quick side note, I was kind of exploring that question in my book on burnout because we know that burnout is something that always happens to people in the context of work. And, but I notice that people talk about things like caregiver burnout, parental burnout, um, athletic burnout, these kinds of things. And I thought when we think of

work as a paid job only, and we think of the typical kind of, you know, you go in, you work, you get a paycheck, we're actually missing, I think, a broader definition.

And I think you capture some important elements of that in this book. I, I was really wishing your book would've come out before I was writing that section, because it would've shaped how I was thinking about it a little. But I think we kind of came to a similar place, which is that work is a little bit more broad than that and it is socially constructed.

So could you say a little bit about that? I mean, where you landed with, with your definition of work, but also that socially constructed piece of it?

[00:36:13] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** Yeah. So we can't claim to have defined work originally or once and for all, but we draw on, uh, a lot of work of scholars and workers over the ages to come to the conclusion that there are three essential traits of work. One is that, is it is purposeful, meaning we're not just doing it aimlessly, it is effortful. That's pretty self-explanatory. And then it is recognized. And I think in that idea of it is recognized, that's where social construction comes in. And that really throws us for a loop when we're trying to decide what is and what isn't work. Because one of the most conventional ways of recognizing work is for tax authorities to tax it. That means that work is paid work and there is a lot of work that goes on, particularly in the home and historically most often done by women that is unrecognized by tax authorities and, and therefore underappreciated. One of the stories that we tell in the book is about my grandfather. He was born a hardworking peasant who was basically a subsistence farmer until he was an early teenager in the Chinese countryside, and the only way out of that subsistence farming life was him for him to enter the military.

And he rose fast and high in the Chinese military and then lost everything when the nationalist army lost in the Communist revolution and he had to start over

again in Sao Paulo, Brazil. I. And basically never worked successfully for pay again in his life. And one question we asked in the book was, well, was his most successful work, the work that he did before age 42, when he rose to these great heights? Or was the fact that he essentially acted as not just father, but sometimes also mother because his first wife died, um, to eight children who then found their way in the world, and then 20 plus grandchildren who are, we are finding our way in the world. Maybe that was his most successful work.

[00:38:30] **Debbie Sorensen:** Yeah, that's a great example of that. Yeah. Um,

so you have a chapter devoted to the, the motivations for why we work and, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and really interesting exploration of that. And one thing I was really fascinated by was the relationship between money and work and compensation and how we're compensated.

Which again, you know, if you think about idea of what we as a society value in terms of work. Like who do we pay well, who don't we? Um, and it's not so straightforward, right? It's also not so straightforward in terms of how we ourselves feel about our work. And I was really intrigued. Something just totally resonated for me.

And this was, was about fairness, right? It's not necessarily a dollar amount. It's feeling like our pay is fair. Could you say a little bit about that? And then I wanna give you just a personal example from my life of that.

[00:39:32] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** Oh, of course. Well, I'm sorry that you have a personal example of that from your life, but I guess I'm not surprised in a world in which, I mean, just to cite, you know, women still don't make, uh, as much as men, you know, on, on the dollar. So, um, this notion of fairness is, is really important. And so some of the just basic, you know, findings about compensation and how this, so, you know, when we think about intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for work, the intrinsic reward is the enjoyment, for example, of the work itself.

I think of, um, we, we talk about Paul Gogan in the book and we talk about other artists. So I think of the artist who's just compelled to make art. Whether or not anybody buys that art, but to not do their art would be impossible. You know, this is an extreme example of just working without any thought of, you know, what's the market for one's work?

Uh, but most of us live in the world where part of the motivation for the work we do is at least I. Extrinsic. So what do we get from that work? And that can be

the corner office that can enable us to buy, you know, nice cars and other sort of status symbols. Um, and we have some sense of, you know, what, what, how does our salary stack up?

And we're incredibly, um, we have like an equity sensitivity about that, where we're just very concerned. You know, anyone, I always say anyone with more than one child knows all about fairness, because I feel like with my own two kids, it's always why did this one get that one and that one, you know? So just this, this sense of, uh, fairness.

Sensitivity is, is so deeply ingrained. And so the, the. The longstanding belief about the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards is that if you're intrinsically motivated to do something, so you're doing it for the enjoyment and you introduce an extrinsic reward that, that somehow displaces or, or sort of, um, cheapens the, the intrinsic rewards.

So, you know, I love to make art and I'm doing it in my free time, and then I just start trying to sell it. And suddenly by introducing payment, it makes me less passionate about it. It basically takes my passion and turns it into, you know, just a job, just a way to make money More recent. Uh, scientific evidence on this though shows that it's quite complicated.

In other words, we can be deeply intrinsically motivated by our work. We can love it, we can feel it's our calling, it's our passion and still actually care about getting, it's not an either or. We can care about both. Um. Some work, including my own shows, that the more passionate though that you feel about the work, maybe the a little bit you still care, but you're maybe a little less sensitive.

May meaning you're maybe a little bit more likely to put in extra work, even if it's uncompensated because you really wanna do that job well and you're a little less fixated on, but am I getting rewarded, you know, fairly for the effort that I'm putting in, for example. And so that then starts to open the door in a really interesting way toward the idea that those with strong callings who are passionate, who love the work, who are deeply intrinsically motivated by it can actually be exploited or taken advantage of by employers.

So basically. You know, I wanna hire you because I see that you're passionate. But as a side benefit, um, I also maybe know that you will always go above and beyond. You will always, you know, sacrifice your time with your family or your time at home to do that work. And I'm sort of, I'm sort of counting on that.

And so there was a really interesting study that came out a couple years ago that showed that people actually believe it is fair to pay those who are passionate about their work less to do that work because that passion should basically be its own reward. So I don't need to pay you as much, which is.

Right, not what I think we want as a society in terms of taking advantage of people who, you know, believe the work is, is more their, their passion or their calling. And then those who do work in, you know, social work, nonprofit work. I mean, this is no surprise. I, I picture your listeners who are in those fields going, duh, you know, this is our lives.

We know we are basically asked to accept less pay because we are doing a social good. And so this line of like, we often compensate the jobs that do the most social good, the least. You know, again, is this fair? Is this sustainable? How does this affect burnout people's, you know, motivation to stay in these careers long term?

And if we want people to be in caring professions, helping professions, you know. Nonprofit work that that serves some very important social end. How do we make this work fairly compensated and sustainable so that people don't reach some kind of a threshold and either, either want to or have to leave it because they're not making enough to, you know, potentially to survive on.

[00:44:47] **Debbie Sorensen:** Yeah. So my story, it's actually really similar, I think to, to what you were saying earlier, Jen, which is that, so I didn't go into the field of psychology to make the most money possible because it's not the field that's gonna do that, and I hope I don't sound like a jerk for saying this because certainly, you know, I get paid enough and many people don't. But I think that a lot of therapists listening will relate to this if you're in private practice, because I get really. Shy about raising my rates and I raised them recently and you know, like I go back and forth for months, should I or shouldn't I? And I feel, you know, there's a mental health crisis and people need services, but I also need to pay my bills.

And I, anyway, I go back and forth and I have all kinds of complicated feelings about this. And then I, and I, I hope I don't sound like I'm being judgemental for saying this, but I'm gonna just say it anyway. Sometimes I hear the story about someone who makes a ridiculous amount of money and they don't seem to me to be particularly like competent or well educated.

I mean, I have a PhD from Harvard for Pete's sake, and you know, or I just somehow perceive them, the work they're doing doesn't seem very important to

me or something like that. And I get so mad because some of them are making like gobs and gobs of money that it kind of gives me the fire to raise my rates because I'm like, I've been doing this a long time. My practice is full. I have a lot of education, a lot of training, and I just, it's that sense of unfairness. It's not really even about the rate itself. It's more like I work so hard and I do important work. What? So anyway, you can tell even by my voice, I get heated around this, but I think it's the, that fairness piece of it, it's not so much about the bottom line as it is about like, people in mental health don't get paid enough and that's a problem.

And so anyway, it gets, you know, it gets me fired up.

[00:46:46] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** Yeah, as it should. And there are different mechanisms. I mean, sometimes pay gaps happen because of organizational practices or blind spots, but I think it's equally hard for people who are responsible for negotiating their own rates. Um, you need to be the one to make that call. And I think that has its own particular, that can be very fraught because again, you are, you know, maybe benchmarking off what you see, you know, other peers doing, but you're ultimately making this decision for yourself, which can be ca can be hard

[00:47:22] **Debbie Sorensen:** Oh yeah, yeah. You get into all kinds of complicated stuff about yourself and my, how much am I worth? And that kind of thing. So, yeah. So I wanna talk a little bit more about the idea of callings, which you've talked about several times.

And I feel like I have a little bit of a calling toward the work I do as a psychologist and as you said earlier, Jen, you know, I think sometimes we almost glorify the idea of a calling or think it's better, but it's not without its personal toll to to work in a field that's a calling. And so I was wondering if you could both talk a little bit about your own experience with this.

Like do you, did the two of you feel like you have a calling? And if so, what do you think are some of the downsides of working in a field that's a calling or what are some of the personal toll that that might take on a person?

[00:48:10] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** I think I do have a calling toward being a professor and toward being a writer, which is part of the job of being a professor. Um, but I also feel like I have a calling toward teaching. Um, and I think that's an inherited calling. My mom is, uh, a teacher of Chinese language. I am her only failed student in a 30 plus year teaching career.

She has taught so many people who have gone on to use Chinese in their lives and their professions. And I am basically still stuck at early grade level Chinese. Um, but she's made such an influence on her students that she inspired me in some ways to be a teacher. And so when I think of retirement, I don't think of actually not teaching anymore, not writing anymore.

I think of doing those things a little bit less perhaps, but I. Never completely giving them up. And I think that's part of the sign of a calling and part of the cost of a calling because, um, even when I'm on vacation, I can't have a good day unless I've done some good writing. And so one thing that I've learned to manage that workaholic component of a calling is to wake up earlier than the rest of my family and get a few hours of writing out of the way so that I can play with them for the rest of the day.

[00:49:38] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** And I'm always like, Christopher, you're on vacation. It's cool. Don't write. You know, like, I'm not expecting it. A, I'm not expecting it, and b, I will not be writing while I am on vacation. So these are the kinds of, this isn't even interdisciplinary, this is just different personalities, um, that, that factor in to, to our, uh, our partnership.

So, um, I feel my work is a calling as well, but my path in was quite different than what Christopher described. And actually our two paths represent. There's this great paper on stories of how people came to find work that they felt was their calling. And there were basically two paths. There were those who kind of knew what they wanted, you know, early calling toward teaching, and then kind of journeyed toward it.

And there were those who just figured it out as they went along. So I was the kind of person who went to business school as an undergraduate. Not because I was passionate about business, but I was more like, I know what I don't wanna do, and that sounds okay. Um, so I've really stumbled along. I mean, I became a management consultant and then realized I couldn't see myself making partner and tried to think about what I really liked.

And I really, really liked being in school. I'm a really good student and I thought, how can I stay connected to that and stay connected to sort of continual learning? And what would it take to, you know, I had had an early, um, you know, in my, in my undergrad career, I was a TA for a class and that really shaped me like I could be on the other side of the classroom.

I could see that. Um, and then I thought, how do I become a professor? Either I need a PhD. It was very like instrumental, like, I need a PhD or I need to be at

the end of a long and illustrious business career and then come back and, you know, sort of teach that way from my experience. What's the basis of my knowledge?

Is it, you know, studying or is it experience? And I said, I'll take studying. So I feel I, I can't imagine loving a job more than I love my job as a professor and I do, I love the teaching component. I love the scholarship and writing component. I love maybe a little less the service component where I'm sitting in committee meetings and, you know, arguing about curriculum and things like that.

But I, I really love it, but it's not that I always knew I wanted it, it's that I have really, I think, stumbled into it and, and fell into it. And so back to the question of do we over glorify calling? 100% and Absolutely. So I think we've come from this place of, you know, early and sort of the mid, you know, last part of the century, mid, mid, uh, 20th century to say, work is drudgery.

We're counting the hours, we're looking at the clock. When can we finally leave this office and, you know, go leave, lead our real lives. We sort of swung very far in the opposite direction to say. Find your calling. You know, we tell people things like, do what you love and the money will follow. Find your calling.

Love your life. I mean, these are actual book titles that exist. We have Steve Jobs making this Stanford, Stanford commencement speech in 2005 telling people the only way to do good work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it, keep looking, don't settle. You know, we have put a lot of cultural pressure on people to find their callings and to know, to almost be like a Christopher, like, what is it?

It's out there and I'm gonna journey toward it. And so then we get students in our offices who are like, what is wrong with me if I don't know my calling? So I teach at Babson, it's a school that's known for entrepreneurship. And so we tell them, where should your entrepreneurial idea come from? What do you love?

What are you passionate about? And they'll, they'll sit there going, if I don't have a, if I don't know. Already, you know, I'm 18 if I don't know what's wrong with me. And so obviously, you know, this isn't what we want either. We want our students and our, our, you know, kind of young early career people going out.

And I always say just have experiences, good, bad, or otherwise, you're learning something and you're learning something that you can bring forward as maybe

you're not this person who it's out there and I'm journeying toward it. I'm just gonna stumble into it. But you can't know unless you're just. Having experiences, you know, taking your best guess at something that you think you're reasonably good at and can actually, you know, get a job doing.

And that might be, you know, I hope it's interesting for you. I hope you love, I hope you don't hate it, but I think we've put an awful lot of baggage on people that you've gotta love it, you've gotta do what you love and it won't feel like work and all these kinds of things. And that's a really high bar for a lot of people.

N not to say the least of, you know, we both said our work is our calling, but there are days it absolutely does not feel like a calling, right? So, um, no, no job feels like a calling or feels deeply meaningful day in and day out. Every job has necessary evils. And so that sort of, you know, what, what are my expectations going in?

Versus the reality of what I've, I'm presented with. And then we put this giant societal expectation that everyone should be out there, you know, finding their callings. Um, it's a, it's, it's pre, it's a lot of pressure, I think, and, and I think it's unreasonable for how most people, you know, actually go about doing this.

[00:55:07] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** So just to set the record straight, I didn't know that I wanted to be a philosopher when I was a kid. In fact, I didn't even know what a philosopher was. Um, I was the most clueless college graduate in the history of college graduates when I graduated with a bachelor's in philosophy, all that I was qualified to do was to go to graduate school in philosophy. And I did know that I liked to study the meaning of life. I thought there was no more important question than asking that, and I think it is absolutely crazy that now I get to study the meaning of work, which is such a big part of the meaning of life. And I feel extraordinarily lucky. But I was just talking with my students yesterday about this very pressure that Jen is talking about. Not only do they feel pressure to be employed out of college, but they also feel pressure to be called to that employment out of college. And as Jen says, that's really unfair. One thing that I think is especially unfair is the way in which oftentimes higher education nowadays is looked upon as preparation for a career. I think we fail our students if the only thing they're getting out of a college education is job preparation. But at the same time, I feel like we fail our students if we don't prepare them for the working world in a realistic way when they graduate.

[00:56:43] **Debbie Sorensen:** I would love to hear both of your thoughts on this idea that maybe we care too much about work and that's part of why people are under so much pressure and stress and burning out left and right and so you hear arguments from some people that we should just kind of care less, disengage a little bit, um, you know, keep it. Better boundaries on our work. But to the point of kind of like emotional dis detachment a little bit, like don't put so much meaning into work. Instead we should just, you know, call it in a little bit. What do you think? I'd be curious both of your thoughts about that.

[00:57:19] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** Just last week I saw a news release that Gallup's annual engagement survey came out, and employee engagement has reached an 11 year low, which surprised me a little bit. I followed this statistic over the years. And the reason that it surprised me was that just last year in its most recent job satisfaction survey, the conference board reported that job satisfaction is at an all time high. So why is satisfaction so high and engagement so low? And I'm still puzzling over this, but I think it has something to do with what you're talking about. I think that job satisfaction can be influenced by things like the ability to re, to work remotely or on a hybrid basis, the flexibility that work offers. And that is a convenience that makes satisfaction, okay? But it doesn't mean that you're engaged with your job if what you're really looking for is the most flexibility so that you can pursue things outside of work. So I think there's a bit of good news and bad news on both sides. If satisfaction is what you're looking for because you get your life satisfaction away from work, then maybe job satisfaction is enough. But if you believe that there's important work to be done and you're not engaged in the work that you're doing, maybe you need work that will engage you.

[00:58:53] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** Well, I'm fascinated by this cultural phenomenon of whether you call it quiet quitting, um, lazy girl jobs. You know, there are fun employment. There are all these sorts of cultural labels out there now where people are sort of. Proudly claiming that they're doing exactly what you described, Debbie, which is kind of doing the bare minimum, right?

Like, I'm going in, I'm not, not doing my job, I'm not doing a bad job, but I'm not going above and beyond, or I'm finding a job that will never tax me at a, you know, extremely high level. And it's hard not to read that as some kind of a balancing out or a co, you know, compensating for how, just how much we got into a place of this hustle culture.

This, you know, always be on, always be working, minimize. I mean, I had students who were working on startups ordering like liquid, you know, meal replacements. So they could just like be, you know. Don't even stop to eat. In

other words, just be, you know, and we're measuring, you know, we've talked a lot about how do we measure our individual self-worth and that we're measuring our individual work worth by how much we are producing in the workplace.

So on some level at maybe like, you know, at the level of culture, I think it's sort of promising that we're reaching a point where people can push back and can set boundaries and that it's okay, you know, to want to leave work at the end of the workday and have work, stay at work. I mean, that's something else that happened in COVID as our work and home lives blurred.

People thought, oh, everyone's gonna work less. They're working remotely. And on average, people reported working more hours from home, even Compensa, you know, even accounting for, they're not commuting and all these other things. So how do we correct that? How do we actually get some balance between work and life so that we don't burn out?

But then it's hard not to also agree with you that you know, nobody wants to hire an employee thinking, oh, they're, you know, they're never going to go above and beyond. They're here to do the bare minimum. I mean, that's also not very, um, very satisfying for us to hear. And, you know, thinking, oh, you know, I'm, I'm deeply invested in my work, but my coworker, you know, maybe with whom I am, uh, closely working or interdependent is like dialing it in, right?

So, so it's not necessarily, a great solution, but I certainly understand where it's coming from because I think people are sort of proudly claiming this in defiance to work, just like owning their lives. Um, and I think that's probably like a healthy course correction.

[01:01:34] **Debbie Sorensen:** Yeah, maybe there's a middle ground there. That would be great. It's like we care about

our work. We find meaning in it, but we're not, it's not taking over our lives to such an extent. I wanna ask one more question and I wish we had another hour 'cause I have about 10 more that I prepared, but that's okay.

We will leave people wanting more and they can read your book because you dive into so many more topics that I think are fascinating. But the question I wanna ask about to end on has to do with the possibility of not working. So, you know, you mentioned earlier, well maybe someday robots and AI will take over and there will be no work left.

Or I mean more current I think sometimes I talk to people who maybe financially could retire early or are considering that possibility or who could, you know, spend time caring for their aging parents or their children and stop working um, when we think about life without work, so potentially life with more time for leisure without that structure of work, um, it sounds pretty nice, you know, I picture myself reading and doing yoga all day and that kind of thing, but what are your thoughts about the prospect of just no work at all? What are some of the pros and cons of that?

[01:02:50] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** Debbie. I think more leisure sounds great too, but I think, I think no work sounds nice at first, but maybe after a few weeks of no work and just playing golf or sewing or doing yoga, those things might start to get a little bit boring. Kind of like work as well. I actually think that human beings are made to work in some way, and so even if, and I don't believe this is a real possibility, but even if we get technology to do all the work for us, I think that we'll still make work. I think that we will make work in the form of finding ways to make new games for ourselves to play. Caring human to human is a kind of work that will never be replaced. One of my favorite parts of writing this book was an opportunity as a philosopher to get outside of the thoughts in my own head and to actually talk to real people about their work. And one of my favorite conversations that we had for writing this book was with a guy who we call Robert Guest in the book, and he is a military veteran who currently works as a part-time street sweeper, and actually got to know him because I rented a car from him off of an app called Turo, which is kind of like an Airbnb for cars. And he lives on a converted school bus that he's planning to drive down the Pan-American Highway to a beach in Costa Rica, where he's gonna park it and live off the income of his disability pension and his Turo income. And even Robert, who dreams of this life of leisure looks back fondly on his time in Afghanistan as maybe the most meaningful work that he ever did or, and will ever have the opportunity to do to try and bring order to a chaotic society. And even though he might be living on a beach, he told us he dreams of being kidnapped by pirates that would be an exciting way to go. So I think that will make work for ourselves to make our lives interesting even if we don't have to work.

[01:05:07] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** Yeah, I'll maybe just chime in to say I do think we have lost what it means to be truly in leisure. I mean, I think leisure feels like a break from working, but I'm not sure we appreciate it in and of itself, and that we even know what we would do with ourselves if we had that kind of time. I mean, I think we're just so conditioned and structured, you know?

The expectation in certainly American society is when you are of age to be an adult and be working, you need to have an account for your time. You know, it's not societally acceptable to just say, I choose not to work. I mean, people do it, but it's seen as this sort of societal, you know, failing. And so as a result, we're structuring our whole lives around work in the workplace, and then not really asking that question of, and I think part of it is the abundance of choice.

What would we do if we weren't working? And we, we've never maybe had to contemplate that for a long amount of time. I mean, the typical, you know, excuses to not work are you're injured. You are caring for a child, you're caring for a loved, you know, I mean, in other words, you're not working because you're doing something else that's taking a lot of your time.

It's not just like you're free, you're off. And so it's sort of encouraging this trend toward, so we're academics, we get sabbaticals. In fact, we used our sabbatical to write this book. You know, I love when I hear about companies giving employees sabbaticals or giving employees time off. Okay. It's still not a lifetime of leisure.

It's still, you know, it's still a structured time off. But I think we need to get comfortable with some periods of leisure and of not working to really like, find ourselves again, to, to reconnect with that part of us that is not just sort of either a worker or in a brief break from being a worker.

[01:07:08] **Debbie Sorensen:** Yeah, it's, I mean, and even in a day to day

sense, sometimes you have two hours. It's like, well, what kind of work can I get done? You know, even if it's the dishes or something, and it's like, we've kind of gone uncomfortable with that. Just, and there's a lot of movements, I'm sure you've seen around rest, you know, and kind of reconnecting with the value of rest, and, and it's, it's interesting to watch that narrative shift a little bit.

Well, I really appreciate your work. Your book is really thought provoking and so fascinating to read. I really love talking to the two of you today. I feel like we found this shared interest in work culture and, and this whole question of how people grapple with this in their lives.

So I really, really appreciate you coming on. And again, the, the book is called *Is Your Work Worth It?* So check it out if you wanna hear more. And thank you both so much. I really appreciate your time.

[01:07:56] **Christopher Wong Michaelson:** Debbie, thank you so much for having us.

[01:07:59] **Jennifer Tosti-Kharas:** Thank you. This was awesome. 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.

[01:08:17] **Emily Edlynn:** You can get more psychology tips by subscribing to our newsletter and connecting with us on social media.

[01:08:22] **Michael Herold:** We'd like to thank our podcast production manager, Jaidine Stoutt Williams.

[01:08:26] **Debbie Sorensen:** This podcast is for informational and entertainment purposes only and is not meant to be a substitute for mental health treatment. If you're looking for mental health treatment, please visit the resources page of our website, offtheclockpsych.com.

[01:08:39] **Michael Herold:** It's so funny that you mentioned the, the burnout book. I was just talking with, a client and she told me that she's reading Debbie's burnout book and it's so good that she actually thinks about getting the printed book because there's so much stuff in there that if you just listen to it as an audio book, like so many details fly by and, uh, yeah, apparently

[01:09:15] **Debbie Sorensen:** gosh.

[01:09:16] **Michael Herold:** you're.

[01:09:17] **Debbie Sorensen:** Aw,

[01:09:18] **Michael Herold:** Apparently, apparently your, your book is out there everywhere and it's just a matter of time before you get your own, um, documentary on Netflix, I would assume.

[01:09:27] **Debbie Sorensen:** any day now. It's so funny 'cause my dad and I talked to my dad and stepmom over the weekend for Mother's Day and they were like. How's your book doing? How are the sales? I was like, I have no idea. 'cause they wait like six months before you give you your first royalty statement. So I'm like, I don't know.

I might have sold 10 copies. Maybe I sold a hundred. Maybe like a million.

[01:09:50] **Michael Herold:** ever again,

[01:09:51] **Debbie Sorensen:** Right?

[01:09:52] **Michael Herold:** and you can listen to that podcast to find a solution to that

[01:09:55] **Debbie Sorensen:** That's right. And then I'll just be like, oh, I'm so sad I don't have to work anymore. 'cause I made millions off my book