

# Co-hosts Values in Transition

**Yael Schonbrun:** [00:00:00] Here's a question, which is, what do you guys do when living in line with your values is, really rough, , or, like you don't really know how to act on your values because it's such a complicated situation.

**Debbie Sorensen:** Okay. I have a personal reveal to me. So

**Yael Schonbrun:** You heard it here first guys.

**Debbie Sorensen:** is, is a juicy one

**Jill Stoddard:** as you guys know, I've told you that my, my husband and one of my girlfriends used to joke and call me destructively honest Jill. And I have another girlfriend who always sticks up for me. Thank you, Hally. Who says no, she's constructively honest, Jill.

That was us on psychologists off the clock.

**Yael Schonbrun:** 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.

**Debbie Sorensen:** I'm Dr. Debbie Sorenson, practicing in mile [00:01:00] high, Denver, Colorado, and coauthor evaced daily journal.

**Yael Schonbrun:** I'm Dr. Yells shown run a Boston based clinical psychologist, assistant professor at brown university And author of the upcoming book work, parent threats.

**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 learned here to build a rich and meaningful life.

**Jill Stoddard:** you for listening to psychologists off the clock.

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**Debbie Sorensen:** This is a time of transition for us here on psychologists off the clock in our last step is sewed. We talked about our co-hosts Diana leaving the podcast, and now we. Three co-hosts again. And the three of us, Debbie and Jill are here today. , we thought it was good timing to have a co-host episode about values and to talk about our values as we move into the next chapter, the podcast,

**Yael Schonbrun:** Values are such an important part of acceptance and commitment therapy. And so as therapists and podcasters, we talk a lot about them, but I think what's important for listeners to hear is that it's an important part of how we conduct ourselves in our everyday lives. That values are something that we're constantly coming back to.

Professionally and personally, and in [00:03:00] fact, it's something that comes up a lot as we're supporting one another as we're going through our regular personal lives together. , and so we thought that it would be valuable to kind of talk about a real world application of values and action as we make this important transition on the podcast.

**Jill Stoddard:** And we even have, , a formal kind of like a value statement as a podcast that we put together. And, you know, this is something that comes from more traditional businesses, but what we decided was important to all of us as a team, was to create a mission, vision, and value statement. And this is something that I do, in my clinic and like I just said, it's something we've done for the podcast. , and it's even something that I do when I think about my own personal life. And so we're going to share ours with you. I'm going to talk about what those three things mean and then share the POCC mission, vision, and value statement, and what we want to encourage you to do as listeners, , is to consider .

What your mission, vision and value statement [00:04:00] might be. And in fact, we're going to create a template and make that available to you on our freebies page of our way. So what a mission statement is, is essentially it's, it's what we're about as a team. The vision is where we see ourselves going and the values are how we go about pursuing the mission and the vision.

So our psychologists off the clock mission statement. At psychologists off the clock we explore and share scientifically informed and meaningful ideas from psychology to help listeners flourish in their work, relationships, parenting, and health, our vision state. Is to reach a broad audience, especially those who may otherwise not have access to science, backed ideas from psychology, and to provide a platform for professionals, including the TC team to share their important and meaningful contributions with the public at large. And our value statement is such that [00:05:00] our work is guided and informed by our commitment to collaboration. Compassion, psychological flexibility, evidence-based ideas, diversity of voices, perspective, taking and wholehearted relating.. And in our statement, we go on to define what each of those seven factors mean. To us. , ,

and I'm not going to go through and read all of those. Cause I think you might get bored listening to that, but we are going to post this document on our freebies page. You can feel free to use it as an example. And then we're also going to post the blank template that you can then use to develop your own mission, vision, and value statement.

so I'm curious yell and Debbie, as you've reviewed this and I just read it, , you know, we wrote this like what a couple years ago now I think maybe close to two years ago. And I'm curious if there's anything now, as we think ahead to the future, anything that you would add or change.[00:06:00]

**Yael Schonbrun:** I want to add humor. I've realized that one of my favorite things is science combined with a little bit of irreverence. I just feel like it makes science a lot more fun and palatable and engaging. My favorite guests have been those who have been able to laugh with. And I think one of the reasons that I love working on this podcast so much is that there's a lot of laughter and fun on the show and behind the scenes too.

**Debbie Sorensen:** I think two things come to mind for me. These are just things that have come up. , I don't even know how to exactly label this, but one is about making decisions about for instance, Sponsorship and guests that we have

on and content that we have on in terms of just really doing things that we personally find meaningful and interesting.

I think we've sometimes had opportunities come our way for things that might be financially better for us [00:07:00] or. Potentially something that would grow our numbers, but where we really felt like that's actually not consistent with who we are and who we want to be.

So I think that is something that is important.

**Yael Schonbrun:** We sometimes get pitched guests whose ideas seem terrific, but there's not an obvious evidence backing to the ideas. And I think sometimes when the person who has pitched to us is somebody really famous or who might be an attention grabber.

It can be really tempting to say, oh yeah, let's have this super provocative interesting idea on because it could really engage people and get a lot of listeners. But we've been pretty clear as a podcast that it's important for us to spread evidence, backed ideas and having that value is really helpful.

Sort of when I think for me values come in so handy in so many different circumstances, but one of the prominent ones that I encounter a lot is when I'm facing a difficult choice, coming back to the value, it helps me to feel more confident in whatever choice I [00:08:00] made.

**Jill Stoddard:** Well, , I love that you brought this up yet because I think this also. Is an example of when values feel like they might be in conflict. Because part of our vision statement is to reach a broad audience. And we've talked at length that for us numbers are important to us, not for the sake of numbers, but because our mission is to spread science, backed ideas about psychology, to as many people.

As we can, people who maybe can't afford or don't have a desire to walk into an individual therapist office we're providing, you know, free content that people can really see benefit in their lives by listening to it, by applying it. And the more, the bigger the numbers, the more people we can live, that mission.

And yet there's also this piece of science that you're talking about and it's like, oh gosh, how do we weigh those two things? And. In everyone's lives. I think we're, we're chronically put in these kinds of decision-making spaces where it's

not [00:09:00] always clear because there may be more than one value, , in the forefront.

**Debbie Sorensen:** Yeah, I think that's so true. And it's not so clear. It's not so black and white. I think that there's a lot to think about there. I'll give another example too, just to make this. Real to our listeners. We've been approached by some potential sponsors, you know, bringing in money is maybe not always our strongest suit as a team.

And we have been approached by some sponsors where that would have helped. With some of our costs and help us actually turn this into a more profitable endeavor. , but there were some potential sponsors where we felt like, no, we can't in good faith advertise this service because it's not consistent with who we want to be.

And there's a little pain associated with that because money would sure help us keep us going. But it, it just didn't feel right to us.

**Jill Stoddard:** Yeah. And, and luckily, one of the things I appreciate so much about our team is that we can talk about these things [00:10:00] and we're like almost always on the same page. You know, I think we share a lot of the same values. But most often we kind of batted around, right? Like we sort of talk about the pros and the cons and the, but it ultimately always does come back to this values conversation and we land on the same page because of that.

And I just think it's, it could be a helpful guide for anyone who works on a team. You know, even when maybe you don't share the same values, having that as a guidepost, I think is a really productive way to. To engage in conversations.

**Debbie Sorensen:** I think that comes down to how we respect each other. Like, I know that if I had a values related concern that you all would hear that and that's happened before, right? Like maybe we don't all feel the same way, but we all respect each other. Sure there's value in that helps us in those moments where we may not be on the same page.

Initially, we kind of hear each [00:11:00] other out. That takes a little openness, I think, as a team.

**Jill Stoddard:** Yeah. And that's the psychological flexibility value that we have on our statement.

**Debbie Sorensen:** Yeah.

**Yael Schonbrun:** And I was going to add to that, that this is something that comes up a lot in the couples therapy room, where we're partners might have different values. And so it's such a useful way to approach those differences to get at it from a values orientation, rather than like, We have irreconcilable differences or you want this, and it makes no sense to be curious together about what it is that each of you values and why, why those might be different and why each of those values may have something important to offer the couple unit and having that curiosity together, moving from judgment to sort of open curiosity is a really helpful way to approach that kind of conversation when people's values differ. And one thing to remember, and this is something that's very easy for us as a team to remember because we're so embedded in the values, work through our professional practices, but [00:12:00] there's no right or wrong values.

They're just different. And so. Coming at it from that perspective can really make a more productive conversation when values between you and somebody else. Don't perfectly align.

**Jill Stoddard:** Absolutely. That's a great point.

**Debbie Sorensen:** I think the other thing that came to mind for me, I think is where the podcast fits into our lives. We have some sections of our value statement that talk about supporting each other as individuals. And I think sometimes we've had to be a little flexible around the work involved in.

Doing the podcast, but kind of respecting each other's boundaries and being flexible when this is one piece of our life, but we have something else going on. And I think the world has been stressful lately and we're all very busy, you know, working parents, we're doing our best to keep everything afloat.

And there's times when the podcast has to take a little bit of a back seat to some other areas of life. And I think being supportive of each other, when that happens has been. [00:13:00] Something that I think is a value that maybe we haven't even named explicitly, but I think it's there to, to carry the load for each other when we need it.

**Jill Stoddard:** Gosh, it's so true. Somebody always jumps in, or, you know, even if there's not a need to jump in, if someone says I'm sick or my kid is homesick, you know, we use a slack channel for our team, inevitably within

seconds, someone pops in and says, what can I do to, to help to lighten the load? And sometimes we take each other up on that and sometimes we don't need to, but, you know, just knowing that that support exists. , it just, it goes a long way and is, is absolutely I, you know, a podcast value that I think is so important.

**Yael Schonbrun:** Yeah. So, so here's a question because we're, we're sort of getting in the rosy glow, a value discussion, but sometimes living in line with your values don't feel so good.

What are some of the strategies that you use or that you help clients, , engage.

**Debbie Sorensen:** I [00:14:00] guess I, I think that I try to be thoughtful and intentional to the degree I am able to in that moment, but then too. kind to myself in the discomfort of it. I mean, I know that there's times when I'm up against something that I am definitely not perfectly in line with my values in every area. And I think I have to just recognize that that is so human.

This is not a perfection contest here. , and I, that I really do talk to my clients about that all the time, too. Yeah. We have a snow day here in Denver today. And I was not my best with my husband this morning when we were trying to squabble over how we're going to manage this. And I apologized for my role in that because I recognized my stress was getting to me.

but I also kind of need to give myself a break. You know, that's just a minor example.

**Yael Schonbrun:** Oh, that's such a good example. That one

happens for me a lot.

**Jill Stoddard:** oh, sorry. [00:15:00] I think I struggled the most when there's uncertainty around. What I think is that I'm doing air quotes, like quote unquote, right. Thing to do. And by right. I mean, values aligned. So where this comes up a lot for me is around interpersonal relationships and boundaries. So in most contexts and instances, something that I deeply value is authenticity.

, and you know, as you guys know, I've told you that my, my husband and one of my girlfriends used to joke and call me destructively, honest Jill. And I have another girlfriend who always sticks up for me. Thank you, Holly. Who says no,

she's constructively honest, Jill. And you know, and it's a value of mine to be able to give people.

Honest feedback. Now I'm not going to say something mean just for the sake of saying something mean, but you know, if you're asking for my input, I'm going to, I'm going to tell you how I feel, even if it's something that you don't want to hear. And that matters to me. And I think part of the reason it matters to me is I grew up with [00:16:00] some inconsistency. In that area. And I feel safer when, like, what you see is what you get, you know, where I'm not worried that you're saying one thing and feeling a different thing or saying something else behind my back. And so that's the way I try to be in most situations, but there are certain interpersonal situations where that doesn't feel safe and where.

Being vulnerable, putting yourself out there is going to be weaponized against you. In which case, then boundaries feel more important safety self-respect. And I often struggle with knowing which of these things is called. In which situation and truth be told when that happens. I usually end up getting kind of paralyzed and avoidant because I just don't know.

So I think it's in that uncertainty of like, you know, what's the right thing to do. I'm not, I'm not really sure. So that's probably the thing. I think I'm still working on the [00:17:00] most.

**Debbie Sorensen:** I love that example. I can so relate to that because I think sometimes I really value being kind and respectful to people. And sometimes that causes me to struggle with setting boundaries, to the point where it's not good for me anymore. And as I work on that, it can be so uncomfortable sometimes. And it gets really.

You know, is this avoidance or is this like a smart decision to protect myself? Am I still able to do this in a kind way? Yeah.

**Jill Stoddard:** Yeah. And sometimes when we're navigating these things, it feels like the pendulum kind of wildly swings. You know, you go from being this passive. At least this was true for me. I went from being this super passive people, pleaser to destructively, honest, Jill, and you know, it's been probably 20 years and I'm still working on figuring out where that pendulum can kind of.

You know, settle in the middle. , but I think it's helpful in terms of being able to talk with clients, to be able to [00:18:00] normalize for them that this is an ongoing process that we returned to again and again and again, that we don't

just wake up one day going like, okay, I'm done. I can check off, you know, psychological flexibility and living in line with my values off the list that, that even for us, we've been practicing this 20 years and it's still a work in. Yeah.

**Yael Schonbrun:** Yeah. So just as like some of the take home tips that I hear you guys saying, cause I think these are really valuable strategies to put into action. So Debbie, you kind of started with self-compassion that when we act out of line with our values

just giving ourselves a break, offering ourselves some self-kindness recognizing that everybody has moments like that and making space for those feelings can be really, really helpful. And then Jill, you're , bringing up a point that . One value sort of on its own, can't capture all the situations that we're going to find ourselves in.

So like if kindness is the value and you really want to align with kindness, you have to also remember there's some situations where kindness isn't going to make sense. Same thing. As [00:19:00] you're saying with authenticity, there are some situations where authenticity. Isn't going to be the most useful value to prioritize, and it can be complicated to figure out what to prioritize instead, or how to moderate it in a way that makes sense.

And so it can really be an opportunity to, to find where your pendulum should swing. Excessively flexible, knowing that it can take some time and some settling. So I love those two strategies of like moderating the value and offering yourself lots of self-compassion. I think that's really useful.

**Debbie Sorensen:** I think an example of that would be. So for instance, if, if you care about honesty, that can be a value that you hold on, that you try really hard to stay true through over time, but there are moments when it does not serve you.

Well, to be honest about every single. Opinion that crosses your mind or to go around, pointing out every thing that you have a feeling about. So you can still value being honest. It doesn't [00:20:00] devalue. Doesn't go away, but make a choice about whether to express that value in that moment or not, because you could imagine if someone felt like I must be honest, no matter what, they could get themselves into some real problems.

**Yael Schonbrun:** I feel like there's some very funny movies about this, like liar liar with Jim Carey.

**Jill Stoddard:** Well, and I think what you're talking about here, Debbie in act is what we would call a self as content. These I am statements. So there's a value of being kind, which is different from, I have a self story that is, I am a kind person. And if my, if I am hooked or fused with the story, I am kind.

And I follow that story at all times, that may actually in some ways, lead away from values. And so when we're talking about psychological flexibility, it's about being able to step back and observe those self stories. And do what's values consistent. And to be able to recognize the difference between getting hooked by a narrative, like I must be this way at all [00:21:00] times, versus what is the value that I want to prioritize at the forefront in this particular situation in this one present moment.

**Debbie Sorensen:** Oh, I wrote about that in my book with Diana actively journal, because I I'm friendly. That's a self story that I have that gets some very highly reinforced, you know, I'm that person that people stop on the street to ask for directions. I have that vibe and I can get that can be very problematic for me, even though it's like a positive, you know, self story I'm friendly.

That seems like a positive thing, but sometimes friendliness is actually not, what's called for, and sometimes it's better to not be friendly or at least I'm not friendly all the time. And so you don't want to get too boxed into any kind of narrative. You've been one that seems values consistent.

**Jill Stoddard:** Right. Exactly. Do you guys have a favorite values exercise that you use in your personal life? When you're trying to kind of like figure out what the values [00:22:00] driven decision is in this moment?

**Debbie Sorensen:** Okay. I have a personal reveal to me. So

**Yael Schonbrun:** You heard it here first guys.

**Debbie Sorensen:** is, is a juicy one in act. There's an classic exercise called the funeral exercise, which is about sort of contacting the sense that life is short and we have to live while we can. And so you visualize yourself, , at your own.

Memorial service. And what would you want people to say about you? And it's a way to contact how you want to live. And when I was early on in my act

training, I did the funeral exercise with my husband. I like led him through it because he was curious about it and I had been trying it out. And I think that, that, that is why I have children, two of them, because we were that couple that was going back and forth.

Do we want kids? It wasn't a no brainer for us, whether we [00:23:00] wanted kids or not, but he did the funeral exercise and became very clear that he wanted children. I don't normally go around doing the funeral exercises, who was people in my own life to be clear. it was just a,

**Jill Stoddard:** you were, if you ever have coffee with Debbie.

**Debbie Sorensen:** Yes, Yeah.

**Jill Stoddard:** goosebumps though. When you told that story and how fun that this is coming out on a podcast episode and yell, and I didn't even know this before. , but

**Yael Schonbrun:** That's amazing.

**Jill Stoddard:** I mean, cause these, if you, if you just, if you get out of your head and actually really, you know, write this down or talk it out or whatever it is, it can be really powerful in terms of like creating some new insight and realization about what.

Your life to be about that's so cool.

**Debbie Sorensen:** that's right. Because a lot of decisions you get very stuck if you're trying to make it intellectually. And I think having kids is a good example, pros and cons. I would go back and forth all day long and think about it. Okay. I could never reach a [00:24:00] decision that way. I mean, I was trying for a very long time to think that through, but I had to reconnect with something else because the truth is there's no right answer to a question like maybe for some people there is, right.

It might be obvious, but it's like there's pros and cons of having kids. So if you try to make the decision from the intellectual level, it's very difficult. So honing into values really. You know, it was a game changer in this situation.

**Jill Stoddard:** I always say to clients, you know, because clients often think there is a right and a wrong, I shouldn't just say clients, humans feel like there's

a right decision and a wrong decision. And there's all this pressure. And I must make the right one. And because we're talking about an outcome that's going to occur in the future.

There's no way to know. And I like to say there are decisions. They all have consequences. Some we like, and some we don't and based on those consequences, we make more decisions and we pivot, or we don't pivot. And if we're keeping values at the forefront, it can make the [00:25:00] uncertainty involved in that process a lot more powerful.

**Yael Schonbrun:** Yeah,

**Debbie Sorensen:** So, what are some of the ways that the two of you. Values exercises in your own life.

**Yael Schonbrun:** This isn't necessarily something that I offer in my private practice, but it's something I write about in my book, which will be out in November, which is I connect to my parenting role in terms of how I want to teach my kids. Not necessarily what I want them to learn, but what I want to embody as a model for them.

Like, who's the best me that I can be is often. Captured by who do I want my kids to be observing? And I don't want them to be observing somebody. Perfect. Which is good. Cause I'm not, I want them to learn from me how to be an imperfect human who tries hard and how to be somebody who has feelings and manages them.

And who , finds the balance between ambition and being at home, loving her kids and who, you know, wants to be of service, but [00:26:00] also who wants to kind of chill out sometimes.

You know, those kinds of reminders to myself really helped me to navigate some of the difficult choices because it sort of helps me to zoom out on the moment and really get perspective on life.

When I think about my little guy.

**Jill Stoddard:** I love that. That's so great

**Yael Schonbrun:** What about you,,

**Jill Stoddard:** I have one that I use all the time that actually came from a client and I may have shared this on the podcast before. I can't remember, but, , I had a client who. She, you know, she came back to session and she told me that she had had a great leak and she had engaged in all these values based committed actions and that the way that she was able to be successful, she just kept thinking WWJD.

And as I was having this moment in my head, I was freaking out about what a terrible therapist I am thinking, oh my gosh, she's totally religious. How did I miss this? Because normally that means what would Jesus do? And how did I not know I've been seeing her for [00:27:00] months and in that, you know, few seconds that I'm pounding on myself about being about therapy, she says, you know, what would Jill do? And I thought it was so funny. She was sort of carrying me around on her shoulder thinking, you know, at every choice point I find myself, like, what would you do? Or what would you encourage me to do in this moment? And I just thought that was first hilarious and like cute and really brilliant. Yeah. I've adopted that myself where, you know, there, there's a kind of common exercise enact that sometimes called the heroes exercise, or there are other names, but where you think about someone who you admire, who embodies the same kinds of qualities that are consistent.

Your values. , and so I often think WW, O D what would Oprah do? , or WW, R B G D. What would Ruth Bader Ginsburg do? Without all those letters, it's too much of a tongue twister. Um, but you know, people, so the Oprah [00:28:00] example, you know, she's someone who has battled racism, sexism, poverty, abuse, body shaming.

I mean, every obstacle you can imagine. And she's never let it stop her as far as I know, you know what I think I know about her. She uses her power for good. And so she just feels like such, , a role model to me. And so I often I'll either think WW ODI, like what would Oprah do when I'm faced with a decision to make, or I also use it as a self-compassion exercise, which is like WW O S what would Oprah say?

When I was invited to do a TEDx talk, I got really down on myself. , I had gained a lot of weight during COVID and I was just feeling really bad and thinking I can't memorialize myself on video for the rest of my life. When I look like this. And truly, I thought. What would overdue she do the talk and we've all seen her battle, her weight very publicly.

And what would over say? And she would say, Jill, you are so much more than your [00:29:00] body and you have a mission. You have a message that you want to share with the world. And that's what matters. And I did it and that's exactly why. And so it's kind of this like silly little values exercise, but it's been really powerfully helpful for me in a number of different situations.

**Debbie Sorensen:** I love that. Stepping out of the self-criticism and towards your values. I want to share one work. You know, like I said, I don't typically do the funeral exercise in my personal life. I want to share another technique. That's tied to values that I teach so many of my clients and I do. You as myself, I call it pause, notice, choose.

I've heard people do versions of this along the way, but I teach people in those moments where things feel hard. Maybe you're having a surge of emotion or something is showing up for you is to take a step back. You don't even have to do anything fancy here. All you have to do. [00:30:00] Pause and notice what's going on, like take a Bowman to get a little space between you and your experience.

Notice what's showing up for you in terms of your emotions, your sensations, thoughts, et cetera, just have it like a just quick check-in like what is happening here are my emotions telling me anything important. About what's going on and then choose means basically asking yourself the question, what would my best self do right now?

How can I just do the next right thing? Take this. I have some intention around the next step that I want to take. So you can do this in 15 seconds in really any situation in life. But I think that it's a way of just instead of reacting on autopilot to just pause and be a little bit more intentional around making a values based action of some kind.

**Yael Schonbrun:** Yeah. And Debbie, I love that exercise. And I'll just add here that for a lot of people, there are certain [00:31:00] situations that regularly unsettled them and cause them to walk away from their values to act out of line with their values. The exercise that you're describing is really helpful in the moment.

It can also be helpful to think about it outside of the moment when the emotions aren't clouding and maybe. Extra heart to reconnect to your values. And, and this is something that I've actually done for myself. So I used to struggle a lot with anger. If I felt like somebody was trying to take advantage of me, I would

get very emotional and think very unclearly and just kind of spout my mouth and, and it, it was very ineffective.

And so I developed a mantra. I love Bernay brown. She's like all about the mantras. I think values are really helpful as a mantra. If you have certain situations that cause you to disconnect from your values to act out of line with your values, it can be really helpful to get clarity and develop a mantra that you can kind of link into during that pause, notice and choose moment so that you have that compass.

And so for me, when I'm angry, my mantra. Calm and assertive, [00:32:00] very simple, but it just helps me to remember that I have to bring my emotions down and I have to stand up for myself, but I have to do it in a way that isn't just driven by the emotion. So first step is to calm myself down a little bit, and it really helps me to make some good behavioral choices in the moment. Um, so again, you know, finding a mantra that can help you in that pause, notice, choose can be extra help.

**Debbie Sorensen:** I love that. And I don't know if I'd call this a mantra, but you know, when you were talking about teaching values to your kids, I used to do this thing. I kind of stopped doing it. And you just start again. I would say goodbye to my kids, the mornings that I dropped them off at school, when I was giving them a hug, I would say, be kind, be brave, learn lines.

And that was sort of my parting wish to them as they face the school day, which was to learn of course, but also to be kind and brave. And I think the reason I chose those particular words is because I felt like they kind of captured what I, as a parent really want to teach them.[00:33:00] And so to me, that's something I could be maybe revisiting in those pause, notice, choose moments when I'm not sure what to do.

What's the kind and brave thing to do.

**Yael Schonbrun:** Hello.

**Jill Stoddard:** that. And you know, what's so great. I think about everything we're talking about is these are simple ways to get in touch with your values. So there are long extended ways like the funeral exercise, which is really powerful and useful and fun, and to take some time and some closing of the eyes and some writing.

And, you know, I think sometimes there's a misconception that to dig into your values, this is the kind of work that's required when that is one way to do it. And there are lots of different examples that are similar to that. And then there are also these other. To that, you know, the pause way and the WW O D way.

And you know, that are really kind of like, you can just call upon them quite easily, a mantra, et cetera. And, that just makes it so accessible. I mean, these are things that people can listen to this episode and start applying hopefully right away. So [00:34:00] I love that you

**Yael Schonbrun:** Um,

**Debbie Sorensen:** Well, I love our darling mutual friend, Dr. Jenna , who we all have a mutual love of Jenna. And she's been on the podcast before to talk about her book values in therapy and. I've talked about this in a co-host intro before a couple months back, but she talks about truffle hunting for values. And this is something we might do in therapy, where we're trying to sniff them out with our clients and just really tune into when values or.

, misalignment with value shows up in the therapy room. We want to be really attuned to it. And I think that that's something else that people can do in their own lives. Notice when things show up that have a values quality to them, when you feel vitality, when you feel like you're doing something really important and meaningful, something that really resonates at the values level, and you feel really proud of how you're handling a situation.

And then also notice when you [00:35:00] don't, you know, if you're feeling. Guilt or regret or longing, or just that cringy feeling that like this isn't really the person. I want to be like myself at the start of this fine snow day. That's all information that you use as your guide over time.

**Jill Stoddard:** Yeah. Yeah. I think that's such an important point and that, , sometimes even looking to other types of pain, you know, just because you feel anxious doesn't mean you're not doing the right thing on the contrary. , it might mean you're doing exactly the values driven thing. Because as Steve Hayes says, we hurt where we can.

Right. If it, if we didn't care about it, we wouldn't worry or we wouldn't feel anxious. And I I'm currently reading Eve Rodsky new books. She's been on the

podcast a couple of times to talk about fair, play her system for gender equality in the, in the home. , and her new book is called find your unicorn space.

, and it's about creativity and things like that. And one of the things she talks about is [00:36:00] exactly what you're saying. It's kind of looking to your emotions to get at what you value. And she used jealousy as a specific example, and I thought, oh, that's really interesting that if I'm experiencing envy or jealousy, like, what does that.

That doesn't mean I'm a bad person, you know, maybe it that's a very human emotion and maybe it's telling me something about something I long for a urine for. I desire to have that someone else has that I don't. And maybe that can tell me something about some choices that I want to make to move in a new direction.

**Yael Schonbrun:** I'll start a dovetail on that. I think anger is another anger is one of these really uncomfortable emotions that is so informative. Like you can really tell us if we think that there's been an injustice committed.

If we feel hurt, if we feel like we're not being recognized. Just pausing and being curious about it can help you decide what value aligned action to take, because there's clearly something that matters there that's happening [00:37:00] and , we can really allow our values to guide our most effective response.

**Jill Stoddard:** Absolutely. Do you think that your understanding of values has changed at all over time? Like since. Started learning about act in the early days versus how you think about it now, you know, I, I thought of this, especially because you talked about Jenna and Jason's values book that changed the way I thought about values a little bit.

I'm curious how that's evolved for the two of you over time.

**Debbie Sorensen:** I think for me, You mentioned this earlier, Jill, I think for me really, and truly looking at values as a lifelong process, I think that I'm just so much more attuned to that over the years than it used to be. I mean, I guess I kind of always had a little bit of a sense of that, but just how this really is a lifelong process for every single one of us.

I mean, first of all, Values [00:38:00] change over time. I think with situations, things that happen in our world and our environment, different stages of life.

There's always more to look at when it comes to exploring and contacting our own values. And also just. This isn't something that you get right or wrong.

It's just, it's this emerging flowing convoluted thing that unfolds over the years. And I guess I just have so much respect for the people I see out in the world who are doing their best to live their values and whatever makes sense. For them in the world and how, you know, just how rich and meaningful, but also how challenging that.

**Yael Schonbrun:** Yeah.

**Jill Stoddard:** What about.

**Yael Schonbrun:** more and more, just the longer that I'm doing this kind of work, the more I realize. How much I care about values. Like my favorite people in the world are people who are clear about their [00:39:00] values. I just like being around people, even if their values are different than mine, who do things. Because they care because they thought about it. There's just something so beautiful about somebody who's clear on what matters to them. , of course, you know, there's certain values that I don't align with. And, , so that's probably an overly broad statement, but, some of my most treasured friends are people whose values are quite different than mine.

You have different, you know, very different stances on work, family balance or money or, or the way that they conduct themselves in relationships. But for whatever reason, if I can talk to them about values and learn more about them and why they value. What they value, then that ends up being a connection point to me.

**Jill Stoddard:** Wow. That's really fascinating. I would have to say that. I think I'm the same way, but I've never thought of it in that way. I've never like put words to it that way, but I, that really resonates with me.

**Yael Schonbrun:** Yeah, it done some, some writing about [00:40:00] this awhile back about, , a friendship that I had made with a woman who is an evangelical Christian. And it was this really eyeopening moment for me that we have really different , worldviews, , I'm like a nerdy scientist and she's very.

committed to her religious practices in a way that, that doesn't fully compute to me, but it was so wonderful to be able to talk about why it was important to her. I feel like it opened my eyes to a different way of seeing the world. And, and

again, I think that that's a really nice take home message for me that I like to impart because you don't have to have the same values as your partner, as your friends, as your family members to have open and interesting and connecting conversations.

**Jill Stoddard:** Yeah, that's very cool. I think the way it's changed the most for me is maybe like in a more concrete way. When I first learned about values, I thought of them more. And I think this is a common, I don't know if I should call it a mistake, that's [00:41:00] not quite the right word, but I think this is a common progression that, , clinicians or other people, as they're learning values go through is initially it's thinking about values just as domains.

Like, oh, I value family. I value friends. I value spirituality. And then thinking about. Valued actions. Oh, I want to spend more time with my kids or I'm going to start planning a mom's night out and that's certainly all part of it, but it took, I think a few years for me to really understand that like the meat of the values is mostly about the qualities you embody as you engage in those actions that are part of that domain that I can spend all the time in the world with my kids.

But if I'm scrolling through Facebook the whole time, I'm with them. Like, that's not really what I want to be about. Right. So it's like, who's the me, I want to be, what are the qualities I want to embody as a human being? As I spend time with the people I care about or I'm working under the domain of my career, , et cetera. [00:42:00] And you guys know, like I talk about my book, be mighty, who is the me you want to be? , and I think it's in there and it's also in my Ted talk where it's twist the me. You want to be in this one moment? Cause that's the only one we have and that it occurred to me that the word me sits right in the middle of the word moment.

Right? Like M O M E N T. So this is another values thing I think about is I actually picture the word moment with. Mom at the beginning, mom, capitalized. Like who's the mom. I want to be in this one moment since that's such a big part of my role right now, or I picture it with the Emmy in the middle capitalized.

Who's the me, I want to be in this one moment. So it's like irrespective of how I'm spending my time. How do I want to show up in those moments? , and so, so I think that has become like, , it's evolved for me and it's become a little more sophisticated in terms of my, my understanding of like the full picture of values.

**Yael Schonbrun:** I forgot that I had formerly thought about values in those [00:43:00] domains. That is so true for me too. And, and I think that that probably is a common starting point. So I'm glad that you articulated that because it isn't about the domains. It's about how you want to be. Right. Values. are quality of action.

**Debbie Sorensen:** In my clinical practice. I don't let my clients get away with that anymore. If they say, you know, it's February, right? So many people have new year's resolutions right now about their health. And if they say I value exercise, I, I say, hold up. You know, cause that's not, that's not a value. That's an action that you do in the direction.

And so I want to dig into. Actually Dana Lee Bagley has talked about that on the podcast before. It's like why there's no law of the universe saying you have to exercise. And that is just an activity you may or may not be doing. You need to tap into something else. That's a little more important that bigger picture.

Why behind that?

**Jill Stoddard:** And sometimes that's not always clear. So th this exercise example, actually I can [00:44:00] give a little personal anecdote that even as an act expert and practitioner, I kept thinking about, , how much my physical health mattered to me and , being a person who makes choices that are good for, , my body, my health being around for a long time and even connecting with those values, I was like, really still struggling. To exercise. I just, I hated it. I had lots of internal obstacles and, , this is another story I may have told before. Forgive me if I'm repeating myself again. But I had this aha moment where, , we were sitting around, my family was like sitting around on the sofa and I realized that I had this thought where I went, oh my gosh, my children.

Can not grow up with too sedentary parents, because my husband's one of those people who's totally blessed to have, you know, a gorgeous body and doesn't have to work for it. Although now that he's middle aged, that is starting to change a little bit. , and you know, I thought they can't grow up with too sedentary parents.

Like someone has to model for them that moving your body is just like a normal part of your [00:45:00] everyday life. And so, yeah, it reminds me of what you were saying, how you think about. What type of model you want to be for your

kids. And it was in that moment, that one moment where it came down to the type of mom, I want to be that it all clicked.

So it's like, I thought I was focused on the quote unquote right. Values are like the most important and it just wasn't, it, it wasn't until I really connected with how deeply, my role as mom and a model mattered to me, that exercise became. A regular part of my life. And it didn't mean I didn't still constantly have thoughts that it's not hard enough and fast enough and good enough and frequent enough, you know, all that noise still showed up.

But I was able to continue to make that choice over and over because I was connected to the quote unquote right. Value.

**Debbie Sorensen:** Well, Jill, I have something to tell you. I know you told that story on the podcast before about your kids, because I remember it, it was your episode with Kelly McGonigal [00:46:00] on the joy of movement. Why do I remember that? Because I still think about that story sometimes around my own values. And you know, just those times when it's easier for me to park my kids on the couch, but instead, maybe we'll go play basketball at the park or go to the playground.

So I think that maybe I should share that with you so that you know, that sometimes these personal stories land with someone, and that story landed with me.

**Jill Stoddard:** Oh, that's so cool. I got goosebumps. When you said that.

**Yael Schonbrun:** I want to add one more thing, because what I've noticed Jill about your exercise is that it shows up on Instagram and it's almost always with your son, which is so beautiful. And I think, again, that's why the values are so helpful because identifying that value connecting to it has pointed you towards the kind of exercise that's really connected to your parenting role. And that is self-reinforcing because it's so important to you that you go on hikes almost every weekend with your little guy. And that is a way that you can show up and, and [00:47:00] persist.

That committed action that probably wouldn't happen. If you were trying to just grit your teeth through it, like that motivation would feed, but instead being guided by that value of being a kind of parent that. you want to be, and being physically active together with your kids, that's where the magic happens.

**Jill Stoddard:** You're so, so right about that. And whenever he and I do our hikes, his nickname is little Sherpa. Cause he always leads the way. And we end up talking about values when we're on these hikes and not because I'm going into like therapist mode and lecturing him about values. But for example, when we did one of our first hikes, he wanted to go up this really steep embankment.

And I said, buddy, I don't think I can do that. You know, I'm like pushing 50 here. I'm not exactly the most in-shape person either. And he said, come on. I believe in you. And I thought, well, geez, like what kind of mom do I want to be? I want to be a mom who tries, I'd rather try and fail and model that to him than just not even attempt it because I [00:48:00] don't believe in myself.

So I got ready to humiliate myself, but guess what? We did it and I did it. And then we did the next step one. And the next step, once we got all the way to the top of the mountain and my little seven year old boy turns to me. I'm so proud of your mama. I knew you could do it. And then we had this whole conversation about the importance of support and encouragement and trying, even when you're anxious and afraid and uncertain.

I mean, it was just like, it was beautiful. So there were so many values that were wrapped up, like just in that one experience that made it incredibly rich and meaningful and vital, which is like what values living is. It's supposed to be about it may not. That felt really good. It may not always feel good, although it was hard.

Right. I was out of breath and my, my bones hurt. , you know, but that, even when it's hard, it has that quality of like meaning or vitality or, or richness

**Debbie Sorensen:** You love it when kids [00:49:00] are the best teachers, those moments are so beautiful.

**Jill Stoddard:** so much. Yeah.

**Yael Schonbrun:** So. , we've, we've just run through a lot of what values are, how you can clarify them and how they can connect to building more richness in, in life.

We hope that you go to our freebies page and find this template and do some nice clarification for yourself. And we really hope that you share values with us because as, as Debbie just said, Jill sharing her value really impacted. The way

that Debbie now engages around exercise and the values that she's been able to clarify.

And I know that that's been the case for me, that when I hear other people talking about their values, I can get really inspired. So we hope that you do some values, clarification, and use that to inspire others as well. So share that on our social media, on Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook

**Debbie Sorensen:** , thank you. So. Everyone.

**Jill Stoddard:** And I just want to thank you guys, WNL. I think this has been such a rich conversation between us and I hope our listeners get [00:50:00] a lot out of it. And I always love connecting with you guys over any topic, but especially. And values. , and I am just like, so looking forward to seeing what 2022 has in store for us as friends and as a, as a team and as a podcast,

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