

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / What We Wish We'd Never Told You

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Mamma Mia Out Loud!
Hello and welcome to Mamma Mia Out Loud.
It's what women are actually talking about on Wednesday, the 1st of November.
I'm Holly Wainwright.
I'm Mia Friedman.
And I'm Claire Stevens.
And it's your last show, Claire Stevens.
It is, but I keep telling myself, you know, Jesse will fall over and break her leg.
Oh, she's already done that.
Or she'll have a bad day and she'll be like, I can't make it and I'll be like, guys, I'm still here.
It's pretty funny the exchanging of the baton for Matt Lee.
I know, it's great.
I will still be around for a few weeks, still recording some other stuff.
So you may hear me and if not, I'll just be tapping on the door being like, guys, what talking about?
I have a thought.
Listen to my opinion.
We'll embarrass you more about this later.
But thank you, Claire Stevens, for all the wonderful work you've done on the show today.
The celebrity who's got the world's biggest vulnerability hangover.
Put your damn phone away and focus on your food.
And is your workplace seething with psychopaths and sociopaths?
Or does it just feel like it?
But first, Claire Stevens.
In case you missed it, when it comes to sleep, we're all idiots, except for the Scandinavians.
There's something called the Scandi sleeping method and I feel like whenever you put Scandi in front of something,
it just automatically makes it cooler, more aspirational.
But it involves partners sleeping in the one bed but having two separate blankets, which means two happy and comfortable sleepers.
So apparently it's a tradition found all over Scandinavia and in Germany and Austria, which also seems quite exotic.
So like you have a double bed but you have two single-dooners.
Exactly.
Or two blankets vertical ways.
Which is like together but separate vibes.

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And it turns out that even the idea of sharing a bed is relatively recent in human history and it was originally just a thing poor people did because they had to out of necessity, not because it's a natural thing or because we sleep well when we do it. And now it's seen as a prerequisite of romantic life with a partner, even though it's been shown to increase sleep disturbances and then sleep disturbances lead to divorce. Guys, we all need the Scandi sleeping method. And so this writer for Refinery29 wrote about the experience of the two blankets, one bed sleeping arrangement and basically said, for example, if you're sharing a double bed with your partner and you have a kid in a single bed, you probably have less room. If you're in a double bed, if you halved that, your little kid in their bloody single bed has more room than you do. And that's why we're also bloody uncomfortable. And so at least having two blankets gives you the sense that you can control your temperature, you can control when you wiggle around in the bed and you're not disturbed by your annoying partner. It's very rare to have the same temperature as whoever you're sleeping in a bed with. I've always done this. I didn't know I was so Scandi. We always have two covers on the bed. And also because, I shouldn't say this because people will at me, but our dog sleeps on the bed. We always had a kid sleeping in the bed and now we don't have a kid sleeping in the bed. We have a dog who often sleeps on the bed. So otherwise, you're just constantly pulling for the covers. So we always have two covers on the bed. I didn't know I was so Scandi. Between you or at the end of the bed? If she gets her own way. She sleeps right in between us with her head on the pillow. You have no boundaries. I wake up in the morning sometimes and her face is in my face and she's like, hi, slicks my nose. This is why dogs have anxiety. I know. There was an article written for Slate that caught our eye this week. It was called, Britney Spears is giving us a tour of her personal life. I hope she's prepared. It's by a writer and a psychiatrist called Jesse Gold. And it's about the aftermath of something she describes as self-disclosure. Because last week when Britney's memoir was released, we all got a very intimate look at her life over the past 20 years and it really was not pretty. We learned about how she had to pretend she was a virgin for years to keep her record label happy, how she had an abortion

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and she had really mixed feelings about that, how she wasn't allowed to seek the medical attention that she wanted while she was having that abortion at home, her heartbreak and her humiliation after Justin Timberlake dumped her and all the ugly details of her 13 years under a conservatorship. It was a lot and none of it was news to Britney because she lived it, of course, but having the world know about your pain after any kind of self-disclosure like this is a whole other thing and it can trigger an entirely different range of emotions.

Jesse Gold writes,

As a mental health professional, I know how big of a deal it is to be so vulnerable in public. Sharing a mental health experience or a hardship like a pregnancy loss is called self-disclosure. You can self-disclose to a friend or family member or to the whole world. When it involves deeply personal details though, it is far from easy and should be done with care. The aftermath of self-disclosure can include any emotion from joy to sadness to grief and anger and it also has the potential to make anyone re-experience and even be re-traumatized by events of the past.

Now, it's impossible to know what Britney is going through, but she has posted on Instagram last week when the story about her abortion was leaked, how she was really upset and sort of shocked about people reacting and she said,

My book's purpose was not to offend anyone by any means.

That was me then and that's in the past and I don't like the headlines I'm reading.

So she was obviously coping with everyone's opinion about her life and her past.

Now, Claire, you and I both host podcasts where people tell us very personal things that they've often never spoken about before, but are you happy and no filter?

And this isn't just about celebrities because anyone that discusses something, whether it's on social media or discloses it to a friend or a partner, what have you learned about the way people feel afterwards and about that vulnerability hangover? So the interesting thing about self-disclosure is that in a traditional sense, relationships are built on mutual self-disclosure and that's how you become increasingly close to somebody.

And it's why when you initially meet somebody and they say something really, really personal and out there, you can get a bit like, oh, standoffish about it because you haven't reached that level of intimacy yet. And you're not necessarily ready to disclose the same.

Maybe that's why I freak people out all the time.

I think it probably is, you know, like with all the love in the world.

This is a stereotype, but I remember being a young woman like 21 and I lived in England and I went to America and the way that a lot of Americans would immediately tell you a lot of really personal things really quickly when you met them really freaked me out.

I'd be on a bus and somebody would be like, yeah, and then my mother died and then this happened and then did it.

It's not very British.

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We're not friends.

Like this is strange.

Because the way we build relationships with people is that I disclose something, you disclose something of a similar vulnerability level and then I go a bit further and you go a bit further

and it's all kind of a bit of a test.

Like you're testing the waters.

Is that why in the first episode of That Are You Happy, you set the table by being very vulnerable about your own feelings about times that you were meant to be happy and about jealousy and about all the things?

Is that why you did that so that other people could feel disarmed and that you'd come to the table?

Yeah.

So I wanted people to feel like they were talking to somebody who had done the same thing I was asking of them.

Like I was very, very conscious that you're asking people to be really, really honest about things that might not seem likeable all the time

and that they might have some hesitation talking about.

But I think I really wanted to kind of set that tone for the show.

It's hard because the way that, you know, our idea of fame has developed in terms of the people that I interview on,

But Are You Happy and social media has developed is that now it's more of a one-way path.

However, Mayor, I'm sure you've noticed this and Holly as well, that when you share something, you'll notice how many people come to you with their own self-disclosures because they think, oh yes, you've disclosed, I can disclose.

And what do you think about that?

Holly, you and Claire have both and I have all disclosed things in our writing or on podcasts.

And it's true, people who've had similar experiences will come at you in waves.

Do you find that reassuring or is that then overwhelming?

I really get a lot out of it.

I don't know if that's necessarily normal.

The amount of people who have reached out and have eerily similar experiences to you and want to talk about it.

The thing I worry about is when people ask me for advice because I'm like, oh, I don't have any.

I don't have any of this sorted.

I'm not at the end of a journey where I can tell you what to do.

What do you think, Holly?

As we all know, working in the world we work in, when you do it this well and right, it's enormously helpful.

So, Mia, when you spoke about your miscarriage more than 10 years ago, and there wasn't an enormous amount of public information out there about women sharing that particular grief, that's enormously helpful.

There is a phrase that you use all the time as a bedrock of Mama Mia, which we're not sure who actually said it first,

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which is there's someone out there with a wound in the shape of your words, and it's absolutely true. But I worry that we have now got a bit of a culture, like it's almost table stakes.

In order for me to trust and engage with you, you have to do that.

And for any high-profile person to get a headline, get an interview, get a cover, get a story, they have to bring some grief to the table.

Lots of self-disclosure.

And I worry that it becomes really self-defining.

And I think this is also true, like not just about public people, but in our friend groups, is that if you're open about a grief or a loss or a terrible thing that's happened to you, and then that comes to define you, I have a family member whose partner took his own life, for example.

She was very much like, that's the first thing anyone thinks about when they look at me.

Oh, you're so-and-so, and that thing happened to you.

And she said, I wish that everybody in the world didn't know that, and I could choose to share it on my own terms, right?

And I think that sometimes in our rush to be vulnerable and likable and let make other people feel better because we're all going through things, you can then come to be defined by your worst moment or your worst feeling.

I remember for myself, and this is a silly thing, not a big serious thing, because serious things I've disclosed about miscarriage, about mental health, about different things. I don't have any regrets about them because they were well-considered.

But you know when we were talking years ago,

and this is obviously touches on what your podcast is about, Claire, and the conversation you had, and I said about how I was jealous about Jesse's book deal and everyone was like, I'm so brave of you to say that.

That's so great that you said that. Well done.

And then the number of people who, whenever I mentioned Jesse in their presence, they're like, oh yeah, like you're really jealous of her, aren't you?

I have no memory of you saying that.

No, I remember. I remember.

I know that's what it does.

And the thing is, no, that is not the defining experience of my relationship with Jesse. It was a fleeting thought.

Well, it was a moment in time where I was obviously wrestling with my own values about success and seeing someone who's close to me achieve something so amazing.

It's true to be honest to discuss that,

but it is not the bedrock defining thing about our relationship.

I have so much joy for Jesse, and I've worked through that ship.

And I think that when I hear whether it's on, but are you happy, which I love, or the imperfects, which I love, sometimes I think,

oh, now every time I see that person, all I think about is,

oh, you don't like this or that or this or like Elizabeth Day, right?

How to fail host who has spoken really openly and very thoughtfully about her struggle to have a child.

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And that's such a gift to so many people,
but there's a bit of me that is almost sad that such a really accomplished woman.
Now, a lot of what she puts out into the world,
what people talk about around it is,
I wonder if she's going to have a baby yet.
I wonder if she's adopting.
I wonder if she's going through fertility.
She's that one who wants to have a baby and it comes to define you.
So this is why it is always better.
The other saying, which I also didn't make up,
but use all the time is this is why it's better to write from a scar,
not a wound or to self-disclose.
And look, it's different what we're talking about
because we're people in the public eye who essentially turn our self-disclosure into content.
For other people, it might be disclosing something to a friend
or a therapist or a loved one that is really personal and private.
So it's slightly different because then you're not talking about
the whole world's opinion on what you've disclosed.
But you do have a degree of control on that.
And I've counseled people in my life who have self-disclosed
about something that's happened to them.
And then they've been asked, will you do this interview?
Will you be the spokesperson for this?
And there's a real crossroads where you can either choose to keep self-disclosing
about that issue and engage with all the people who want to talk to you about it.
Or you can say, I spoke about it.
I'm sort of done speaking about it.
I'm not going to pretend it didn't happen, but I don't want to keep speaking about it.
And that's essentially what Brittany is saying.
She's drawing a boundary.
She said, I wanted to get my story out there,
but I didn't really want to have a conversation or engage in a conversation
about all of those things that I've disclosed.
I mean, I think with, but are you happy for instance,
the idea of why you're sharing something.
And I think that's a bit of a defining feature of whether that self-disclosure
is going to cause issues for you or not.
Even with, but are you happy?
I say to every guest, like you leave and you'll spend the next 24 hours convinced.
You said things you didn't say, cringing at everything, wanting to kill the interview.
The amount of emails, voice notes, phone calls I've got from people afterwards being like,
can you cut this?
Can you cut this?
And we are incredibly accommodating with people because it is obviously a mental health podcast

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and we do not want things on there that's going to be distressing to people.
But I do say you're going to imagine things and you're going to hate yourself
because you've been vulnerable.
And I think it's about why you share it because in the context of that podcast,
what we're trying to get across is that if you are successful and you're living your life
in a public way, things look amazing and they're not.
That's the simple kind of premise of it.
They're not always amazing.
Things more complex than they seem.
Whereas if there is kind of not an ulterior motive,
but interestingly in the first episode of But Are You Happy?
I spoke to Michelle Andrews and Zara McDonald from Shameless.
Michelle talked about in the first book, she wrote a chapter about sexual assault
and she hadn't told her family about it and she hadn't told most people in her life about it.
And she said in hindsight, she felt like as a woman,
in order to have any right to release a book as a woman,
you had to share the worst thing that had ever happened to you.
Yeah, I was really, really moved by that.
Yeah, and in hindsight, she was like, I don't know why I shared that.
And Hugh Van Keilenberg in his episode talked about sharing some stuff about his sister
and her experience that he realized wasn't really his to share.
I said, yeah, this is what my sister's been through.
And we've had a couple of conversations where she's like,
I don't mind you talking about what I've been through, but I want to be consulted.
I never talked to her about it because I think it was too hard to talk to her
about her mental health.
So I just didn't.
I was like, I'll put the story together.
Yeah, this is good.
I should be happy with this.
I never asked her.
I have a lot of regret around that.
I just wish so much.
I sat down with her and said, if you're comfortable,
let's share your story with the world in a way that you are really comfortable with.
So I think it's an ongoing journey where people learn the limits
of what to share and what not to.
But I think that actually thinking about why you're sharing it
and the scar, not a wound, I think is really important.
But also, are you sharing it because you feel like you have to?
I can often feel like sometimes if I'm defensive or like getting attacked
or something like that, that I want to be like,
but I'm going through this thing and it's really hard.
And I'm like, no, never do that.

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But isn't that because in our culture at the moment, certainly on the left, it's like, show us your trauma.

You know, to have the right to say anything, you have to prove that you're not as privileged as you seem from the outside. So everyone's self-disclosing all over the place.

Yeah, it's interesting because even, and I know we've discussed this before, Claire, but even this idea that like everybody's life looks perfect, it's not just a thing about celebrities.

The amount of friends I have who are like, well, obviously so-and-so's marriage is perfect and look at them and what have they got to complain about? And they don't, you know, nothing bad ever happens to them. Haven't we all lived long enough to know? Why can't we just sort of walk through the world with the assumption that like everybody has got shit happening in their lives at different degrees? You know what I mean?

And that everybody's life will have seen some shit. You don't have to show me your bruises and scars for me to believe you because really what this is about is it's a result of comparison culture. It's the idea that if my relationship is terrible and I look over there and see that couple laughing, then like I'm immediately like, look at them, they don't have any problems and it's not fair because I have all these problems, but those people have problems too.

Why can't we just like have a more evolved awareness of what people are going through without people having to wear badges that say, my life shit just like yours. But I think particularly now. I want one of those badges. Particularly now, we don't have that awareness. I don't, especially, and I totally get what you mean. I think it's a bit of a generational thing that like the more life experiences you have, the more you realize that. But I think particularly and with, but are you happy, our core audience is Gen Z. And I think it's incredibly important to show that narrative to them. Absolutely expose that. Out louders, stay tuned. We'll be updating you on our new line of merch saying my life is shit just like yours. There will be badges. There will be t-shirts. It's all coming. I want a hat. Speaking of self-disclosure, a few years ago, I was out to dinner with a friend of mine

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and the main got delivered and looked amazing.
And I pulled out my phone and my friend said to me,
if you take a picture of your food, I am walking out.
Shots fired.
Hello.
And respect to my friend, my sensible, no bullshit friend.
Fast forward five years and I do still occasionally take photos of my food,
but so does everybody else at the table.
It's like, this isn't like if you're just having a sandwich,
but you know, if you go to a, oh, we're going out for dinner.
What do you do with those photos?
Well, often I don't do anything with it.
Sometimes I'll send it to someone who might be interested.
So you don't post them publicly?
Well, I might post them publicly if it was a highlight.
In a photo dump or something.
Rarely. I'm not really a food blogger.
A lot of people put it on like their Instagram stories.
Yeah, their stories.
With some cool music.
Yeah.
It becomes a vibe.
Yeah, that's boring to me.
And I get it, right.
But everybody's doing it now.
And we're talking about it because a restaurant in Brooklyn in New York
certainly not only this restaurant,
but they made news this week because they have banned,
and it's a very good looking restaurant.
They have banned influencers, phones,
and laptops from their premises.
They're just like, no, you are not.
The owner said people were coming in
and literally doing photo shoots.
They'd get one drink and stay for two hours shooting.
It's a free for all.
No one's regulating the Tik Tokers.
I didn't want to be a place where people just come and go for the trend.
I regret we didn't do this from the beginning,
but I didn't know it was going to get to this level.
So I have a few questions.
Is that a humble brag?
It totally is, right?
We're so good.

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People just want us for content.

I know.

They're trying to be a restaurant.

It totally is.

And I think we talked about a while ago

that I went to this posh restaurant in Sydney once

where they do take your phone,

and they put it in a pouch and they lock it in a little cupboard.

That feels controlled.

You have to go get it back at the apiece, piss,

can I have my phone?

But here's my question, right?

Once upon a time, a restaurant used to know

when a reviewer was coming in,

or high-end restaurant reviewers would actually go in disguise.

But in the industry, they'd all know they'd be like,

oh, that's the name that so-and-so always uses in the kitchen and stuff.

But now, anyone who walks in and takes a picture of your food,

they could be a food influencer with hundreds of thousands of followers,

or they could just be somebody who wants to take a picture for their mum.

Isn't the theory of hospitality that everyone who walks in

should be treated as if they're special,

like they might be the one with hundreds of thousands of followers?

And is that part of the problem?

Claire Stevens.

There's often stories online about an influencer reached out

to stay at this hotel or to go to this restaurant,

and we're going to publicly shame them and say what they asked for

and share the email that they sent, whatever.

I find that so uncomfortable because, A, it completely misses

the reality of what advertising has become.

Like, that's just how marketing works.

Like, influencers is how it works,

and if you're not engaging with influencers, that's fine,

but you kind of have to agree that that's a big part of the industry now.

But I do think that it's a big part of hospitality, this idea.

I remember working at Booth's Juice, and you had your secret shoppers.

You had your secret shopper, and they would turn up, and you'd be...

Probably that's a good side hustle, being a secret shopper.

Yeah, I know.

I'm a secret shopper.

If you look really normal.

I actually am.

No, you couldn't be a secret shopper.

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No, no, I actually am.

But you're so...

How could you be?

Because I have a friend that works at a clothing label,
and I had some feedback for her.

So I'm solicited feedback, and I said,

I know you haven't asked for this, but here's my feedback,
and she's like, I love feedback.

Please, will you be my mystery shopper?

And I'm like, I will take on that responsibility.

Oh my gosh.

Yes, I will.

Like working at Booth's Juice, I was like 16,
and I was working at my 65% energy level,
and not giving much of a shit.

And there would be a secret shopper, and then you get feedback,
and they'd be like, she was served by the blonde girl,
and I'm like, God damn it, that was me.

And you'd get all this feedback about your service,
and how you stuffed up the drink, and all of that.

And so I think this idea that anybody can be reviewing
your restaurant at any time is not a bad thing.

I think it's very important that we treat everybody
like they are the mini-celebrity that they could be.

Yeah, I think you're both right, because I think that,
yes, it's completely self-defeating to not allow people
to take pictures of your food and post about it,
and tag you, because duh, why would you not?

But I think what this particular restaurant's complaining about
is these people aren't ordering any food,
they're just using it for a backdrop,
while they're probably doing their beauty influencing,
probably like unpacking their makeup bag on the table,
and doing a get ready with me while they have one lemonade
on the table.

You're not wrong, right, because when I was looking at this,
there was this restaurant in Taipei in Taiwan
that put this new list of rules out that made me go,
oh, this is what we're dealing with here.

They've got a list of rules for influencers that say,
no standing on chairs for photo taking,
no taking photos with other customers' meals.

So this is clearly what people are dealing with,
it's not necessarily that you bring me my entree

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and I get my phone out, although if I did that,
if we were out for dinner, Mia, would you think I was being a dick?
No, I would just think that's going to be really boring content.
But it's like, not people just doing that,
but they're literally, as you say, moving,
oh, I really need a good angle on this,
I'm going to stand on my chair.
Oh, I really need a good angle on this,
I'm going to put it over there, put it next to that lady,
put it next to that.
Like, that is not cool.
Do you know what it does?
Yeah, no, I get that.
And it's the being disruptive to the actual service
and running of the restaurant
without helping the restaurant in any way.
The other thing that it does when you take a photo of it,
I think we spoke about this a few weeks ago,
this idea of that director who has a no phone rule on his set.
What it does is that it leaches energy away from the interaction.
So if you and I were having dinner together whole
and you took your phone out to take a photo,
that would break the connection and the energy that we have
and it would diffuse it out to you thinking,
right, I'm going to do this and I'm going to post it.
Even if you post it later,
it means that you're kind of not present.
And I know that we're often not present
and often if someone's telling a boring story,
you're thinking about something else.
But I like to pretend that the person is really engaged
and really present.
I don't like the idea of judging people
for whatever they are doing in a restaurant or bar or whatever.
I mean, maybe if they were going to the toilet on a seat,
like, yes, that is inappropriate and unhygienic.
But like, I don't like the policing of you can't take photos
and you can't bring a laptop.
And if somebody's paying to be there...
Well, no, they can't stand on your furniture
and disrupt other people's meals.
Like, imagine if you're then eating
and someone just comes over and goes,
can I just take a photo with your clam linguine?

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Can you go away?

I'd say no.

And that would be absolutely fine.

But there's a cafe that I used to go to a lot
and I would get a coffee and maybe some food
and I would sit there and work from there.

Yeah, I like working from cafes too.

And then they put a freaking sign up saying
they're not allowed to work from there.

Yeah, but because there are businesses.

So how do you expect them to make any money?

But don't you think me that that's because I used to love
to write in cafes.

I probably still do, but I don't do it very much.

But there's like a social contract you have
with that place where I go,
if I'm going to do that, I have to order food.

I have to order a coffee.

If I'm going to stay a bit longer,

I have to order another one.

Like I'm not just going to sit here and order nothing.

And then you have to have a timeline in your head, right?

If you're going to stay more than an hour then all.

And also if the restaurant's busy,
if it's busy, you can't.

Or if you're taking up a table for four
or the social contract is don't be a dick.

I just think most people are socially aware.

I don't believe that this restaurant has been overrun
by purely influencers who only want to order one drink
and take a photo of it.

I just think most people are normal.

And this is probably just a publicity thing to say.

We're so fancy people couldn't stop taking photos
on our premises.

I want to throw one thing to the out louders
because when we were talking about this in the office,
one of our colleagues had a great hack
that she and her friends do to stop them from,
as you say, leaching away during a meal.
And I want to know what out louders think
and if they've got any.

She said if she's having dinner with her girlfriends,
they all put their phones in the middle of the table face down.

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And if anyone reaches for it before the bill is paid,
that person has to pay for dinner for everybody.

Oh, I love that.

I do love that.

I do love that.

Have you got similar rules in your world
for stopping all this snapping?

Excuse me, waiter.

You probably recognize me, but my name's Ashley.

I have a bit of a social media presence.

Someone even called me an influencer.

Anyways, I saw you left the check while I was using the restroom
and I wanted to come up and see if maybe I could get my meal for free
if I posted like a cool story about your restaurant.

If you think about it, the exposure and the value from a story of mine
would be worth so much more than just me paying for my meal.

Mumma Mia Out Loud!

If you want to make Mum Mia Out Loud part of your routine five days a week,
we release segments on Tuesdays and Thursdays just for Mum Mia subscribers.

To get full access, follow the link in the show notes
and a big thank you to all our current subscribers.

Former lawyer and author David Gillespie has written a new book
called Toxic at Work.

It was inspired by his own workplace encounter
with someone with sociopathic traits

and his quest to understand those types of people and what to do about them.

So Mia, you've interviewed David Gillespie about psychopaths
and now he's written this book specifically about what these people are like at work.

And these are the psychopaths, not like serial killer psychopaths.

These are the psychopaths that walk amongst us.

Yes, and thrive in corporate environments.

So he spoke on conversations with Sarah Kanowski about his experience.

This is some of what he said.

What were your first impressions of this guy when they arrived?

He was great. Absolutely terrific.

He looked like he fitted in perfectly.

He said all the right things.

He believed all the right things.

He seemed to have exactly the right attitude.

There were instances where suddenly the message he was giving
didn't match his behaviour.

Where he would do things that seemed to hurt the team
or hurt individuals in the team

or even hurt the interests of the business that we were in.

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And it was really hard to explain.
You'd look at what he'd done and you'd say,
why did you do that? Why did you attack that guy?
And then what started to happen was people started to not trust each other in the team.
According to a clinical psychologist at the University of Technology, Sydney,
Erica Penny,
typically psychopathic traits refer to limited or no empathy or morality.
She says sociopathic traits refer to having a sense of morality,
but not one that's consistent with the morals of the culture.
And she says there can be a few telltale psychopathic behaviours.
One is a pattern of telling lies or misrepresenting facts.
Another is limited regard for the human impact of their work decisions,
only caring about relationships with people who can progress their ambitions,
caring more about status and ambition than fairness or having collegial relationships.
And one thing that really stuck out to me in this podcast
that I think people might recognise from their own workplaces,
is that one reason sociopaths do so well in the workplace
is because they make decisions incredibly effectively
and you will never know a sociopath to be indecisive.
So one of the flaws of human beings at work is that we're faced with a decision
and we're like, oh, I've got to consider all the factors
and I'm really going to have to sit on this
and I'm considering how that's going to affect this person and this person.
But that's an asset in a business.
Exactly, exactly.
And that's how sociopaths get to the top,
because bosses go, oh, thank God, they're the best decision maker.
And it's not necessarily the best decision maker.
They just make decisions very quickly and don't second-guess them.
Oh, that's a big red flag to me.
Yeah.
And so Gillespie talks about what you should do
when you encounter a sociopath in the workplace
and why this interview and this book is so interesting and controversial
is because he's like, absolutely do not challenge them.
Absolutely do not go to HR about them
because none of that will work.
They're far too smart and manipulative.
You just have to distance yourself as much as possible
What if they're your boss?
from these people.
Well, he's sort of like, don't tell them anything personal
about that they can use against you.
Just do.

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No self-disclosure to a psychopath.
Absolutely no self-disclosure.
Do what you need to do.
Keep a record of things.
Keep things incredibly black and white
and don't engage in the way you'd normally engage with a colleague.
Do you think the word psychopath is overused
in the same way that toxic is overused?
Something I don't like or someone I don't like.
I'm very sorry if you've already said this,
but what's the difference between a psychopath and a sociopath?
They're the same thing.
Neither of them are actual conditions that appear
in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders.
It's sort of called like antisocial personality disorder,
but they are both observable.
What are their characteristics that they have no feeling?
How do I know no emotional empathy?
So for example, looking at a person who is crying,
they don't feel anything and their brain doesn't light up.
That's completely different to people who might be on the autism spectrum,
who when they say somebody crying do have an emotional reaction.
It's just that cognitively something different might be going on.
It's true.
Until the boss recognises what they're like and gets them out,
there's no hope because they definitely manage your perception
as a boss of everybody else and your perception of them.
Yes, they manage up incredibly effectively
and don't manage down because they don't have to.
So I reckon I've encountered one.
Holly, do you think you've ever encountered
a psychopath sociopath in the workplace?
Maybe you're the sociopath.
Yeah, exactly.
That's what I'm thinking now because I don't think I've ever met
anyone who doesn't think their boss is a sociopath.
Yeah.
Interesting.
I think most people...
That's true.
Most people get upset that their boss isn't empathetic enough towards them
because their boss's job is not to be empathetic towards them necessarily.
Sometimes it is.
It's to do the best thing for the business as far as they see fit

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or tick off their KPIs or whatever it is.

And so I know a lot of people who are like, that person's definitely a psychopath because I told them that my grand was sick and they still wanted me to do that thing or whatever. And that's not what we're talking about here, right?

All right.

I'm going to be really boring.

I don't think I have.

Holly.

I'm sure I have.

I can't think of an example of a time when I've been like, that person has no empathy at all.

You always see the best in people.

And it's just, it's not fun for whinging purposes.

I'm sorry.

Tell me I'm wrong.

So I had a boss once.

It was very, very cutting comments, particularly that you're like, oh, but would also play people off against each other, which was particularly manipulative.

And that actually requires some thought.

Do you know what I mean?

To be like, this person's great.

Everybody be more like...

What's the difference between one of those and an asshole?

Yeah.

And also kind of put my hand up to say anyone has ever done management training and lots of out louders who'd be listening to this would have sat through several of those.

The thing they tell you before anything else is you work out who your team are and then work out how to get the best out of them.

Another word for that friends is manipulation.

Yeah.

It is actually your job to a point as a manager, as a boss to go, what motivates Claire?

What does Claire care about?

It won't be the same as what her twin sister cares about and motivates her.

And my job is to figure that out and push those buttons.

Like that's a very brutal way of putting it, but like work in the best way I can.

Like if I'm being a good boss, which hopefully I have been, but to you play to your strengths and I get what I want out of you.

In the most brutal terms, that is manipulative.

I have like sort of semi-psychoalized you with my like,

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oh, she's got a red brain or a blue brain or whatever chart we're using at that moment and gone, this is how I work Claire.

Like, is that evil?

Well, I think the problem is inspirational that the people who like, there's an empathetic way to do that.

And then there's a non empathetic way to do that.

And like Mia, you would say, and I know that as a business owner, the biggest thing is, and I remember having to think about this, sometimes decisions need to not be about people.

They need to be about the business, right?

A lot of the time they have to be.

Normal people really struggle with that.

Sociopaths don't struggle with that at all.

So that's why they actually make great, you know, CEOs and banks.

So that's why they can get quite high.

Yeah.

Cause they're like, I don't mind making 50% of people redundant.

That doesn't hurt my soul.

Whereas I, that's why I would be so bad at that.

And I think it's why a lot of people, for example, really struggle with management because you know that the thing that's getting in the way of being the most effective manager from like an objective standpoint is your feeling.

Yeah.

But a good manager, as we all know, can juggle that and work out how to get the best out of their team that's also good for them.

Yeah.

Because ultimately in my crude example of pushing your buttons to get you to do what I want you to do, the ideal situation there is that it also makes you feel great because you're doing work you're proud of, you feel like you've got upward motion, you feel like you're being appreciated.

Like in the perfect world, all these boxes are ticked, right?

But that's quite hard.

And I wonder if that's why, as you say, maybe if you're a sociopath, it's easier because you don't have to worry about ticking those other boxes.

Out louders, we would love your stories of workplace psychopaths.

They are my favorite.

And I want full anecdotes because it's something I think a lot of us have encountered and I just want all the stories.

My recommendation today is a little bit different.

I know we've all been feeling helpless about the horrific images

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coming out of the Middle East.

If you're a regular listener, you also know that we've been wrestling with ways to talk about it that feel useful.

Here's one.

If you're able, please consider donating to one of the charities that is working to get aid to those who need it most in Gaza.

UNICEF works in 190 countries around the world.

They are the world's largest provider of things like vaccines to kids in places where they wouldn't normally get access to that, delivering good nutrition and safe water and sanitation.

That is their absolute bread and butter.

And right now, they have an emergency campaign for guys and children.

They're on the ground working with local partners in extraordinarily difficult conditions.

But whatever's happening now and whatever happens next in this conflict, they are very well-placed to being at the forefront of the organizations who can get help through.

So you can go to unicef.org to find out more.

People are also donating to Doctors Without Borders.

You'll have heard of them.

Medicine Son Frontier.

They are an extraordinarily hard-working international and independent medical humanitarian organization.

They deliver emergency medical help to people affected by all kinds of things, armed conflict, epidemics.

And their slogan is independent, neutral, impartial, funded by individuals like you.

They also have an emergency appeal for the Israel-Gaza War, and you can donate to help support their extraordinarily difficult work at msf.org.au.

Both these organizations are trying to get aid to those who need it most.

The links to help are in our show notes.

And if you're looking for something else to listen to, on yesterday's Subscribe episode,

Mia, Holly and I continued to work our way through the one and only Proust Questionnaire.

We each shared our idea of perfect happiness, the virtues we consider overrated,

and revealed what our current state of mind is slash are.

It's not a lot of sunshine and rainbows, although Mia's was weirdly positive.

It was so positive.

And we also discovered that we're all a little bit dirty.

The link to that episode is in the show notes too, of course.

Claire Stevens, we couldn't thank you enough for doing such an amazing job filling in for your sister, Jessie.

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And you have been amazing.

Everyone can keep listening to Claire, of course, uncanceled, but are you happy?

And we are sure that she will be back in this chair, because as you said, things are going to happen.

I don't know if what might happen now.

Jessie's a lazy girl. I'll be back.

Thank you, Claire Stevens, from all the Out Louders and all the team at Out Loud.

We love you.

Thank you for listening to Australia's number one news and pop culture show.

This episode was produced by Emily and Gazillas.

The assistant producer is Tali Blackman,

and we have audio production, as always, from the lovely Leah Porges.

Thank you. We'll talk to you tomorrow.

Bye.

Shout out to any Mamma Mia subscribers listening.

If you love the show and want to support us as well, subscribing to Mamma Mia is the very best way to do so.

There is a link in the episode description.