

Bringing Your Childhood to Work: How Attachment Shapes Our Working Lives, with Dr Judy Ho

Work in Progress Series, Episode 6.

Speakers: Dr Sanjay Popat and Dr Judy Ho.

[00:00:05] **Sanjay:** Hello, and welcome to the Work in Progress series as part of the Research and Innovation Podcast. My name is Dr Sanjay Popat, and I'm a Chartered Psychologist and research fellow specializing in mental health at work. Today, I'm joined by Dr Judy Ho. Dr Judy is a triple board certified and licensed Clinical and Forensic Neuropsychologist, a tenured professor at Pepperdine University, television and podcast host, and published author.

[00:00:30] **Sanjay:** Dr Judy conducts neuropsychological and psychodiagnostic evaluations, serves as an expert witness in legal cases, conducts clinical research, provides expert commentary to media, and is a sought-after public speaker. She's also the author of books like "Stop Self-Sabotage" and "The New Rules of Attachment."

[00:00:49] **Sanjay:** Dr Judy, welcome.

[00:00:50] **Judy:** Thank you so much, Dr Sanjay. I'm very excited to be here

[00:00:54] **Sanjay:** Thank you so much. I've really been looking forward to having you on because I saw there was a moment in your life where you were choosing between whether you wanted to study business or psychology, and I had that very same decision to make. So that crossroad feels particularly relevant for our conversation because psychology plays such an important role in explaining behaviour in the workplace.

[00:01:13] **Sanjay:** Dr Judy, you're an expert in attachment. We're a business school podcast, so a lot of our listeners are managers and leaders. They may not be familiar with this concept of attachment. So in simple terms, what does it mean?

[00:01:26] **Judy:** Attachment is really based on your first fundamental relationships as a human being. So this is talking about birth until roughly age six or even beyond, but those six years are generally thought of as very crucial for understanding the templates of life. What you need to do to be able to reach your goals, how people respond when you're in distress, how you can feel about the relationships in your life, and whether or not you feel safe to explore on your own, knowing that there's always a secure base to come back to.

[00:01:57] **Judy:** And this is especially important for us humans because we cannot thrive on our own for, well, arguably many years, until we're almost completely in adulthood. And it's something that's very special about our species that's not most of the animal species, where there's this very long period after birth where you still need to rely on the adults around you to take care of you.

[00:02:21] **Judy:** And that's why attachment, though, is so fundamental, because it truly is the key to your survival. And so the lessons that you learn in these early years tend to follow you into your later years and has an impact on how you work, how you play, how you cultivate relationships as you get older, and also how you feel about yourself and your self-concept

[00:02:48] **Sanjay:** And early research by Bowlby and Ainsworth and colleagues show that there are actually different styles of attachment. Could you briefly walk us through those different styles, both in terms of what is happening in childhood, but also the resultant attachment style itself?

[00:03:01] **Judy:** Sure. So roughly there are four attachment styles that the researchers found when they conducted these studies, with individuals who were basically toddlers. That was a really big part of the research sample. And based on their behaviours on how they separated and connected with their primary parental figures or caregiving figures, they were able to create these categories.

[00:03:28] **Judy:** And so secure attachment is essentially a child who is relatively trusting that their provider is going to come back, their relationship isn't damaged because a provider had to step away, and during the time that their provider is absent, they're still able to do some things somewhat independently, but they're very excited when their provider comes back, and that's because they have a strong relationship with their provider.

[00:03:56] **Judy:** And through that secure base, they're able to explore more, be able to interact with people outside of their providers and have more confidence in how they navigate their environment. Then there are three insecure attachment styles. The first is an anxious attachment style. So these toddlers, when their primary caregiver left the room, they tended to have a really hard time.

[00:04:19] **Judy:** They seemed somewhat inconsolable at times. They weren't able to explore quite as much, even if there was a friendly stranger who would come, and this is somebody that the parental figure actually already introduced them to before they stepped out of the room. So it's someone that, you know, essentially the, the symbolism is that this is a safe person.

[00:04:36] **Judy:** Your mommy or daddy is saying this is a safe person. And yet they just had a harder time navigating, and then when the provider came back, they clung to the provider a lot. They, they still showed distress even though they were back. And what this translates to is that these children tend to have a harder time navigating without the adults being around them constantly.

[00:04:57] **Judy:** They needed to feel the presence of the adult or ask for validation, and some of these types of behaviours will essentially follow them into adulthood and how they navigate their adult relationships and other types of tasks.

[00:05:09] **Judy:** The avoidant-attached children, this was a very interesting population because when their primary provider left the room, they almost seemed like they didn't care. They would continue to engage with the environment, play with toys. They might engage somewhat with the stranger that they were just introduced to by their parent. And then when their parent came back, they also kinda seemed like they didn't care that they were back. It just kinda seemed like they just didn't have much, kind of reaction at all.

[00:05:36] **Judy:** But later on, they did some supplemental studies, and they found that in these individuals, it wasn't that they didn't care, it's that outwardly they were suppressing their expression. So when they measured physiological markers like heart rate, and things like that, their heart rate was elevated.

[00:05:52] **Judy:** They were stressed when their provider wasn't in the room, but they were just trying to cover it up, and it was kind of a coping strategy. And so what we know about these children is that they weren't 100% sure that their provider could be counted on, or maybe they start to develop these ideas that their problems are burdening their providers.

[00:06:09] **Judy:** And even into adulthood, they tend to be ultra-independent. They tend to be more distrustful of closer relationships, and they generally value individualism over working with others.

[00:06:21] **Judy:** And the last category is always the most difficult one, because it was called disorganized attachment. And originally, the researchers just kind of dumped everybody into this category when they didn't quite match up to the other three styles we talked about. So it kind of became this catch-all residual category, which isn't very useful. But I think over time, I've developed the understanding in looking at other research as well as working with my patients, that the disorganized attachment isn't just a vacillation between anxious and avoidant, which is often what you see in pop literature. It's its own style. And the style of this type of child is that they feel like they're in constant fight or flight, so their nervous system doesn't have extended periods to calm down. And even very minor things that happen throughout their lives, their nervous system is almost always elevated.

[00:07:10] **Judy:** And so this sometimes can happen if their provider might have even been a source of potential trauma for the child, or there's just a lot of chaos. Even if the provider is not the one who perpetrated trauma, their, their everyday life is just very chaotic, so they feel like they always have to be on pins and needles.

[00:07:30] **Judy:** And this is something that also follows them into adulthood at times, where they view everyday activities and everyday interactions as if it was life or death. And of course, that can be really, really hard to move forward with goals when you're really just focused on survival 95% of the time.

[00:07:47] **Sanjay:** And at first glance, these sound like something that is naturally very relevant to childhood, to early life experiences. But why is attachment something that is

relevant to the workplace? Why is attachment something that we should care about in the workplace?

[00:08:00] **Judy:** I think that the misunderstanding about attachment theory is that it really only speaks to those early childhood behaviors as you just referred to, Dr. Sanjay. And of course, it has relevance in that timeframe. But because these are the first templates that people develop about how they're supposed to think about the world and themselves at a very early age, it tends to be the type of theory or idea that sticks more, and this is because human beings tend to have a confirmation bias. When you've developed a certain idea or a certain concept, you tend to look for similar things that might prove that concept to be true in your everyday life, and you might actually disregard the things that could challenge that existing idea. And this also goes back to the idea that as humans, we are cognitive misers.

[00:08:49] **Judy:** Our brain has to conserve energy because it has to leave some stores available in case a true emergency happens. And so if given the opportunity, your brain is always going to take the least resistant route. And that's not to call us lazy, that's a survival strategy. And so what happens is these ideas that are already preexisting in your early childhood just tend to follow you because they're already ideas that you hold, and it takes actual cognitive effort to reflect and say, "Well, this is not my environment anymore."

[00:09:22] **Judy:** This may have been true of me in my early childhood years, but now I'm much more in control of my environment, and the people in my life are behaving differently than the primary caregivers in my life before. And maybe it's time to revisit the script." But people don't really do that without conscious energy.

[00:09:40] **Judy:** And so this is why in adulthood it affects so many different aspects, because if you have certain beliefs about yourself that when I call for help, people don't come to help me. That's, let's say that's one of the beliefs or templates that you've developed. In adulthood, you can see how this applies in the workplace.

[00:09:56] **Judy:** Like, "I'm not gonna work with anybody 'cause I don't expect them to do what it takes, and so I'll just do everything." And as they've gone through their life, whenever they see any kind of relationship or experience that seems to confirm this idea, that's the one that gets cemented in their memories.

[00:10:15] **Judy:** They're not keeping those where, for example, the colleagues did step up and were very helpful, because your brain is trying to ignore things that doesn't seem consistent with its existing templates.

[00:10:26] **Sanjay:** That makes a lot of sense. And I just wanna drill a bit deeper into some of these natural areas of organizational behavior. So I think a big topic is often leadership. So can leaders become attachment figures to employees? Is there this leader-employee attachment relationship as there was a parent-child attachment relationship?

[00:10:48] **Judy:** Definitely. So oftentimes in the therapeutic world, we talk about this idea called transference, and transference means that you're transferring your ideas about a significant person in your life onto another person that may serve similar roles or just remind you somehow of that person. And so certainly supervisors, managers, and bosses can

represent a caregiver figure because they are responsible for important elements of your work life, and especially if they have certain personality traits or just ideas about them that seem to represent one of your primary caregivers, then that transference is gonna become even more apparent. But because of the parallel in the roles that they take in the workplace versus in the home, that they're kind of the manager of the workplace, whereas your primary caregiver was the manager of the home, when their actions can dictate some of how you do your activities and how you go about your day, and that would be similar again in the childhood environment, this replicates very easily and quickly. And so interestingly, the supervisors, managers, and bosses can be a person who actually helps you to repair any insecure attachment relationships that you've had in an earlier time in your life, but they could also possibly make your insecure attachment a little bit worse and more severe. And similarly, the manager or boss, they have their own attachment imprints too, and so there's a bidirectional effect.

[00:12:22] **Judy:** So if there's two insecurely attached people trying to interact with one another in a supervisory-supervisee relationship, oftentimes you will see that, you know, certain things may work well, certain things may not work well, but it can be often in very predictable ways.

[00:12:37] **Sanjay:** And my own research area is in the domain of burnout, and we often talk about burnout occurring when demands at work exceed resources at work. How does attachment play into this? Are certain attachment styles more susceptible to burnout perhaps?

[00:12:51] **Judy:** I think that in general, most of the insecure attachment styles are more susceptible to burnout because they don't end up allocating their resources as effectively as people who are securely attached. So people who are anxiously attached, a lot of their resources ends up being devoted to things like people pleasing and getting validation. So for example, instead of spending most of their time working through a project or a task, they're sometimes more concerned with, you know, what did that comment mean in that meeting from? And should I go and try to talk to this person and make sure that we're still okay? They may need more validation for their work at every step, so even though their manager has given them free reign after giving them the assignment, they may need to check in more to make sure that they're doing it right, even though their manager fully trusts that they will implement this the way that they want it to. For someone with avoidant attachment, they are more prone to burnout because their resources are devoted to trying to do everything on their own.

[00:13:48] **Judy:** And so again, when there is the ability to ask somebody for help or maybe just to defer parts of your task to someone else, and that is actually very appropriate given your role and what is expected of the project, they may have a really hard time doing that, and then they become more susceptible to burnout because they have such a high cognitive load and a workload that they, they don't even need to be carrying. And then with individuals who have disorganized attachment because they are in fight or flight oftentimes and their nervous system's always a little elevated, as I alluded to earlier, it makes it harder to think beyond just survival. So it's harder to keep your eye on the goal of whatever the project or the assignment is, when really they're just kind of feeling like they're overwhelmed all the time by even more simple tasks.

[00:14:37] **Judy:** And so all of the insecure attachment styles are more prone to burnout, but the mechanism is different for each one.

[00:14:46] **Sanjay:** I think that's so interesting 'cause we often talk about workload in terms of burnout. We often conflate the two, but actually there are these individual differences like personality, like attachment styles, that would certainly benefit from future research. So thank you for that, Dr. Judy.

[00:15:00] **Sanjay:** And we often hear the term narcissist used a lot in workplaces now, particularly around difficult colleagues, difficult leaders. Do you think that narcissistic workplace behavior is really just a question of attachment, or is there more going on there that meets the eye?

[00:15:16] **Judy:** Great question, and as you also probably know, Dr. Sanjay, narcissism has been thrown around much more colloquially than maybe it was first intended in the clinical literature. We have something called narcissistic personality disorder and narcissistic personality traits, and there's clinical dimensions to that, and there's a dimensionality, a spectrum to that. And, there is some research that suggests that individuals who end up in high-powered leadership positions, they have some more narcissistic qualities, but not all narcissistic qualities are completely antisocial or not effective for some reason. It's just really about how it expresses and how the person recognizes it or has insight about it. When we talk about the relationship to attachment theory, I think that narcissism or narcissistic traits can oftentimes be displayed in individuals who have a really strong avoidant attachment. And it's not necessarily that they think they're better than everyone else. The mechanism is that they don't feel like they can trust anyone else. But sometimes in the language that they use and the way that they behave, people see it as narcissism because it seems like they just don't care about anybody. It's not that they don't care, they're just afraid to lean on someone else. And so I think that that can cause a lot of conflict, a lot of misunderstandings. And so I, I think that for the predominance of people who might be displaying narcissistic qualities, it's not the true narcissism where we think about it as an overt narcissism, where they truly think that they're the best in the room and they don't want to listen to anybody else's thoughts or feelings. It's oftentimes coming from a more defensive or protective place. So there's a term for this called defensive narcissism, and that's probably the predominance of narcissistic individuals that we see. And it's coming from a place of insecurity or mistrust rather than, "I truly think I'm the best in the world."

[00:17:09] **Sanjay:** Thank you for that, Dr. Judy. Yeah, I think, so many people at work - they're, they're trying to repair their old emotional wounds. And I think once you see it like that, it's very difficult to unsee that. And there was some research published in the Journal of Organizational Behaviour several years ago now, and it said that, yes, leaders can be attachment figures, yes, colleagues can be attachment figures, but the organization itself may also act as an attachment figure.

[00:17:34] **Sanjay:** So, for example, during a job loss or a major restructure, that attachment relationship is actually between the employee and the organization to which they belong. What are your thoughts on that, probably from having provided therapy to people going through these kinds of situations?

[00:17:50] **Judy:** That's a very interesting idea, and I think that it, it plays out because the organization is the network from all of these relationships, where they're derived from. And so it makes sense that in itself it's almost like an overarching relationship.

[00:18:03] **Judy:** And a lot of people do identify with the places that they work. A lot of people are very proud of the places that they work. Both you and I work at universities. You know, there's certainly like a university pride, and sort of that idea of the whole organization being something that a person, an employee, could either be attached to or not attached to. And so I think that this is especially relevant when your relationship with your organization, is not just one or two relationships, it's the idea of your whole lifestyle, right?

[00:18:37] **Judy:** So there's certain organizations where, yes, you have your managers and the colleagues that you see every day, but then there's also community building events. There's a huge sense of organizational pride that gets talked about, you know, frequently in the workplace. And so then it reinforces this idea of the organization as an attachment figure in and of itself.

[00:18:55] **Judy:** And so I oftentimes talk about separation from a job, whether it's willful and, and even self-initiated, like a retirement or something, versus of course being let go, that that is still a grief or loss process for many people. It's a huge transition, and this is where a lot of their attachment wounds can come up, things that they haven't dealt with, that they thought that they had kept in check or they had already processed.

[00:19:20] **Judy:** Sometimes these types of things will come back up in those types of circumstances.

[00:19:25] **Sanjay:** Yeah, I think the more that I'm talking with you, the more I'm kind of reflecting on the fact that modern workplaces often unintentionally reward anxious attachment. So, overworking, people-pleasing, constant availability, fear of disappointing others. I feel that's almost an inbuilt sense of, of where we are in this, in this day and place.

[00:19:44] **Sanjay:** And I think all of this begs the question then that can attachment styles change? And not to kind of beat you to the punch, Dr. Judy, but in your book you say that secure attachment and all its benefits are achievable at any age and stage of your life. Now, no doubt a lot of that will be to do with therapeutic techniques, so what you call reparenting your inner child.

[00:20:03] **Sanjay:** But is there anything that organizations or leaders or HR can do to help foster healthier attachment in the workplace?

[00:20:10] **Judy:** Definitely. I wrote this book because I wanted people to know that attachment styles is not just a label that follows you forever.

[00:20:17] **Judy:** A lot of times people see it almost like a personality trait that's unlikely to change, and I would argue that even personality traits are subject to change, but I understand this idea that personality traits tend to be more long-standing for most people, and people also identify themselves with their personality traits, and I just don't want people to get stuck in

identifying themselves with a type of insecure attachment when all of us are capable of changing. I think that in terms of organizations and managers and how they might be able to assist in the process is really just to have, first of all, more awareness of attachment dynamics in the workplace. And this is not to excuse poor behaviour, poor performance, or, you know, bad behavior towards colleagues and bosses, but it's more just understanding where the root cause might be coming from and trying to address the root cause, but also taking an approach where, the whole organization gets psychoeducation about it, not just the people that you're trying to help, right?

[00:21:12] **Judy:** Because it's also not your job as the boss or the organization to necessarily treat all of your employees' neuroses. We all have them.

[00:21:23] **Judy:** And it's kind of up to ourselves to deal with that. But I do think that it is important for an organization, because of their ability to do so and to set an example, to show their employees that we can talk about mental health and workplace dynamics and that that is a common conversation that we can have.

[00:21:40] **Judy:** And without having to get into details or admit individual concerns that they may be struggling with, that we can just talk about that, the fact that there's a relationship. Of course there's a relationship. And you're also gonna be bringing out the best in your employees if you have those discussions.

[00:21:56] **Judy:** And so many of the organizations that I've worked with just started with, you know, even just having some workshops or seminars about burnout or about mental health, about attachment in the workplace, and just to kind of start the conversation. Some of them will follow up with, you know, follow-up conversations after the presenter leaves, and they'll kind of have their own discussion. Some of them will have book clubs that highlight books and book discussions on these topics. Some of them will also have, you know, meetings that start with a little brief check-in, right? And it's just meant to say, "How are you doing today?" You know, "How are you feeling? What do you need the most from us?"

[00:22:31] **Judy:** And everybody has their own styles of doing it, but I think that it just normalizes these kinds of conversations, and that can really help. And then when you are in a more individualized manager-employee relationship, to the extent that it feels comfortable to bring that up and to the extent that an organizations already set up that this is a normal conversation to have, it's okay to talk about the things that might be harder for you in terms of what's truly affecting the productivity or your ability to trust one another. And even without using attachment language, we can have some of these more honest conversations about how the work relationship is going, because that is such a huge driver of not only productivity but workplace satisfaction. There's been many studies that have been done, and you may be aware of many of them already, Dr. Sanjay, where when people are really connected to the people that they work with, they just, they're happier at work, they show up better, they're more effective, and they help more people at work. I mean, those are kind of the high points of these types of studies. And so you're only benefiting the organization, you're benefiting the workplace, and you're creating a better environment for everybody.

[00:23:36] **Sanjay:** Absolutely. And I know we're here to talk about attachment, but I'd be remiss if I didn't briefly ask you about your time working with forensic populations, and what

I'm assuming involves assessing criminal behaviour, maybe psychopathy or sociopathy, where there really is this low empathy, lack of remorse, and tendency to manipulate.

[00:23:55] **Sanjay:** How has all of that work changed how you think about behaviour within organizations? Are some of our leaders psychopathic, or is that just a pop psychology comment?

[00:24:04] **Judy:** Yes. Well, I think it's both. I think that there's a pop psychology element to it, but also, similar to people who might have narcissistic traits, people who have some psychopathic traits, they do tend to show up in higher proportions in leadership positions because they're able to get there due to a variety of reasons.

[00:24:23] **Judy:** People who are, people are carriers of psychopathic traits, they tend to be very dynamic and they make people believe in their message. And also they generally do whatever it takes to reach their goal. So if their goal is to become a leader, they're gonna do it no matter what, no matter who they might hurt in the process, right?

[00:24:43] **Judy:** And so they do exist in higher proportions in organizations, but I don't think that all of it is problematic. And I think it really depends on what else is in place for this individual as they were growing up, as well as other models and other, other structures of their environment. So there was this, there was this researcher, his name is Dr James Fallon, and he found that he actually has, quote-unquote, "a psychopathic brain," meaning that there were certain brain networks and brain structures that represented what we see in psychopathic samples versus non-psychopathic samples. Then he scanned a bunch of his family members' brains, and a lot of them had these types of structures and, and it, it all was bearing out in these imaging studies. But he is a highly productive, highly empathetic individual, and he credited that to his upbringing, having parents who emphasize empathy and care, and also having a wife who basically when he does something that he himself calls maybe an expression of his psychopathic trait, his wife will kinda, you know, get there and say, "Hey, you know what?"

[00:25:48] **Judy:** That was very... That, that was not appropriate what you just said to this person," or, "We need to do this and we need to make sure we build community around this person." And so with that type of environmental encouragement and even people who actually remind him of things that are pro-social versus antisocial, it actually has helped him to essentially, overcome maybe some of the biological traits or predictors of perhaps more negative behavior.

[00:26:15] **Judy:** And so I think that that's possible for a large part of the population. There's always some outliers, those rare outliers where no matter how much you rally around an individual and even with the most positive environment, they're still going to do horrible criminal things. But I think that there, there's a bandwidth for most people to possibly have improvement except for that very small proportion.

[00:26:36] **Sanjay:** That's absolutely fascinating. It could be a whole episode in and of itself, so thank you for that. Just zooming a bit further out, I saw that one of your speaking topics, your keynote topics, is mental health in the workplace. Is there anything that you haven't

mentioned that you've learnt there that you would advise organizations, to improve mental health more generally, just outside of attachment?

[00:26:56] **Judy:** Well, it's interesting that you mentioned one of your areas of expertise, which is on burnout, and I've been speaking a lot about burnout in my recent discussions just I think because it's such a big issue in the workplace that people are trying to conquer. And I would say that one thing that, I've found is extremely helpful is really starting to be able to witness what burnout actually looks like in your coworkers and yourself, because sometimes people don't see the signs. And so this has been a big topic of, you know - and when you do see the signs, how should you try to intervene, either as, for yourself or for a coworker? And we should say something. We should feel comfortable enough to, to bring it up, maybe not in a big work meeting, but, you know, one-to-one. Like, "I've noticed that you've been more irritable or things just felt more overwhelming for you lately. Is there anything I can do?" Right? So instead of, starting the conversation from a place of accusation or presuming that they have depression or whatever the case might be, focus on the behaviours you witness and then ask the individual what they think about that or how you might be able to assist. I feel like that particular piece of dialogue, even though it seems so simplistic, can be so helpful to people so that they can feel like somebody sees what they're dealing with and that they're human, you know?

[00:28:10] **Judy:** And then also just realizing that all of us probably deal with some dimension of burnout from time to time, and the people who are the most prone to burnout are the people who love their jobs because they're the ones who actually end up taking on more.

[00:28:21] **Judy:** As opposed to the ones who really just see their job as, "This is my job. It's my nine to five, and I'm just gonna do what's needed, and I'm gonna go home and enjoy the rest of my life." It's the people who actually find purpose in their work that they oftentimes are burnt out the most, and that usually surprises people too.

[00:28:35] **Sanjay:** Yeah, myself included. There's a real paradox there. You know, love your work and you get rewarded with more work. Just a few final questions to finish, Dr. Judy. So we have a lot of experts on this show, but I think it's always good to ask some questions about their journey, as I think this often inspires a lot of our listeners.

[00:28:53] **Sanjay:** So this is the "Work in Progress" series. What part of you is still a work in progress, either professionally or personally?

[00:29:02] **Judy:** Great question. I see us all as work in progress forever, I think. So I don't think that your work and self-development is ever done. I feel like there's a lot of things that are still in progress with me. I think one of the things is really learning to have balance in my life because I, I would probably be what most people would call a workaholic, and really trying to find balance, but also understanding there's so much I'm still excited about in my career and wanting to do those things, but also realizing that that may not be the best when you're overwhelmed with your schedule and have too much on your plate all the time.

[00:29:37] **Judy:** And so how do we manage that better? And, and how do we find purpose in some of the other things that are enjoyable about life? I feel like there was times where I

maybe felt guilty about doing my hobbies because I had so many responsibilities, but I now understand more than ever that my hobbies are really what enrich my life, but also help me to face the next workday in a better way. So that's a constant struggle and a balance that I'm trying to find. I also think that for a person who has been so over-identified with work, really challenging myself to broaden my self-concept, you know, and being able to think about myself in all of these other different domains. And so I have a toddler.

[00:30:21] **Judy:** He's not a toddler anymore. I think he's almost five. Is that a toddler? I don't even know anymore. But, you know, he's a young child and, you know, being a parent has been the most rewarding element of my life ever. And so really just focusing on some of these other things and what I want to impart with him, and it's, it's really been a time of deep reflection for me.

[00:30:45] **Judy:** And so I, I think it's, it's that idea of not really being afraid of it when your, when your life changes and also not being afraid to reflect and look at what's underneath. Those are the kinds of things that I'm working on now.

[00:30:58] **Sanjay:** And just related to that, we, we ask all our guests this question. If your life was a book and where you're at right now was a chapter in that book, what would that chapter be called, Dr. Judy?

[00:31:10] **Judy:** Oh, how interesting. I mean, I'm in the middle of my midlife, so I feel like the chapter of the book would be like the midlife transition and what that looks like. You know, you, you kinda go from early career to mid-career to midlife to possibly past midlife. So it's, it's a very interesting, intersection because especially for females, there's not a lot of literature still out there about this phase.

[00:31:36] **Judy:** And so I think that it's important to, to talk about that because a lot of big issues start coming up in this time, and thinking about how you wanna spend your time for the time that you have left, that becomes much more poignant and more visceral for people during this time. And so I think that the chapter would be something like akin to like the midlife transition or something like that.

[00:31:59] **Sanjay:** Amazing. Dr. Judy, thank you so much for your time today. I'm sure I can speak on behalf of everybody when we say we've learned such a lot. Really, really appreciated.

[00:32:07] **Judy:** Well, thank you so much, Dr Sanjay. This has been a wonderful conversation.