

135. Motivational Interviewing with Stephen Rollnick

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Diana Hill: [00:00:22] you're listening to Dr. Stephen Rollnick on Psychologists Off The Clock.

We are four clinical psychologists here to bring you cutting edge and science-based ideas from psychology to help you flourish in your relationships, work and health.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:00:42] Dr. Debbie Sorensen, practicing in mile high Denver, Colorado.

Diana Hill: [00:00:46] I'm Dr. Diana Hill, practicing in seaside Santa Barbara, California.

Yael Schonbrun: [00:00:50] From coast to coast, I'm Dr. Yael Schonbrun, a Boston-based clinical psychologist and assistant professor at Brown University.

Jill Stoddard: [00:00:56] And from sunny San Diego, I'm Dr. Jill Stoddard, director of the Center for Stress and Anxiety Management.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:01:02] We hope you take what you learn here to build a rich and meaningful life.

Diana Hill: [00:01:05] Thank you for listening to Psychologists Off The Clock.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:01:08] Hi everyone. If you're a mental health professional, check out some of the online offerings from Praxis. You can link to them through our website, offtheclockpsych.com Praxis offers some really wonderful trainings in acceptance and commitment therapy and other therapies related to the content of the episode today that will help you build some of these core clinical skills.

Um, and if you link to it through our website, you can get a discount. So check it out.

Diana Hill: [00:01:36] Today we have the privilege of talking with Dr. Stephen Rollnick, who is one of the founders of motivational interviewing and motivational interviewing. If you are a therapist or a healthcare provider, most likely you have his book on your shelf. It's one of the foundational approaches to supporting people and making change, whether it's in addictions or healthcare settings, or, uh,

Or even teaching in parenting. It's just, it's a real treasure to have him on the show and hear directly from him.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:02:08] Yeah, it was so cool. You even did a little mini motivational interviewing practice with him, which was what a privilege for you.

Diana Hill: [00:02:15] Yes. I was so excited. I was ready for him. The six my life changed my life and.

To note this is, this recording was done with a Dr. Rollnick prior to the pandemic, and then Debbie and I right now are pretty much in real time. It's Monday. We're going to be releasing this on Wednesday So some of the concepts that we talk about may feel even just re listening to it again, Debbie felt a little bit out of place talking about things like coaching athletes, which is not happening right now, or, or some of my personal struggle around work life balance, which has changed so much since that time.

So I just want to acknowledge there may be some things that feel a little bit. Different than what you're experiencing right now, but the concepts that he offers are particularly helpful, I think right now, because communication in our households with each other, with our loved ones is probably under a lot of stress right now, and it's helpful to have some tools and ideas of how to address them.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:03:07] Yeah. I think I have to do a few things a little, uh, try something new with my spouse when we're in quarantine. The other day he observed. It seems like every time I walk into the room, you have something for me to do, and I, I think of them as helpful suggestions, but apparently it's not going over too well.

And he usually just rolls his eyes and ignores me, which is pretty much what we find with the more directive approach is that it doesn't work. People don't like it, they don't listen. They, they kind of have a, a bit of a backlash against it. And so I love Dr. Rollnick approach, which is just a kinder, gentler version of how to. Instill change.

Diana Hill: [00:03:46] Well, it's kind of a gentle air, and it's also how to increase intrinsic motivation for change in the person that you're working with. So there's just the human nature of ambivalence when we're wanting to change something in our life, often we have reasons why we want change and reasons why.

We don't, and as soon as someone outside of our CR starts to argue for change, for us, it's natural tendency to put up some resistance. And you argue against change so that even if your husband maybe was thinking about picking up the socks or doing something like that, as soon as you tell him to. Now he really doesn't want to do it anymore, and that can happen with our partners.

That certainly happens all the time with our kids are teenagers or teachers working with students. And the, the real skill in motivational interviewing is that one, it takes a lot of patience on the part of the person that's doing this type of communication. I think patients. I've been thinking a lot about right now is not one of my strengths, and it's something that I really value and I think we all need more of right now.

So patients and patients comes in with asking more open ended questions at the beginning of a conversation, open ended questions, not going in with your suggestion for change right away and really listening and affirming in the person that you're talking with, what you're hearing and listening for change.

Talk. Which he discusses a little bit in the episode change talk is just that little bit of a suggestion on the person you're talking with that maybe they want to make a change in a, in a behavior of theirs, but maybe they don't feel like they have the skills or they're concerned about it, but really reinforcing that change talk and

somebody highlighting it.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:05:23] Yeah. It reminded me a bit of the interview that our cohost yelled at a couple months back about the family guide to addictions and how often families will really be on the case of the person who has a substance abuse problem or an addiction and kind of focus on trying to get them to change versus positively.

And we're even enforcing the time that the person themselves takes a step in the right direction. And I think that's a really important thing and a really hard thing to do. Sometimes cause it can feel so microscopic, but you really want to just have the patience to wait for those moments and kind of reinforce the change talk or the change itself.

And so yeah, it's a hard thing to do, but I think it's really highly effective in the research. Certainly bears

Diana Hill: [00:06:06] that out. I think also helping people identify discrepancies between how they are and how they want to be, and that really maps onto some of the act work and he talks about values in this episode as well.

That values are connected to that intrinsic motivation for change and helping people identify the discrepancy between what they value and maybe how they're acting and just reflecting and summarizing what you're hearing about that. That can be really powerful as well.

Debbie Sorensen: [00:06:31] Yeah, and another area where this approach is used a lot is in medical settings, and I work in a healthcare setting. And often I think the old model was that you'd go in and your provider who's an authority figure, sort of tells you what to do, you know, quit smoking, lose weight, change your diet, et cetera.

And it's sort of been well established by now that that isn't a highly effective approach. People say, Oh yeah, that sounds good. And then they go home and they don't do it. And so the, a lot of healthcare settings have. Trained all kinds of providers in motivational interviewing as a way to elicit change, talk and build that intrinsic motivation.

So it feels less like a power dynamic and being told what to do and something that it helps the patient have buy in and their own internal motivation.

Diana Hill: [00:07:16] So whether you're a therapist working with clients right now, whether you're in a medical setting, working with patients, whether you're a mom and dad just trying to get through the day with their kids, not destroying your house, we hope that some of these communication strategies will be helpful for you.

There's a lot that we can't control right now, and I think it's just sometimes helpful to have some focus in on what can I control? What can I do to make communication healthier, more effective, more positive within my home, or whatever signs on it. Thank you. Take care and be safe.

Stephen Rollnick is a cofounder of motivational interviewing. His work has included support to programs for pregnant teens, children with HIV, AIDS in Africa, medication adherence in different areas.

He's also a cofounder of Pada pediatric AIDS treatment for Africa and the motivational interviewing network for trainers he is the coauthor with William

Miller of motivational interviewing, helping people change, and the author of books, including health, behavior change, a guide for practitioners, motivational interviewing and health care, motivational interviewing and schools, and his newest book coaching athletes to be their best in sports.

He is an honor, a distinguished professor in the school of medicine at Cardiff university Wales in the UK with a research record focused on good practice and efforts to promote change and behavior change among patients, clients, and the practitioners who serve them. It's a real honor to have you on the show.

Thank you for being on. Dr Rolnick.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:08:45] Really, honestly, it's a pleasure. I'm sitting in the, the wintery wild, stormy weather of South Wales in the United Kingdom, I'm sitting at home and I'm by the fire and ready to check you.

Diana Hill: [00:08:57] Sounds lovely. And I think maybe a good place to start is for us to talk about what motivational interviewing is before we talk more about how you use it in these different domains.

And it's really a client centered, but also directive style of counseling that elicits change in people, and particularly people that, um, are experiencing an ambivalence. That's a natural part of change. You've applied it in a lot of different ways. Can you begin with sharing with us how you came about motivational interviewing

Stephen Rollnick: [00:09:29] I mean, you described it its essence very well that you captured it, which is that it's a, it's a style, a way of speaking to people about change, particularly if they are uncertain about a particular change.

And she will use the word ambivalence. And it's also a set of skills that you use within that style for getting the best out of them and your conversation with them. So that's it. Like fairly broadly, I guess. But if, I guess one way of looking at it is it is, it's like a recipe with familiar ingredients, but done in a particular way.

Okay. So it's a, it's a reasonably coherent and well-defined recipe, but the ingredients are all familiar. So I must, I must say, Diana, I never it that way. When we started this journey. Right, which goes back to the early 1980s I kind of thought we were in this world of specialist treatment

in that scenario was addiction treatment, but as the decades have unfolded, have come to see it more as a matter of what we did was we uncovered jewels, if you like, that we're really there.

It's a bit like we're miners. These jewels were ready there and inside all of us. and, we also uncovered, I guess, whatever the opposite of jewels, or if you like dysfunctions or nasty little stones, right? So we, um, we uncovered things that go on in communication that are either helpful or not.

And, all of these jewels involve, Talking with people about change, that that's what it's connected to.

Diana Hill: [00:11:12] Well, it's interesting you used the word recipe because I think there's two different types of cooks. There's the cooks that get out the cookbook and follow these specific steps and in the cooks that are just really good cooks that have a sense of where to go next, and how to put things

together.

And what I've noticed about motivational interviewing over time is that it's become less cookbook. When I learned it in graduate school, it was all about acronyms. You got to remember the oars and the and that, and now it feels much more of an, like you said, the, the essence, the spirit is really at the forefront.

can you speak about what is the spirit of motivational interviewing? what are some of those jewels? And then we can also talk about some of the stones
Stephen Rollnick: [00:11:51] Absolutely. And you're absolutely right about, you know, the recipe idea. It's got its limitations because as we know, you can follow a recipe and that is not what I was wanting to indicate. Right. I just meant that the ingredients are familiar, but you make your own recipe. With the suitcase you, you meant, you ask about what is the spirits, and I guess that's Mmm. You could call it a style. You could call it a way of being with people. When you talk about change

it is probably most recognizable

in the attitude of a compassionate guide.

Probably most of what we call the spirit of motivational interviewing is there in a compassionate guide, a compassionate parent, a compassionate teacher. In other words, they don't drag people into change, drag people into learning. What they do is come alongside them and help them get the best out of themselves.

And this involves. Attitude, a certain attitude to how you speak to someone and how you bring the best out of them, and that's where the techniques come in. How do you speak with somebody so that you get the best out of them? Okay. there's different ways of framing this, and I don't want to fill out conversation with all sorts of jargon, which is why I'm deliberately talking about familiar. Mmm Mmm. Styles that are used in everyday life by people. Like a travel guide. Travel guide won't tell you what to do. If you walk into a tribal shop, they'll say, where do you want to go? And they'll help you refine your, your sense of what's going to be best for you. So that that is what we mean by the spirit. But I could dive a little bit more deeply inserted. You want to, but that's the essence of it.

Diana Hill: [00:13:46] Yeah. you said it's sort of something that's inherent within us, but at the same time, I think when you're in the helping profession or you're a parent or your teacher or you're a coach, our tendency is to not do that step back and allow space for the person you're working with to come to their own conclusion.

Our tendency is to know what's best for them and tell them, so what happens when we do that? When, when we, when we tell people what they should be doing, how does that. Create problems for people

Stephen Rollnick: [00:14:14] I mean sometimes it works if you have a very good connection with somebody and they deeply respect you and you tell them what to do. Sometimes it does work and also it can work to just tell people what

to do. If all you want Ben to do is to comply. And did he add to what you like in the military or something like that?

People will do that. And I'm not suggesting there's only one way of encouraging people to change. That is certainly one way but really, Diana, if I go right back to the beginning, what Miller and I discovered 6,000 miles apart. I was in Cape town, South Africa. There was a young nurse, and he was, Mmm. He was in Albuquerque, New Mexico as a young psychologist.

We both discovered something quite similar at the same time in the same setting, which was addiction treatment, which was the more we tried to persuade people to change, tell them why it was a good idea, tell them how to go about it,

the harder they seem to kick back. And Diana, what we noticed was that we were surrounded by a treatment environment in which.

Given that problem, the staff around us and ourselves in Kuda tended to blame the other person so that when we tried to explain to them why or how they should change, and they resisted until Miller had this kind of seminal insight, the tendency was to say it's their fault. There's something wrong with them. And indeed the textbooks had this idea that alcoholics or drug addicts or pathological liars, you've got to watch out for them. And Miller's seminal insight was this, that

if I see that as a problem in the relationship, not just in the person I'm speaking to,

it then raises the question, well, what can I do to repair.

Such that this person's feels safe enough and brave enough to be really open with me. And with his background in counseling and a number of other psychotherapies, what he found was that if he shifted his style, the one that was more empathic,

I would say looking back, good empathic guide, if he shifted his style,

their resistance sort of disappeared.

And their motivation to change seem to flourish and fire up in front of him. And I had an identical experience in, in South Africa, Cape town, South Africa, where I was a young nurse where this, fiery atmosphere confronting.

Impatience and them denying and resisting. It exploded my face one day and a terrible thing happened to a patient who walked up to very violent things happened and it shocked me and I then read MLIS paper and started using what he called motivational interviewing

and found that he was right.

He was right. Some of the most difficult conversations could be made really easy.

You shifted your style, you empathize more. You practice these skills that these jewels that we uncovered from mostly Regina in counseling, very, very tough scenarios could be made a lot easier and outcomes.

It would be better.

And that seems looking back, that seems to be what the many, many hundreds of controlled trials. Sort of show us. There's like, I don't know, I don't, I don't keep track down at this probably 1400 plus randomized controlled trials of motivation. To me, God knows where this all comes from. Every imaginable field, you know, even terrorist suspect interviewing.

I hear last week of, of research in that area. What you find is that. If you come alongside and practice empathic listening in the face of difficult conversation about change, things improve. So in, in a weird sort of way, the heart of the problem it is you face. The softer is the style that's needed to help someone be brave enough.

Consider change.

Diana Hill: [00:18:35] And it takes bravery, I think, on the part of the clinician or the hostage negotiator or the parent to step into the natural ambivalence that is present when people are, um, struggling with change. It's hard to not just argue the reasons why the person should change, would actually step into the ambivalence.

Can you talk about what role in bivalence plays in this process and how you work with it?

Stephen Rollnick: [00:19:01] No, I think.

It's completely normal first of all. It's not some special pathological feature of patients, of clients. We all know that experience of feeling are,

I better do this with somebody else's making me feel I better do this. And we all know that experience of

thinking about a change, feeling reluctant, and then stopping thinking about it and not doing anything about it.

So. Impermanence in this sense is like completely normal. It's a part of the human condition

and it seems like this is really quite strange diner. It seems like

if somebody is feeling that way

and you take the position on the change side of there a comp correct. You adopt that position and you try and, for example, persuade me out of my feelings of ambivalence.

It seems like a natural reaction on my part to protect myself and to tell you why change isn't a good idea. And that's a perverse, you know, people like freedom to make their own minds up for themselves. And yeah. You know, just this morning

I'm saying to my son. Because I'm stressed. You know, you asked about like when things go wrong and why do things go wrong?

I think if people are stressed, if they feel very important and experts, if they think they know it all and someone's ambivalent, you're going to hit trouble. So I said to my eight year old this morning, listen, don't put the muddy shoes on. Okay. Just don't do it. And I could see he was wavering, right? Use these other shoes. I know they're not the right color, but just use them. Boy did I get into trouble? Yeah. so it's very normal. It's very common. It's very human. And we very commonly make the mistake when we feel stressed, rushed, if we feel we owe it all. And basically, I suppose if we stop paying attention to the learning and growth of the person in front of us

Diana Hill: [00:21:07] Right? I think there's this, this part of it where we start focusing on the outcome that we want to get to as opposed to the process of, I mean, even for your son, to have that decision making for himself of why, why would it be good to wear muddy shoes or not wearing muddy shoes? There's a, there's a whole problem solving skill that gets lost when we go straight to, okay, don't do this or do this, and that.

Actually. Helping the people we're work with develop that problem solving skill on their own, or assume that they can actually problem solve for themselves. For the most part, that we can be there to support. The problem solving is, is actually strengthening that we weaken people by going straight to , solving the ambivalence for them.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:21:47] Exactly. You cracked it, Diana, and you know. Mmm. There's an influence that positive psychology has had on motivational interviewing, which I'm only just beginning to recognize and appreciate, which is. It's so many of us. I mean, in your my case, we are experts, psychologists, okay. But ditto, the school teacher .dittoo the expert parent ditto the sports coach

We tend to slip into that unfortunate pattern, which is the more expert, we feel the more we tend to see. Ourselves as problem solvers, and it comes from a really good place. But unfortunately, if you see yourself as a problem solver, then all you see a problem.

I mean, I, I don't know whether this strikes you is pop psychology psychobabble, but you know, one of the influences of positive psychology on, on, on my work and on our work and motivational interviewing is that it is possible to put on a different set of lenses, if you like. On top of those lenses that just look all problems, which is to look at, this is a human being in the first instance.

Athlete, patient, clients, kid second, but it's a human being first, and that human being freedom likes to feel connected. I'd like to learn for themselves, and if that had been the lens that I'd looked at my son this morning, I would have done what you suggested, which is not. Especially clever. It's not particularly specialist and expert.

It's just something we forget about. And it's a natural approach to helping someone learn, which is to say to the guy, look, there's dirty black shoes and there's clean gray shoes, right? What do you reckon, guy? Yup. And then if our

connection is good enough and he feels safe enough, he will go, uh, maybe I should take.

The clean gray shoes. Instead, I slipped into the pattern of say, don't do this, do that, do this, do that. And it evokes reactive, so I got into trouble. Okay. So, you know, I've got to learn to be humble. Like, you know, when you're stressed out, you don't help people learn. I guess that was my, my little lesson this morning.

Diana Hill: [00:24:09] Well, and another lesson that you've taught me in some of your writings is that we can always get back on track, which is the nice thing, and so many times throughout a session. I catch myself. Going into problem solving and seeing the change talk decreasing and the resistance showing up.

for me, that's just a signal to me of, okay, I need to change course here. This isn't, this isn't working what I'm doing. And in addition to starting with empathy on the relationship that you work with in motivational interviewing, there are things like building discrepancy, helping the client identify their values, and, and where is the discrepancy there between how they're acting and their values.

And then also this concept of, um, change talk. Can you, can you speak to some of those strategies that you use

Stephen Rollnick: [00:24:53] Yeah. You know, I was with, I was with an athlete this morning.

The guys had an injury. Okay. Career threatening injury shortly before he reaches the apex of this particular lead sports he has been involved in and he's talking to me about,

maybe I could go into recruitment. Maybe I could all action talk, you know, maybe I could go into property with my motivational interviewing hats on. What I say. Tim asked his permission and I said, look,

could I just shift the focus here and ask you what is really important to you? No. Why do you want to go into these things? What? What are the talents that you have? What do you think brings the best out of you?

He looked at me kind of frozen, promoted because he wasn't too expecting this. He said, so what are you getting at? And I said, look, I'm just wondering why you want to do these things.

And he started talking about his values. And when he did that, what I heard was the natural expression of his dreams and aspirations, which took the form of change talk.

In other words, these always own good reasons to improve and change. And so in motivational Legion being, all we do is we flag up that very natural language that people use when they talk positively about change. We're given that label change talk. And we say, when you hear that, don't change the subject. Get out of the person's way. Well, they tell you why and how they want to change.

And that changed talk. It's an expression of a motivation to change. And so the

techniques of motivational interviewing are designed to help you respond to that and get the best out of the person. So that when you do get to talk about practicalities as we did this morning, he said, look, I think it's property. Well me, I was able to say to him, well, what would be a reasonable plan for you right now? Give him that you can see your career is about to end here. And he said, I think Bob, buy, buy, buy, buy, buy, buy, not. I heard change talk again. And so we developed a change plan that was driven in tiny by motivational interviewing.

He came up with the plan was his plan, not mine. I gave him some advice along the way and we helped firm up an ABC change plan for him that had him feeling okay to least underwear to start here, and I'm going to learn as I go along. So change talk is the natural expression of someone's motivation to change. Calling for it like I did. Why would you want to do these things? Recognizing it when it appears, and then responding appropriately with empathic listening, which we can get into in a moment. Those are the core skills of motivational interviewing, and what I found was that I felt very close to this guy. I felt compassion for him.

I think he felt understood by me.

And there was no battle. There was no sense of friction in the conversation. It was not me saying to him, I tell you what, why don't you meet so and so? I know somebody who's high up in property. Why don't you meet him?

Diana Hill: [00:28:20] advice-giving yeah,

Stephen Rollnick: [00:28:22] Well, I think advice giving can be beautiful and skillful, but that would be really clumsy.

And so we could talk, we could talk about giving people advice and feedback and how you can make that into an art form, which I believe it is. But it's got buried in this Avalon's of action talk by parents and teachers and sports coaches thinking they know what's best for other people. And that's, I guess where the fork in the road cut.

You couldn't take one of the directions there.

Diana Hill: [00:28:53] Well, and it's what you write it, that people are better motivated by reasons they come up with themselves. And so it seems like that was, that that was the skill set that you were using there of having him come up with his reasons that are connected to his values and what he knows about himself will, will motivate him as opposed to you coming in with the suggestions of, you know, the people that you know, high up in real estate.

So you, you mentioned that there's some, some, some specific skills around practicing empathy.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:29:22] yeah.

A big

Diana Hill: [00:29:22] what? What does that look like?

Stephen Rollnick: [00:29:24] Pick one.

on the technical front, so to speak, Empathic listening and affirming. Two really incredibly powerful skills.

And I use the word skill.

I use the word skill deliberately. So when you say you can be empathic with someone. It doesn't just mean standing in their shoes and trying to understand their experience.

And so that's a little Juliet. We picked up from Rogerian counseling, which actually exists in everyday life.

I've seen people using pathic listening without knowing anything about Rogers.

I've seen a seven year old kid using puppet listening. Okay? So these are, that's what I meant by jewels that you uncover and here's what it is.

I mean. Different ways of defining it. I'm not saying it's, this is the best way, but here's how we see it. Okay. it, like it happens in two stages. The first is what is commonly regarded as empathy, which is to try and imagine someone's experience. Okay. Try and stand in their shoes. We all have this facility because it's founded on curiosity, that's step one is to imagine someone's experience. Then there's a second step that we've uncovered from Roger's work, which is. To say to someone to make a statement to them that shows them, did you understand their experience? so empathic listening involves both of those steps.

Now, what we found in motivational interviewing is that this skill, which is commonly regarded, I must, I don't want to, I'm not sure this is a case in the United States, but a lot of my psychologist colleagues consider this, Oh, this is basic. This is listening,

Diana Hill: [00:31:14] do that all the time. Yeah.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:31:16] I do it all the time. I don't need to practice this. Honestly, Diana.

Of I had to drag myself. Kicking and screaming into the world of empathy was always a problem solver. Ryan, I have spent decades practicing the skill and trying to get better at it, and it's like playing a musical instrument, a conversational instrument.

it's very powerful and useful.

could I just identify a couple of uses of this.

Diana Hill: [00:31:42] sure. We'd love to hear it. Yeah.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:31:43] first of all for connecting with people, it's incredibly useful. Okay. Particularly when there's heat and arguments upset, just engagement. Practicing this skill radically improves the level of engagement. Okay. And I'm sick. I'm driving a car the other day. And the seven year old, he was seven and sits in the back and you sit and the windscreen wipers are going really fast because it's pouring with rain. He sits in the back of the car and he says, those windscreen wipers must make driving really difficult for you.

That

right now that's a statement, not a question. And his statement indicates to me that he not only imagined what it was like, but he told me, he said what he thought it must be like for women. So the power

Diana Hill: [00:32:34] you feel when he said that?

Stephen Rollnick: [00:32:36] I thought, my God, who is that in the back seat? Nailed it. It's exactly right.

Diana Hill: [00:32:40] I feel so supported and heard by my backseat driver. Yeah.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:32:45] a little seven year old kid is most clear and he's curious and he naturally comes out with an empathic listening statement now. So empathic listening is very powerful for improving connection. Okay. And for full well, dealing with difficult conversations.

We used to call it resistance. We don't anymore, but if you want to use that word, resistance will go down.

If you use empathic listening in any situation. So that might be useful for some of you listeners, but then there's another use to it. Another couple of uses to it for him, too. Empathic listening. One of them is particularly Lilly specific motivational interviewing. Which is that when someone is talking positively about change

and do you hear that change talk?

The most useful responses in impact is impact, isn't it? They know that and they feel understood,

but they feel brave enough to explore further how they might develop a different perspective or a different plan. So this empathic listening. Such at the heart of motivational interview because it helps you get out of the way of people as they're coming to a new perspective, as they're deciding about why and how they want to change.

Diana Hill: [00:34:09] Yeah. What am I very first and early supervisors was a therapist, and he described it as dribbling the ball down a soccer field or a football field. And when you're dribbling, when you practice empathic listening, you're sort of just given that ball like a little bit of a nudge and it keeps on moving in that direction as opposed to coming in from the side or blocking it.

Yeah,

Stephen Rollnick: [00:34:30] And it's very easy to block people's. Discovery of the best way of doing things, and you're not. Then I think there's a third you spirit, which is poorly understood, and it's something I'm just busy working on at the moment, which is when you want to give advice to someone

and when I, a bit earlier described advice-giving is an art form.

I feel that if you use empathic listening, when you give advice. It sends you into it onto a different level with someone, and you can give advice really effectively

integrated with empathic listening,

Diana Hill: [00:35:12] Can you give an example, an example of that, of what that would look like with working with an athlete or, um,

Stephen Rollnick: [00:35:18] Cool. Sure. We developed a framework called

Ask offer us ask the traditional approach to advice, giving stock to us like me with a kid this morning, right? But just to tell, advise in form, and then you get kicked back using this simple framework.

Ask. Offer ask. What you do is you first asked, can listen.

Okay. Which helps to engage people and helps you then get to understand what the information needs are.

Then you provide, but then critically having provided your information or advice,

do you use empathic listening to draw out of them? What sense they might make of it?

Okay. So I could give you a practical example from the sports field if you want to, or any field. I mean, what would

Diana Hill: [00:36:14] sports. Let's do sports.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:36:16] do we do sports? A guy who runs up an elite Academy in sport

says to me. Look, we've got this problem with parents screaming from the sidelines.

Okay. Very common actually

Diana Hill: [00:36:32] yeah.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:36:34] over eager parents. Right.

Diana Hill: [00:36:36] Giving advice to their children. That's against the coach's advice. Yes.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:36:39] Yeah. Well, and when it's against the coach's advice, the coaches are nuts. Sometimes I think there's a, sometimes I think there's a competition between coaches and parents, and the coaches like to do the screaming. Right? And they don't like it when the parents do, but that's another story. But here, the guy said to me.

Look, we've got to do something about this because the parents are sometimes are right out of hand and they cut across what we're doing. Okay, fair enough. It's a problem. So I said, look, well, why don't we get together with, parents. Okay. And

we want to give them advice too. Maybe not shout out so much.

Right? But if we tell them to do that, they going to feel resentful. You can see it coming. So we've got a few parents together. he said, well, do you want to facilitate that discussion? I said, yeah, that's great because you're part of the problem, so to speak. You're the coach. So I sat down with them and I said, look,

we have

something here that we want to discuss with you and possibly give you some advice about, but we first want to, no, how you feel about it. So now this is the innocence. Sorry. Let's see. How do you guys feel about standing on the side of the field

and wanting to give the kids advice? How'd you feel about that?

Wow. I don't know whether it was, Oh kid. We drove all the way. I drove 75 miles to buy, buy, buy, buy, buy. I want him to do better and blah, blah, blah. He's my kid. So we elicited from them. What sense they made at this whole thing. Then I asked permission to give them some advice.

Look from the, from the club's point of view,

our advice is let's try and find a different way of going about this

because it's not helping the kids when we see them confused between the coaches and the parents.

So our advice here is that we must solve this problem. That is our advice. This is really important. And the coaching team have decided they want to solve this problem in some way

and we suggest,

did you parents come up with some kind of way of, of handling this differently? that's the end of the provision.

Okay. Of the advice. So this is advice giving the group, what do you guys make of it? And what we heard from the parents was changed org.

They weren't agreeing altogether with that. We had, Oh, I see the point. So it's different kinds of setting. We ended up, we're the solution, which one of the parents suggested and we said, yeah, okay, let's go with that.

Which was, the parents have a huddle. All the practice session starts and one of the coaches has the huddle with the parents, explains to them what they want to do in this particular practice session so that the parents feel part of it.

So, you know, we had a good outcome there, but that's what the group, but with an individual, it's much easier.

First, ask them what they understand about this whole situation. Asked their permission to give them some advice or feedback, give them the advice of feedback, and then critically listen for all your worth. About what sense they make it good and that's when you hear them expressing change talk and motivational interviewing and advice giving become merged.

Diana Hill: [00:39:52] And I think what you're, what you're pointing to is these, the importance of, even when you're giving advice, you're giving freedom to choose this component of autonomy.

Even when you're giving advice, you're connecting and having the sense of

relatedness, and then you're also checking for competence. So those three components of sort of self determination of what motivates people, you're using that even when giving advice and it's a different way of getting advice. than telling. The kid to not wear the muddy shoes. That's great.

one of the actual techniques that I do apply from graduate school, of all of this specific recipes, but one recipe that I do use on a regular basis is the ruler. And the reason why I like that, is that . It assesses not only for, uh, where people are in terms of their motivation for change, but it also can be a tool to increase motivation for change.

Can you talk about the ruler sort of technique, how you use it

Stephen Rollnick: [00:40:53] yeah, I mean, it's, it's a device, you know, I don't know where it came from. Okay. It might've, the idea wasn't ours. I think the idea of scaling things on a, on a scale from zero to 10 is nothing new. I think it probably solution focused therapy. Who knows where it came from. But what we find in motivational interviewing is a thing of beauty when you use this device. Because you can ask someone a question. How important is it for you to make this change on a scale from low to 10 Nord is not at all important. 10 is very important. Give me a number. And they get home usually somewhere around the middle because people often feed them . Hmm. The thing of beauty is what happens next and how you integrate listening into it. Because if you say to somebody, well, why did you give yourself a score of five and not zero?

You hear change talk. You'll hear them saying, why this is at least important to some degree. And then you can say, what would have to happen for that school to go up from five to six or seven and do you hear change talk again?

So it's a very neat way of having a conversation with someone where you. Use a scale, a kind of a visual, uh, a device for helping them explore why or how they can change.

And so you can use a rule of full, lots of different questions about how motivated you are, how walking today's, how confident do you feel.

I even had a Swedish, a Swedish colleague who says he uses a ruler when he's with somebody to work out how helpful and engage them or so he goes, nought to 10 naught is not at all helpful. This conversation, 10 is very helpful. What number would you like? So

Diana Hill: [00:42:47] I use with my kids and, and it's just a quick, easy assessment of where they are. But then asking that first question is, why is it a five and not a one helps sort of them do the change talk. But the other question that I really like is, what would you need for it to get to be a nine or, or 10 how to, how to increase it. And then they start talking about specifics around how they could increase their own change.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:43:11] Absolutely. It's absolutely, it's a neat example of how stuff that come comes from psychology can be used in everyday life. And that's what's happened to us. And particularly to me, a, you know, as a cofounder of motivational interviewing, I've sort of gone on this 30 40 year journey in which I

felt, wow, what about screw teachers when they want to help the kid to solve a math problem?

Where does empathic listening come in there? Where does the scaling procedure come in there? And now with sports coaches, exactly the same set of techniques can be used to get the best out of athletes and coaches.

Diana Hill: [00:43:59] Another area where you've done a lot of work is with pediatric AIDS, and that seems like it's very meaningful work. Can you talk about your experience there and what, what you're doing in that arena?

Stephen Rollnick: [00:44:09] Oh, Diana, it just, you know, it was devastating. Uh, you know, by, by the turn of the century, um, millions of people were losing their lives in Africa. Okay. And the most vulnerable and the most neglected were kids or some distance. And you know, even today, this is very serious. Even today, you know, there are.

Two Oh one six

a million kids with AIDS in Africa that are untreated is about a million that are in treatment, but about a million that are untreated. So these dreadful, um, figures and stories became . I became familiar with them through going back home to South Africa quite a lot and developed with a couple of colleagues, um, and network for treatment teams because the people at the front end of this, they are the ones who are dealing daily with devastatingly difficult situations, poverty, stigma, Mmm

And also the really important need for people to take. Antiretrovirals, which you'd, by 2005 they were on, they were on track. And now it was just a question of engaging people in persuading them to take these medicines. And so I spent a solid 10 year period, um, in that field, and I could say I had my heart broken and lifted in equal measure.

You know, it was broken by that, by the sheer scale of the problem and the tragedies that these people, uh, will well working with. And it was lifted immensely by the spirits of these doctors, nurses and counseling working in difficult circumstances and, Hmm. Yeah. In a gentle way. We help them to be more reflective about how they speak to people.

Because you can imagine it's easy for them to pull out what we call the writing reflex. You know, the inappropriate advice giving and try and hammer away at people and they don't like it. And so next month I'm going out to meet these provincial ministers of health. And so that for again, we taking them through a motivational interviewing workshop in person, they are getting to experience it. And then we're going to discuss the policy implications in IX state. The thing here is not, I don't mean to wave a motivational interviewing flag at all. It's not about that. It's about looking after the wellbeing of practitioners are out there working in difficult circumstances and giving them every support

do a better job.

That's a summary of like 10, 15 years of, um, tremendously rewarding and heartbreaking experience.

Diana Hill: [00:47:07] Yeah, and as you mentioned in, in the field of healthcare,

sometimes maybe you only have one or two sessions or one or one hour with someone or 15 minutes with someone. Is motivational interviewing effective even in that short period of time.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:47:22] Yes. I think the evidence does point to it. Yes, certainly there's research studies, but you know, literally in the space of two, three minutes, it is possible to engage with somebody.

Raise whatever subject you'd like to and help them to consider and face change.

And you have to be super, you have to be more skillful if you've got less time. But funnily enough, here's a paradox

more usually his listening skills the quickest is your progress.

Okay. And that's. Something that's quite difficult for people to take on board because they think, uh, listening means I've got to sit back and just let the person talking. I don't have time for it. But if you use the kind of list we described, the motivational interviewing that comes from Rogers, that my son in the back of the car uses your progress.

It will be quicker.

Diana Hill: [00:48:17] Kelly Wilson, often says, we don't have a lot of time, so we need to slow down. And there's something relieving about taking that pressure off also for the therapist or counselor that they don't have to have it all figured out and then apply it, that they open up the space or for the person that's sitting with them and slow it down a bit.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:48:37] Okay. In that state, you don't have time not to listen.

Diana Hill: [00:48:41] Right. Exactly. So I think motivational interviewing is, is best learned through, through a demonstration or experience. And, uh, I'm wondering if we could maybe just demonstrate some of the skills you've talked about today. Uh, with me around something and do a quick little motivational interviewing.

Example, either. You could give an example of what not to do first and then an example of what to do, and then we could talk about just the specific skills that we, that you're using what do you think? Okay.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:49:11] It's a half crazy idea, but I don't mind doing it.

Diana Hill: [00:49:15] Is it half crazy?

Stephen Rollnick: [00:49:15] no. With pleasure. let's go and, let's see.

Diana Hill: [00:49:19] Okay. We'll make it quick. We'll go fast and speed through it.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:49:23] Well we'll do it in two minutes. Will change your life in two

Diana Hill: [00:49:26] Good. I will appreciate that

Stephen Rollnick: [00:49:27] No. so why didn't you think of a scenario in which something that, um, it's like something that. You feel two ways about a sort of change? Nothing too personal because we don't, we don't want to engage in site, personal cycle. Nothing too personal, but nothing too superficial. Okay? Nothing

like my hair color or something like that.

You know, something you feel you really, yeah. You've thought you'd like to change, but you're not so sure. Or other people at any rate think maybe you should make this change and then. I think what you're asking me to do is first show you how not to do it and then try and demonstrate good practice.

Okay.

And we could, we could tweak it a little bit and make it something that you definitely, you know, I know you think people, well, people want you to make this change, but you definitely don't want to. That's a ramp up. The pressure on me to do a good job. Okay. That that's, that's quite a common on that.

Why is it that that place that gives me quite a high bar Mmm. You've provoked me into trying to do a good job.

Diana Hill: [00:50:43] Well, I've got one that I have a good amount of resistance around. Uh, uh, which people are saying I need to do. My friends, my family, my, my, uh, partner, which is reduced the number of clients that I'm seeing

Stephen Rollnick: [00:50:57] Yeah.

Diana Hill: [00:50:58] to make space for some other things that I'm doing in my life professionally, and also make more space for my friends, my family, and my partner.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:51:07] so these people are, are really pointing out to you a problem. I'm just wondering, can you see, if you look down the line, can you see, do you know anything about burnout?

Diana Hill: [00:51:20] Uh, yes, I experience it currently. Yes. I know a lot about burnout.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:51:25] really? So you're really experiencing burnout and, and you know, it's really important that when you see the warning signals, you do something about that. Can't you see that?

Diana Hill: [00:51:35] Yeah. I probably should do something about it. I see the warning signals. Yeah.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:51:40] You can see the warning signals. Okay. And I think the important thing is to start making a plan. You know, start. At least cutting back just a little bit, because if you can see the warning signals, um, that really Chris day,

Diana Hill: [00:51:55] I've tried that a million times. I make a plan, I cut back and it doesn't work. Cause then somebody needs to see me. They're having a crisis. I fit them in. And then, um, that just doesn't, it hasn't worked for me.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:52:07] Okay. So what that tells us that you've got a really good heart, you actually being a little bit soft. So the question then becomes, how can you toughen up here? Yeah. Is it sounds like you need to toughen up and I'm just wondering, would you mind I, I, you know,

Diana Hill: [00:52:23] Yeah. But I don't want to toughen up. I kind of like having a soft door. I love what I do. That's the problem is I love what I do. And so, um, yeah.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:52:33] Can we, can we stop there?

Diana Hill: [00:52:34] Yeah. It's good.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:52:35] Say if we step out of that, what, what I know I can tell because I've got visual contact with you while we're doing this, the listeners maybe don't realize, I can tell from your, from your face that the harder I try and persuade you,

the more you tend to back off.

Mmm. This is something that you run bivalent about and.

If I adopt the change side and try and persuade you, I heard three or four butts in that conversation, but I mean, the, the most important thing is how did you feel?

Diana Hill: [00:53:09] Uh, I felt, I felt resistant. I felt like you weren't getting me. I felt like you were trying to, you had some idea of what I should, what I should do. I felt like you were psycho educating me about burnout. And I'm like, of course I know about burnout

Stephen Rollnick: [00:53:25] yeah, yeah,

Diana Hill: [00:53:26] and, uh, and yeah, I could feel the bets. And so that, yeah, I felt, and I felt just tense in my body.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:53:31] Yup. Yeah. And I mean, I, I was trying to be a little bit extreme zones being very insensitive there, but you know, without trying to parody advice-giving that is often what happens or stop listening to you because I felt I had the solution to your problem.

I fell into most of the traps.

That we've identified in motivation to be and was using something called the righting reflex. See a problem. Boom. Now look, we stopped there, but we could have carried on and it could have, and we would have both been left with a feeling that time was wasted. So the question is, how can we make better use of the time?

So should I try and have a go now at sort of variation of motivational interviewing?

Diana Hill: [00:54:20] Yes. My family will thank you for it.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:54:23] Right? Want to call your partner? Yeah, whatever. Sorry, I was making a joke. No, Diana. Yeah. I know. What, what's the essence of this, of this conflict for you?

Try and help me understand it.

Diana Hill: [00:54:37] essence of the conflict is that I love too many things. I love my work. I enjoy my work. I find it incredibly rewarding to me, and I also love my family and my friends and want to spend time with them, and I feel like there's not enough time to do it all. Um, yeah.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:54:56] so it's like, it's like not so easy for you to fit into your life, the things that you value.

Diana Hill: [00:55:05] Right. Yeah. It's not, I always say, I wish I had just one more day a week to fit it all in.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:55:11] So the ideal for you would be to sort of

carry on doing your clinical work. Yeah. . Parts of your life going without having to make any kind of radical reduction in the amount of clients that you see.

Diana Hill: [00:55:24] well, yeah, that, I guess that would be the ideal. And I, and I see all the consequences of not reducing my clients because I end up feeling spread too thin and in all the domains.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:55:39] Yeah. And so it doesn't really feel like

the solution to just try and keep fitting everything in.

Diana Hill: [00:55:47] no,

Stephen Rollnick: [00:55:48] Yeah.

It must be. These may be some other way of going about this.

Diana Hill: [00:55:55] Yeah. Except for every time I try and make a change, I, I fall back into the same pattern again. That, that, that's the struggle for me is that I want it to be different. And I feel that that's it. That there's a possibility of it being different or, I don't know. I don't know if there's a possibility of it being different cause I keep on falling back into the same pattern.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:56:15] Yeah. And so it's not like you don't see the need for change. It's the. You haven't found a way of making it happen.

Diana Hill: [00:56:24] exactly. Yes we can. We can stop there but that's exactly it.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:56:32] Yup.

Diana Hill: [00:56:33] What would you do next?

Stephen Rollnick: [00:56:35] Next.

It seems like the difficulty for you is not the why, but the how.

Diana Hill: [00:56:42] Uh huh.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:56:43] Okay. What I did was I used one reflection, empathic listening statement after another. Don't think of, I don't think I asked you any questions. Just use impact.

Diana Hill: [00:56:55] It was amazing though. It felt like, like a massage for my, for my struggle because , I just felt really understood and I felt like you were taking me some of that somewhere. Was that you weren't asking questions, you were just reflecting, huh?

Stephen Rollnick: [00:57:08] I was just using impact listening statements. I felt we were trying to get to a shared understanding of what this challenge was for you, because I didn't, didn't know, but the empathic listening helped me. To develop that shared understanding, which sounds like it was gained to become, not about why, but about how.

Mmm. You could make a change for that. You don't lose the wonderful clinical work that, that, that you value. And at the same time have space for other things in your life.

Diana Hill: [00:57:46] Yeah, that's exactly it. Yeah, and so. Yeah. And so the, so the foundation is using the empathic listening maybe to get to the why, but then it's also doing that next level of assessment of do they, do they feel like they can carry this out? And you can see that with something like alcohol use, maybe they come in really clear, this is not working for me in my life, but not really clear on how to make the change.

Stephen Rollnick: [00:58:11] And the Tinder depletion there, and it's a mistake is

either to jump in. With advice giving or to assume that because you know the why, the why is clear for you. We just got to talk practically about the how. Yeah. In truth, the why and the how tend to be kind of intermingled in your motivation's going to go up and down as in the moment as we speak, it's going to go up and down.

And so the next step would be to look at the how it used precisely the same techniques. It wouldn't, I wouldn't make any adjustment there if we had to spend two, three minutes talking about the how. Yeah. Very difficult compensation for you because obviously if the solution was that simple, you would have done it a long time ago.

Okay. Are we talking about delving into something deeply, personally or to you? When we talk about the how and you need space to wonder aloud with me how that might come about.

There might be a place for me to give you information and advice in that conversation. I would've waited. I would have held back from any advice giving because in the space of just a couple of minutes, we were getting pretty close to what the challenges.

Now I must give you the space. Just gently consider the how

Diana Hill: [00:59:36] so what would be a probing question for that? Like what? What would that question look like?

Stephen Rollnick: [00:59:40] Well, I w I wouldn't even, I wouldn't even need a question. I mean, you could use it um, but I would probably say something that you like. So this feels really important to you to do something about the balance in your life.

We're not losing things. And I'm just wondering,

That it's more to do with how.

You gain to do this. So I'm just wondering about in a curious way with you, and you can say, well, I'm, I'm on Mamba, so we'll gently ease into the how. But you could easily have a direct open question, which is, I wonder how you might do something about this, but notice it's wonder the word one day. It's not,

in fact it, it's, we are sharing.

Curious. Um, ideas about this. We're not firming everything up and I would be very mistaken in a conversation like this to imagine that we've got to finish it with you making an agreement to change.

Diana Hill: [01:00:44] Right?

Stephen Rollnick: [01:00:45] Okay. In that sense, it's not like the school shoes with the kid. Okay. Hmm. In this scenario, it's to leave you with the courage based on my.

Compassionate and caring attitude to face this for yourself with a conviction that the solution sits inside you.

Diana Hill: [01:01:10] yeah, and it is really a feeling of like you're saddling up right next to me. In a supportive way. So I feel kind of held in it, but that, yes, but the responsibility is, is still still in me. And it's so skillful. What you've done is you've taken this process of what felt very natural between the two of us, and then you've broken it down into what are, like you said, what are the ingredients of, what is Stephen Rollnick doing in that moment?

And that's what you do with your description, motivational interviewing, whether it's in your book or it's in your work with athletes when you write about that or it's work, the work with healthcare providers, when you write about that. That's what's I think really exciting is that we can learn how to do that.

It's not just sort of like this gift.

Stephen Rollnick: [01:01:55] Oh, you guys a technique that I never use was that okay. Affirmation was affirming you and really I just never got around to it, and I wasn't trying to be clever, so I had to be honest, never thought about it. But if I were to critique what I did, then it was a certain failure to put the strength lenses on in front of the problem solving lenses might've said to you something like this,

you've put a lot of effort into expressing your call values in your clinical work and nerd out.

Into your family life as well and get it somehow. It's somehow not balancing out.

No. What I say to begin with was an affirmation. I was trying a light on your good qualities and the effort that you've made. That would be an example of affirmation, and the logic here is that that skill in itself can have a tremendously powerful effect on people.

But it's wearing the lenses. That's important. The affirmation will come tripping off your tongue. If you wear the lenses, you can't think clever. Clever. I'm going to make an affirmation. Now, I've got really look at you is as somebody, wow. Good qualities and achievements and success in order to say it. So I've got to see you as a human being with strengths, not a client with problems.

Diana Hill: [01:03:23] exactly. And I love how in the in the coaching athletes book you, even you, you referenced this because there's a difference between affirmation and praise, which is what we, we tend to fall into the praise, which is good job. Great work. As, as opposed to actually affirming the person.

Stephen Rollnick: [01:03:42] Now that that that might be one of the biggest contributions of this book was sports coaches. That's the sort of feedback I'm getting because you know, when I was done in a cricket club, I know it's a, it's a sport that's foreign to you guys, but it's a lot like baseball, right? Except that one game takes five days, so let's not, let's talk about it.

Right? When I was done in a cricket club yesterday and one of the coaches said, what's this thing between, between affirmation and praise? The difference between that, and I said, look, we know at home. You don't have to sit in a sports field at home, at school, you're on the sports field. It's all this good job stuff.

Right. And it doesn't actually. Mmm, okay. It's like having a little drink. Right. It makes you feel gently intoxicated for a short while. Right? And then the effect wears off. And the athlete or the child, is it looking for more confirmation from you

that they've done a good job? In other words, it's a judgment that comes from the outside.

It's paused about your, how well you, you're done. And it carries the shadow shadow, uh, behavior from the coach or parent that if you haven't done well, you. That could get pointed out. Or if you don't get praised, you're not doing a good job. Okay. And school teachers, this is really important, you know, to just use praise all the time, like it's confetti.

I think they've done research and it demonstrates, I think this is Carol Dweck work, demonstrate that praise, that success is excessively used in particular ways, actually depresses performance. . What we found with affirmation is that it's not a judgment you post. It's simply shining a light on something that's already inside you.

So when I say to you, you've put a lot of effort into expressing your values in your clinical work and in really trying to be compassionate in your clinical work and indeed in the family that's around you. That's not praise. I'm not saying well done for doing that. I'm just saying that's the reality that is in you.

it has a very different effect on people.

Diana Hill: [01:05:58] Yeah. It creates the intrinsic motivation as opposed to the extrinsic motivator, which if then if no one's looking to praise you, then you're not really going to engage in the behavior. Right. As opposed to it coming from, from within. Yeah.

Stephen Rollnick: [01:06:12] Really I have come across elite athletes did. They became depressed when the praise dried up. Okay. And burnt out. Okay. I've also come across clients unintentionally from me. I can't say I did this intention. Have you seen enormously transformed by affirmation. So I'll give you one quick story. Okay. This is quite recent.

There's this guy with type two diabetes addicted to multiple drugs, okay. Or living in poverty. Two or three ex wives or girlfriends, two, three kids from each, and he's about to have a leg amputated. Early forties out of control type one diabetes. What a clinician or any other human being would regard as a walking nightmare.

I mean, he's life expectancy was greatly reduced. and I'd seen him quite a few times and it was very difficult not to get overwhelmed by the gravity of his problems. And just hearing him talk about them.

One day he walked up and the S, by the way, the surgeons didn't want to take his leg off because he was changed smoking.

Okay. Right. Dreadful situation. One day it comes back to me and you say, Steve, I stopped smoking when I was in. You are joking. That is, that is, that must've taken some effort rather than, well done.

Okay. That must have taken some effort. It's an affirmation. Okay. And he said, no. It took no effort at all. It was something that you said that changed everything for me, Steven. I said, you're joking. What did I say? He said, as I got up last time to say goodbye to you, you stood up. You shook my hand, and you said you were a dignified person, which I must've said, I don't know why I must've noticed it.

Right? There's dignity in the face of these troubles. He said, I walked out and I said to myself.

I am a dignified person and no one's going to take my dignity away and I'm going to use my dignity and I'm stopping smoking. You stopped smoking. Okay? I didn't tell you that story to say how wonderful is Steve's use of exclamation? I wasn't even conscious of it, okay? I must have had the strength lens is on, on seeing something beautiful inside him. I simply pointed it out.

So I think affirmation is something, I don't know where it comes from, Diana. I must be honest. I tried to see where that technique comes from. I don't understand where in psychology it comes from. I reckon that's one of those jewels that's inside all of us. I reckon good parents and teachers and coaches do use it sometimes, but we've been conditioned to overuse, to use praise instead.

just Coon it on the praise, right. And practice affirmation and you'll notice people responding in a much more heartfelt a way.

Diana Hill: [01:09:13] Well, I think ultimately what we, what we crave is to be, to be seen and for someone to reflect what they, what they see and to see the goodness in us. And I think that that's actually one of your gifts is, um, bringing that, that heart to the field of psychology in, in, in this really, um. Impactful way in a global sense, but also in just a one on one personal sense that that you do at one-on-one with me, but then you're out there like changing the world in terms of pediatric AIDS. It's pretty phenomenal. I thank you for spending this time with us and sharing what you've shared with us on this show, and also thank you for your life's work and changing the lives that you have.

Stephen Rollnick: [01:10:01] No, honestly, Diana, I think honestly, really it was a pleasure. And do hope your listeners take a few nuggets out of it too. Mmm.

Enjoy using them in everyday life.

Diana Hill: [01:10:14] Thank you for listening to Psychologists Off The Clock.

Yael Schonbrun: [01:10:17] You can find us on iTunes, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Please help us out by writing a review on iTunes.

Jill Stoddard: [01:10:23] We'd like to thank our interns, Dr. Katharine Foley-Saldea and Dr Kati Lear.

Debbie Sorensen: [01:10:27] This podcast is for informational and entertainment purposes only and is not meant to be a substitute for mental health treatment. If you're having a mental health emergency dial 9 1 1. If you're looking for mental health treatment, please visit the resources on our webpage. We're at offtheclockpsych.com.