

Business Minds Coffee Chat with Robert Mack | Ep. #30

Hey everyone I'm Jay Shear and welcome to Business minds Coffee Chat The goal of this show is to share insights help to lift and inspire others and deliver practical meaningful and actionable content Where does happiness come from Do you attach happiness to external things Are you ready to live A happier healthier and wealthier life Well get ready because on today's episode we're gonna be talking all about happiness with a leading authority on the subject Our guest today is an Ivy League educated celebrity happiness coach a positive psychology expert the published author of the critically acclaimed book Happiness from the Inside Out and the TV host personality and producer for Own and E Networks You've seen him on Access Hollywood the Today show Good Morning America CBS early show and more He and his work have been featured in GQ self health cosmopolitan Glamour Forbes and many other magazines His impressive list of coaching clients includes a list actors professional athletes popular musicians and entertainers c suite level executive executives fashion models and everyday people from all walks of life Please welcome the man who embraces life to the fullest and wants the same for everyone Robert Mack Robert Welcome to the show So awesome my friend I so appreciate you You have no idea that introduction was Epic Brother So very kind of you Very courage encouraging of you Thank you I'm so happy to be here Absolutely Well I am truly grateful So I I wanna dive right in There's so many different areas that that I want to speak with you about I I first I have to tell you that I have thoroughly enjoyed learning about you and Robert your resume is crazy in a good way And II I tell you I'm happy already just having you up So the the two of us had an opportunity to connect last month That was actually about one month ago almost to the day And and I gotta tell you I was drawn to your authenticity and your incredible story So if you will you know please share with us where your story begins And what was it that drew you to the field of psychology and happiness Such a great question And I had to just reflect that back I mean when we connected I got shivers they're call I call them soul shivers but it means you've got a real deep authentic connection So thank you for that I my story started really with suicide and depression I was deeply depressed I remember being depressed at four or five years of age Quite honestly I couldn't quite describe it then of course But I always thought as I got older that I would grow out of it that I this self loathing this self hate the general anxiety and stress and worry that seemed to be so

pervasive and prevalent in my everyday experience I thought I'd grow out of that that if I just did well academically and I did well athletically eventually I'd be happy you know if I just accomplished enough and impressed enough people and got enough people to love me and that didn't quite happen At least not right away And as I got older my depression only deepened and the suicidal ideation only increased so much So I get to the point where it was nearly impossible for me to get through a day really get through an hour without thinking about and wanting to kill myself So I eventually got to a place I did some research I decided to get a kitchen knife and I rammed it into my wrist and it was really a test sort of mark that I put in my wrist because I as much as I want to end my life I didn't want to increase any pain even physical pain You know What what are you at this point Robert How old Yeah What where were you Yeah I was I was in my early twenties like ok Yeah And something very strange and unexpected happened and I felt a peace that I never experienced before I felt a joy that I didn't think was possible and I felt love in a way that I'd never experienced And so at that time I thought I'll put off this po then postpone this suicide for like an hour That that was all it was no more than that And honestly that felt like a really long time to postpone the suicide because my pain was so so severe But in that hour I began to do some research and I discovered I wasn't alone in this There are a lot of people in fact an increasingly large number of people who were experiencing suicidal ideation stress anxiety access one and access two disorders and that it was more common than I had realized So that hour of postponing my suicide bled into several hours And now I look back two decades later and I am blown away that so much can be accomplished in a relatively short period of time at least for me because I thought that suicidal ideation depression stress anxiety was something that you would have to live with forever What a a powerful story So I I there's two things that I'm thinking about at this moment One of those is you you were able to recognize the depression at a very early age And I I don't know if you had the language to be able to articulate it yet But at at four and five years old are you able to point to anything in in particular that that created that situations anything that you can specifically point to Yeah You know you're right at the age of four or five I didn't have the language really much for anything Um and I certainly didn't know what depression was I just knew that I hated being in my own skin It was the and I would say there were levels and layers to it and as I've evolved and increased my education around depression stress anxiety I've come to a deeper understanding of what it was

really about But I think at the very beginning it was mostly that I felt stress and anxiety and it was absorbing the stress and anxiety in my environment I had a beautiful loving health healthy happy family Uh But we also had a ton of stress and a ton of anxiety So I took a lot of that on also Um I had very high high expectations for myself And so so nothing seemed to be good enough I would get an A but I knew I should have gotten an A plus or I get the A plus And I knew that the next time I probably wasn't gonna get an A plus It was this sort of self sabotaging uh thought patterns and uh behavioral patterns um that were really around perfectionism And so there was a deep level of insecurity I saw external validation um you know really almost exclusively I did almost everything to try and please someone else and impress someone else and get someone else to love and like me And then there was a deeper level as I got older which was an existential angst which was this idea that I looked and thought about life from a very broad perspective and said look nothing I'm doing or achieving or acquiring or accomplishing is delivering on the happiness that it seems to promise that even the best of experiences leaves me with a feeling of emptiness and that happiness I experience is fleeting And that was frustrating And then on top of that I thought well even if I achieve and accomplish what maybe nobody else has in the world I'm still one day soon tomorrow or 70 years from then I will have it all stripped away by death and I will have everyone I care about stripped away from me and out of my hands by death And that I did not want to live through I did not want to continue loving people and getting people to love me and trying and working so hard to accomplish these things that would very soon be taken all away you know and so I just wanted to be done with it It seemed like this life proposition was a really bad idea overall So after some time I have discovered the real root of it all though was which is overthinking I was just a ruminated to no end I would think and think and think and the mind is a bit of a maze And if you think you're gonna find happiness by figuring out that maze of your mind you're just probably pre paving a very miserable journey and a miserable destination for yourself So I learned how much of my problem was just an addiction to thinking Robert II I really appreciate you sharing that with us again What a powerful story There is one other thing that I have to go back to because I want to get a little bit of clarity So I hope you don't mind But at that point you had that knife in your hand and and you had it on your wrist and you you mentioned that you you felt a you felt a peace that came over you What did what what was that what did that feel like And it was it something in your environment or was it

just something that was in your your soul and in your your your body at that moment nothing externally or objectively changed something subjectively emotionally psychologically did I had a hard time understanding what changed in that moment But as I look back now it's clear for just a brief moment I saw or felt or understood that there was this possibility of all this problematic thinking and all of these perceived problems coming to an end So I sort of thought of death and suicide as a way to end all of my problems And as I began to see or recognize that I didn't have to experience the problematic thinking that I had or that life didn't have to be one problem or series of problems after the other I felt relief in that And so quite succinctly I just stopped thinking for long enough period of time to recognize realize experience and enjoy this like thoughtless wordless pull of happiness underneath it all you know it was just this beautifully inexplicable piece Perfect peace That's always there underneath all your problems all your worries everything that you've achieved or accomplished or haven't achieved or accomplished There's this just perfect piece underneath that all it's the same piece that you see sometimes come through the eyes of a small baby or come through the you know um presence of a small animal a kitten or a puppy You know you just feel peaceful in their presence and you feel like they love you It was that experience that I had because I finally stopped thinking long enough to let it surface Incredible Yeah it really is So so keep keep us moving forward then So was that the impetus to go into the field that you did Yes exactly So at that point I thought OK let me do some research and I started reading all these people that were much smarter than me much wiser than me One thing I've always been is I'm smart enough to know I'm not very smart So I was like there's got to be some people that are smarter out there in the world that have figured this out One thing I've learned and I've learned a lot of that from you Jay that you know there are always people out there that have solved for the problem that you're currently struggling with So I looked to those people and most of them were virtual they were dead authors Some of them weren't living authors but there were very few people actually that were living people that I had direct connections with relationships with They were just through their books or through their videos or whatnot So I read a lot I listened to a lot and for every two steps forward it was like four steps backwards So the suicidal ideation continued for a while and the depression continued for a while But as I continued being di di diligent about applying happiness pitch tricks and tools that I discovered and just forgetting about the ones that didn't work I made progress And before

long I found uh this program at the University of Pennsylvania It was a master's and Applied Positive psychology program It's the Ivy League Science and study of what makes life worth living the ways in which happiness drives success and the ways in which success does not drive happiness all based on empirical data I matriculated into that program And opened my private practice and those that sort of happiness journal that I had that I was using to track those happiness tips tricks and tools eventually became published as Happiness from the inside out which you mentioned earlier And so yeah so you know it's amazing how the worst thing in your life can some often turn out to be the very best thing in your life But you can't see it at that time You can't see it while you're in it Yeah my gosh that's uh it truly is amazing And I I I wanna talk about happiness from the inside out uh for for a moment Do you mind if we shift to that Absolutely Anything you wanna talk about brother So in that book you describe eight principles for realizing unconditional happiness and achieving the success that comes with it I'd like to geek out if we can on the science first and talk about brain chemistry So what are the neurochemicals of happiness Yeah So and there's a great question There's a so first of all we've got a genetic set point OK And that's always that was always hard for me to kind of share with people because I don't want to discourage people but we have a happiness set point OK And so part of this is inherited part of this is genetic The interesting thing about our happiness set point is that it's malleable unlike height or unlike eye color which is not changeable happiness your happiness set point is actually very malleable and perfectly changeable And based on the thoughts you think the people you spend time with environmental factors diet lifestyle all those things influence that happiness set point You can actually adjust that happening at that point at increasingly higher levels right And so that's the first piece The second piece is that you know there is an entire body of research around neuroplasticity and neuroscience And we know that with about six I think today the number is 66 days If you start basically practicing happiness in scientifically proven ways in 66 days you will find that your brain changes itself to make that practice and process and experience of happiness increasingly effortless and enjoyable right And so whereas before it was so easy and almost it was so easy to be miserable and unhappy or stressed or anxious you can suddenly shift that in positive directions And so you know there's all kinds of neurotransmitters that are involved in that right So um as they say um neurons that wire uh that fire together wire together But the idea essentially is that as you begin to do

different things or new things happier things think happier thoughts Um and in other cases not think thoughts at all you can essentially rewire your brain for happiness or dopamine is evolved Serotonin is evolved you know lots of neurotransmitters and chemicals are involved Um you know folks don't need to get too lost in that But the idea is that you can change your brain and you can wire it rewire it for an increasingly happy experience of life in in incredible so 66 days is the time frame to be able to make that type of change and kind of rewire for happiness That's right That's right You know and it's interesting we can all have this experience because I think sometimes it can be hard to make that mind body connection right But even now if we're sitting here and we think about biting into a lemon for instance Italy if you really visualize it you can almost feel in the back of your mouth You know think you get a little salvation and all and you can almost get a sour taste in your mouth without even having bitten into the lemon but only having imagined biting into the lemon And the same thing happens all the time when you imagine something happening to you that hasn't happened and you feel fear or anxiety you produce uh the stress hormone called cortisol and your adrenaline spikes And before you know it you actually not just affect your body compromise your health and well-being but you also compromise your ability to think clearly creatively productively effectively efficiently efficaciously and also behave in those increasingly helpful supportive and constructive ways right So there's a woman named Barbara Fredrickson who's done a ton of work on how thinking or feeling increasingly positive aspects meaning feeling better increasingly you know um good feeling emotions how it broadens and builds your perspective so that you have access to psychological and emotional capital resources that you didn't do that you didn't have access to when you were feeling down or in a low mood or upset or angry And so it's really fascinating because I know I don't know about you but I was raising this idea that you know like the moody people were the most creative ones to some extent they were the most productive But scientists um really debunked that idea and proven that if you can find a way to feel better you'll also do better and you'll do better with less time energy and effort That is that's incredible Well let let's let's unpack that a little bit So my wife is an artist and I've just learned through conversation with her about some very famous artists who are no longer living But let's say some of the some of the masters who we've we've learned were many were depressed maybe they were alcoholics and some suicidal And yet the creative energy and the the the body of work that they were able to create is

is remarkable So it almost sounds like what we're finding out now is that's not necessarily the case what a great point And I love that Um your wife has had this experience because I did that too You know part of what kept me trapped in my depressed state and dysphoric state was that I looked out into the world and read stories and biographies about some of the most successful people And I realized and I found out that lots of them had or experienced all kinds of mental dysfunction mental illness whether it's bipolar depression or whether there was borderline whether it was sometimes in some cases they were schizophrenic Um But what's interesting is is that you know what this science has found is not that people don't you know mental illness and mental health is really a spectrum And we all experience moments in our day in our lives um in our weeks where we're a little less mentally healthy than in other moments right And so it's a spectrum and at some point in this spectrum you know clinical psychologists and researchers draw a line and they draw a line somewhat arbitrarily but they draw a line with the best in the best way that they can It says hey to the left of this or whatnot are folks that are healthy and to the right of this are folks that really we have to diagnose with some kind of mental illness right But the truth is we all experience this sort of spectrum OK What they found is that even for the folks that say that are bipolar that often the most creative works of art came out of their manic phase not out of the low mood phase it came out of the hype where they're coming up out of it and they're super you know excited and they're super manic and they want to do something they think they can overcome the world or conquer the world And so that's so you know there's nothing about this And I don't want to suggest that for a second if you're struggling with any kind of mental illness or mental dysfunction or in some way you feel um compromised in that way that you can't be creative that you're not creative now that you won't continue to be creative But notice that most of the creativity comes out of or is best expressed when you're in a higher mood or and you're experiencing more positive aspect Um and sometimes the mo contributes to that right So we hear artists like Taylor Swift and she has made an entire career out of really you know flushing out what she experiences when she has a breakup or something's going really wrong But when she's able to sort of access it and express it in creative in increasingly creative ways she's often feeling better already And part of that process is cathartic for her That's why she expresses it Ok Interesting Well you've you've shared a lot of information here and I wanna get tactical for a moment if we can and give some very practical steps that others can take to change their state of

mind change their mindset You you talked about um books and you talked about you know turning off negativity or turning off negative news things like that But what are some things that that you would suggest to others to help them go down the path of that 66 days so they can come out the other side happier and healthier Yeah So I said the first step is to commit to happiness in a way you've committed to nothing else before you know part of my the surprise of my life has been that the person I hated the most myself and the person that seemed to be impossible of being happy for even a few moments is now one of the happiest people I know that I somehow some way it's just unbelievable to me like you know and um that doesn't mean that I have you know a problem free life at all But I you know I'm clear and so one of things I've discovered in that process is that what allowed me to experience the in and inherent happiness that exists within us as us all the time is that for me it was life and death I literally said I'm going to live blissfully or not at all I mean it was that committed to it OK And so I committed to living as happily as humanly possible And I prioritized that above everything and everyone else and it seems incredibly you know incredibly selfish and it is in some ways but we also know that the most selfish people sort of authentically selfish People turn out to be the most authentically selfless people right So believe it or not you know happiness is our gift to the world And the happiest people in the world they donate the most money they're the most charitable they're the most generous they don't like the most blood right So you focusing on you allows you to have something to offer or share with other people in the world So the first thing is above all else recognize and realize that you don't need to route your happiness through success through other people through middle men and middle women or middle things You can go directly to the source for it which is yourself that one realization will take you all the way home But after that then it's a question of one I would say um really sifting and sorting through your relationships so that you surround yourself yourself as best as possible with people who are encourages with people who are focused on positivity with folks who are generally happy or at least trying or aspiring to be happy and people that don't getting in your way it's very difficult to be happy If your entire life you're surrounded by unhappy people you can do it but it's a little more difficult right So I need to ask you a question then because this has come up in conversation with uh with other uh individuals that I speak with And what if what if you have family members let's say that are not supporting your goals that don't uh that aren't happy that can suck

energy from your life How do you handle situations like that Or can you handle situations like that where it is someone who's close to you Great question So I'd say that um first keep the interaction short and sweet you know make them a little less frequent or if you have to make them more frequent but keep them short and sweet It's critical take mindfulness breaks often Um The second the third piece around that I think which is important in a great way no matter who it is you're connecting with especially when you're connecting with yourself is learning to tell a better feeling story based in truth about everything and everybody in your life right So you have to learn how to lean into positive intelligence and positive communication It's a real term PQ positive intelligence is essentially the ability to stick to source recruit increasingly supportive and constructive thoughts and tell yourself and others increasingly positive stories that are true and authentic right So that's critical So it's like how can I pivot in this conversation and use cognitive restructuring and positive reframing to have a more peaceful and a more loving and a more connected or connective experience with the other person So sometimes that means staying off of issues that are hot button issues or triggers for you or triggers for them You don't have to discuss things that are uncomfortable all the time You don't have to discuss things that you disagree about all the time Or if you do disagree can you find a way to disagree without being disagreeable But you've got to learn how to lean into the positive intelligence and lean into the positive communication The best place to start is when it's easy with yourself So you'll notice as much as anybody else in the world can seem to terrorize us and sap us of energy We have no enemy like ourselves We are our greatest enemy And I know that firsthand nobody has been more cruel to me or meaner to me or gotten my way of happiness more than myself like so if I can learn to practice that so that's what the practice of meditation is about or mind what it is about being able to observe this crazy crackhead that lives in our head that always wants another fix of something painful right Um Yeah And so you want to create some kind of practice and I would say that even more important than relationship peace with others is learning to prioritize the relationship you have with yourself and realizing that relationship that you have with yourself sets the precedent or tone for the relationship that you have with everybody and everything else in the world When you find harmony and happiness within yourself you find it with everybody and everything else in the world Even if they don't find it with you you can still be happy with you can still enjoy their company somehow Some way if you don't outsource this

happiness thing to them Oh man What a great way of stating that Well it took me 20 years bro II I love it So how do you respond to those that say gosh when I when I have when I get that particular car I'm gonna be happier when I get that that house I'm gonna be happy or you know it's usually the things right It it's it's so often we hear about the external things that people talk about that as soon as I have that then I'm gonna be happy So I was as much of a victim of that one as ever I still love nice things I still have a beautiful car and I love that car Um The difference is is that I don't see myself or my happiness in the car I enjoy it but it's gonna get scratched It might get taken away one day it might get wrecked one day and I don't invest my identity in it and my happiness in it So if it's taken I would prefer that not to happen at the same time I'm quite crystal clear That I have felt happy as happy with the car as I have without a car Ok so that's the first thing the second thing about stuff is that you know I've always joked and said I think ha happiness is really for the rich the super rich And by that I mean that it's for those who are rich in things because they come to a realization and understanding that having bought everything and purchased everything it doesn't deliver on the happiness that you think it will never does That's why practice is full of people that are really successful But they don't have the one thing that they thought money would eventually lead to but they can't buy which is happiness or peace your self love And so but the other way I say it sometimes is that it's also for those who are rich in in intelligence right And rich in awareness And it was I think for most of us we don't have to buy too many expensive things to come to the recognition that they don't deliver on the happiness they seem to promise I mean I had I think it was a geo Metro like a you know and a button and an auction and it had rotor issues And already I was like oh boy like I had dreamed about getting this car put it in a credit card terrible idea I got it And I was like man I was wanting this so bad and now I'm already bored of it It's been a week or it's got issues and you know and then you have a couple of those experiences in life and you suddenly discover that success is a poor substitute for happiness and that your possessions are a poor substitute for peace So yeah I think it's nice to just notice how much of the stuff you've prayed for your entire life you now have and that if it were taken away from you or if they were taken away from you how deeply unhappy you'd be right And yet how still that lasting meaningful abiding experience of peace that you so strive for just it's never ever attached to things in the way that you think they are so true Yeah So I have to ask this question being the happiness expert that you are and you've

alluded to this you you're not happy 24 hours a day So when you do experience those times when you're just not feeling it what are the steps that you personally go through Can you kind of walk us through What that process looks like Is it self talk Is it picking up a book Is it the mindfulness a combination of it all What is that for you Beautiful So I'll so at this point I only go directly to the last tip and trick I'll share But I wanna give everybody the full like chronological journey that I worked out for myself So the first thing was creating a happiness islands list Those are things activities people places that with very little time and energy or effort uplift you inspire you make you feel happy to be alive In the beginning I couldn't come up with a whole lot of stuff I was pretty depressed So it was like chocolate it was like pretty girls you know I was just young and and and um but also I noticed it was music sometimes and it was sports or whatever And so I came with this list and we can call that a self soothing list But basically my commitment to myself was that when I was feeling down or upset or unhappy I would pick something off this list and I would do it no matter how badly I didn't want to do it So sometimes it was just going for a walk or sitting out in nature or reading a book or taking a nap nap is surprisingly effective often in changing your mood So the Happiness Islands like first the second thing is that's about happiness being what you do It's about activities The second thing is really about happiness being what you think And so that's about learning to tell the better feeling story based in truth And so I would begin to and by the way when you're feeling super unhappy or in this extremely low mood distraction is always a way better alternative than trying this next step which is about telling a better feeling story based in truth Ok When you're feeling really unhappy and really frustrated the last thing you wanna do is like try to be optimistic because it's like trying to take a car that's in reverse and shoving into fourth gear you're just gonna drop the transmission you're gonna break the car right You don't wanna do that So the second step is really about beginning to say well I can acknowledge and admit that Xy and Z is frustrating but how can I talk about this in a way that lets me feel better now So sometimes that sounds like the fa my favorite part of this circumstance or this condition or this person or this experience is right Or what I'm really looking forward to or what really or the idea that really excites me is and then you talk start to talk about the ways in which you're looking forward to it turning around or you're looking forward to learning the lesson from it or you're learning to double down on your self love or above all else everything in our lives the greatest adversity is also the greatest teacher And so it's

personal trainer for your soul or for your unconditional happiness And so if you really mean it when you say you want to be happy everything supports you in encouraging you to become increasingly unconditionally happy right So you just learn to tell these stories The third piece and I'll keep it short is learning not to think at all So we often think that we'll find happiness by doing things or buying desirable products or goods or services or by just thinking our way there But truthfully as you evolve in this experience and take this journey you come to discover that to a large extent happiness the absence of thoughts it's the absence of thinking and it's simply the awareness of this nonthinking thoughtless worthless peaceful aliveness that exists inside you already But so many of us are lost in our minds So consistently we never take the time to just breathe and walk or breathe and shower and experience the peaceful aliveness or like energy in our body for its own sake But honestly it's that simple That's why we call it childlike faith because kids are really good at it Incredible Is is that where a mindfulness practice or or meditation would come into play That's exactly right So one of the greatest tips and tricks I recommend is a micro meditation You know most of us have had the experience of going to a meditation class listening to a meditation app and spending like 29 minutes and 59 seconds out of the 30 minutes being distracted annoyed over it You know it's like please anything else but this you know and I've discovered that we can all do one breath and we can all do one breath successfully and Enjoyably And so if you can just take the time as frequently as possible throughout the day preferably before you're in a low mood or before you're stressed or anxious or unhappy and take that one breath only with the goal of enjoying that breath and not letting thoughts get in the way So you just let your thoughts go and you breathe in and out through the nose from the stomach and you do it only with the goal of enjoying it Like it's the last breath you will ever take on the planet If you did that one thing it's the most transformative practice I've ever discovered Nobody believes me on that The only people that believe me are the ones who have actually tried it for long enough but it sounds so poultry But I promise if you really want to be happy and you just practice doing that one thing while you're swiffer doing laundry typing you'll discover that with a lot less effort and energy you become so much happier and so much more peaceful and so much smarter too I love that II I love the simplicity of it and it has certainly changed my life and I I make a a practice of meditating daily and sometimes it may be two minutes sometimes it may be 12 minutes or longer but it's the act of doing it It's the act of taking that that moment and

deep breathing the way that you just explained and paying attention And when you do find yourself distracted which it's going to happen just go back to the breath you nailed it It's a consistency over the intensity and it's just being more in the experience than the story in your head So it's learning to think less feel more think less enjoy more And that doesn't mean you have to fight thoughts stop thoughts delete thoughts You notice them just like clouds in the sky or a song on the radio If you don't fight it I promise it'll seem to pass by more quickly they'll stay for shorter periods of time And you also notice that the painful negative thinking and thoughts will be less in 10 every time because you're creating a little space between yourself and these thoughts and these stories And then suddenly what you think is the problem either dissolves itself or you find a solution to it or in some cases um you know you're able to continue to live your life despite the problem right It's not nearly as relevant or as painful as you thought it would be And in some cases it delivers gifts that you couldn't have fathomed So yeah it's you know meditation and mindfulness is such a popular topic and trend these days And I know most of us speak a hot game or we talk a hot game but we rarely walk it And uh when you're serious about happiness in the way that you are or you're serious about success in the way that you know both of us are Then you really find that that one practice can shift everything for you um in the easiest most effortless of ways So true I love that So I wanna talk about what's happening in the world today in regards to the the pandemic And I'd I'd be interested to find out from you how you're processing what's happening and how has it impacted your business And if so how and what's how how are you doing things differently to today and what's working Well Yeah So I would say that in the first month or two most folks I don't know if they were either in denial or they were fighting it But my business um slowed down and then quickly it exploded more than it ever has And I think that's both a really sad thing in some ways right Because that means people are really struggling But in another way it's really inspiring and enlightening and exciting for me because I like the idea of people focusing on what truly matters uh which is their mental health which is their psychological and emotional well-being their physical well-being and the things that they can control you know at the end of the day there's lots about this pandemic and plague and the economic thought that is not controllable focusing on and trying to control the uncontrollable is the definition of insanity in some ways Um And uh focusing on what is controllable which is always sort of what you think whether you think what you focus on and how you feel you always

have control about that So I have mostly been helping people navigate the stress and anxiety the concerns the uncertainty around all of that Some of it is related to relationships with a personal professional some of that is um really around finances and and economic um you know side effects of this entire thing Um But most of it you know is really just helping people to develop a different relationship with their thoughts and their emotions and to still enjoy life despite all the things they can't control you know when there's so much you can't control it can be frustrating at first But then you realize that the meaning and purpose you've been seeking in the future in other people or other things could be found right here And now in the present moment it doesn't have to be in the future In fact I would argue that unless you find it now in the present moment you won't find in the future either right Unless you find it yourself you won't find it outside yourself either So that's sort of where I've been um focusing on people I think most of the work is about self soothing it's about emotional regulation It's about positive reframing it's about dealing with difficult people or navigating difficult conversations because that people have become more testy more irritable The deaths of this fair have been going through you know they're kind of going through the roof You see lots of suicide you see lots of violence um you see lots of drug abuse Um So people have a hard time learning to self soothe instead of just numbing out So I'm sure every client is different and every case is is different that you work with But it can can you point to on on average when you start working with with someone the amount of time or the amount of sessions that it would normally take before you start before that individual starts to see a change So it varies so widely and it's so interesting to me Um you know and some of us it's just we've got a leg up because of our childhood or upbringing or the work that we did previously but also how dedicated dedicated we are to actually being happy or finding peace or whatever problem is we're trying to solve I think lots of us are interested in solving certain problems but we're not committed and I've struggled with that myself Like am I actually just kind of interested in dabbling or am I fully committed But I always tell folks right off the bat that you know I didn't get into this positive psychology practitioner game this behavioral change game to make money I really didn't I could have gone into a lot of other fields that have made a lot more money And my friends remind me of that occasionally Um But you know I got into it honestly to help people because it's the one voting desire in my heart OK And so I tell people right off the bat one session is all you need and I've had clients a few just

maybe I can count on one hand that have taken me up on that I said look one session take and apply exactly what I say even with just one thing and if you are really wholehearted about it it'll take you all the way home it'll lead you to all the other pieces You don't have to know at all You just have to know one thing that you do Well it's like Bruce Lee would say I fear not the man who has practiced you know 1 uh 10,000 kicks once but the one who has practiced one kick 10,000 times here right So I'd say it varies though anywhere between I mean say most people do not get by with just one session It's probably about three months you know and uh to about I try not to have people in my practice more than a year or two Generally the goals change over those two years So it makes sense Um but you know I find like I feel like if they're not making progress maybe I'm not the best fit or maybe this is not good to time for them or maybe it's not a good time for me or whatnot but I try to find something that can be more useful Uh If that makes sense what are you most proud of The fact that I didn't kill myself It sounds like the bar is so low honestly and I'm I'm most proud Um honestly it's I think the greatest achievements are internal I really do feel that you know um and they're not even achievements as much as Acknowledgments right So the greatest achievements to me are inner acknowledgements which is essentially means that what I've been trying so hard to accomplish in the world through other people with other people Um never really delivered on the happiness or peace of love that I wanted But when I turned that time energy attention and focus back inside I discovered an entire world uh that has exceeded my expectations and has delivered every single time You know it's like we go seeking the world for riches but there are riches inside and they're real and they're guaranteed and everyone who goes inside to find them eventually finds them and is fulfilled by them You know and uh most of us who have lived in the world can't say that about the world you know and that's not to me that we can't enjoy the world that we can't support And help the world we should but we can do that so much better when we spend time with ourselves practicing mindfulness meditation prayer whatever your practice is doesn't matter what it is Ok But something that allows you to see the infinite in internal nature of yourself and the infinite in internal nature that is happiness that is peace that is love and that is true wealth and abundance um that changes and shifts the entire game for you And you're able to show up in the world as a bright light that can't easily be dimmed by all the dark sources and dark forces that seemingly seem to pervade the world Beautiful Well you're definitely a bright light No question about that

Takes light to recognize light my friend Let me tell you you Are you are that Thank you brother I appreciate that Do do you have a gratitude practice Um I did I did So I'll share something interesting about this gratitude thing and you're right Gratitude is a huge boon to our happiness No question about that The interesting thing too is that happiness also increases our gratitude which is interesting right So it's this positive feedback loop Same thing is true by the way of generosity and happiness When you're generous you become happier When you're happy you become generous Now there's something there's a little qualification I want to add to that because that's the body of research I do think almost all research Well the point of it is to describe the average Right That's what science does Well it doesn't describe the outlying conditions so much And that's not his job When I was struggling with my own unhappiness I tried very hard to be really generous and charitable and kind and uh full of gratitude and I didn't do a good job of that Let me tell you and I would get mad at myself and I would judge myself for not feeling more sort of grateful and appreciative of the health I had the incredible girlfriend I had my unbelievably loving family my two beautiful German cars my great consulting job like I had a hard time I was like why don't I feel more grateful I'm so blessed I'm infinitely blessed I have no reason to complain what's wrong with me and it only piled on or added to my unhappiness And so I'm not suggesting for a second that we don't aim for generosity I think lots of you know cognitive behavioral therapy even but lots of therapeutic approaches are all about getting outside of yourself helping others supporting others And that's often what you most need But I will say if you're coming from a place of emptiness or unhappiness and you're trying to find gratitude or things to be grateful about sometimes it's taking the hard long route to happiness I found instead when I can quiet my mind I feel instant gratitude for no good reason I think the ultimate goal sort of is to feel unconditional and unreasonable and unshakable immovable gratitude or love right And that's kind of gratitude without cause or reason that you just feel good and grateful And you can't describe exactly why maybe things aren't going that well but you're just like oh I'm so happy to be alive you know So I think there are multiple approaches There one is yes I do have a gratitude practice Or at least I used to have a gratitude journal It was a self love journal where I find things about myself to be grateful about but also things about the world and other people to be grateful about That was very helpful especially as I was becoming beginning to come out of the unhappiness But when I was in the deep most deeply unhappy state I didn't have access to that psychological

and emotional capital resources that would let me get there which is weird I know it sounds odd Um But it's a practice too right So it's like a muscle So I think part of it is that as you practice it and do those reps every day you get stronger and the gratitude practice becomes easier right That is super interesting with what you went through though and that you weren't uh you know even though you had that practice you just weren't feeling it totally I was like and I think part of that is and I wonder about you but it was I think part of that too was that I was living somebody else's script when you're living somebody else's script and your life is filled with shoulds Then it's hard to feel grateful about things that you feel were never your choice to begin with You know it was like the job It was great company great people But I hated that it was nothing more antithetical to who I was and probably that job in so many ways you know uh I couldn't talk to people about personal things and that's one of the things that makes me me But yeah I think you absolutely nailed it It is kind of interesting isn't It truly is So before I ask my last question to you where can we go to connect with you Where is the best place to purchase your book and how where can we go to consume your your your content Yeah I appreciate that Um So you can check me out at my website which is coach Rob Mac M ac K dot com You can find me on all social media platforms uh especially Instagram at Rob Mac M AC K official And you can find my book Happiness from the inside out everywhere Great books are sold including Amazon and Barnes and Noble Wonderful Well we will link to all of that in the show notes Is there another book in the works There is there's five more So yeah I I wrote five books Um I mean look it's been what is it I don't know almost 10 years or so since I wrote Happiness from the inside out And I love books I don't know about I mean clearly you are like one of the most educated people I know I'm self educated Um you know both of us and I think I just have a love for books I always will And so I continued writing since the day I dropped the first book and it took I put it on the shelf though because I think when you're going through a lots of change you write something and you put it on the shelf and then like four months later you go back and you're like what is this This is no this is not it I've gone beyond beyond that This is just like not the right you know so you keep having this process So you eventually get to a place where you get to kind of you don't hit a plateau but you get to relax a little bit and then you can finally accept what you've written and you feel good about it So yeah I've got five coming out um two next year beginning of the fall and then uh two the following year and then one the year after oh that is so so good to

hear So I'm gonna ask you this is not my last question but I definitely want to reconnect with you We'll we'll connect before then But when the next book comes out let's please take some time Number one I'm gonna read it But then I want to take some time to delve into that a bit and share that with the audience as well because uh your your way of articulating a a story and sharing information is outstanding and your message needs to be heard And there are especially now but in all times but especially now it's so very important that that that people are able to attach to something that gives them meaning and helping them overcome the challenges that we're facing and that we face every day and you are a perfect resource for that So thank you for continuing to write and I'm I can't wait to uh to see what's coming down the pike for you brother That means so much to me I don't I don't get that emotional that often but that hit me right in the heart man Like I really appreciate that coming from you That is the highest compliment Um I fully received that which I've had to work on receiving compliment I really really appreciate you saying that man you made honestly you made my month with that So thank you Wonderful Well thank you So here is my last question to you What's one of the biggest gifts that life is giving you that you didn't realize at the time Hm Man it's a good one I would honestly say this unhappiness thing this suicide thing man It's like I would I used to think about death I don't know dozens of times a day It was definitely felt like a curse I could not get my mind off of death Like I was obsessed with it Ok And I was like this is a problem I can't stop this thought And of course any time you try to stop the thought you actually feed the thought right So it just got worse after I had this suicidal experience and then began really committing to this journey of self love peace and happiness I have discovered that this thought of death one of the greatest gifts ever because it's death that makes life so meaningful You know it's death that makes every moment perfectly precious and priceless It's prosperous every minute I mean you're infinitely prosperous I mean in time more than money is something It's the most it's the only appreciating infant appreciating asset I think on the plant the more you spend the more it's worth and you can't save it invest it and earn compound interest off of it Every moment not spent today fully lived and loved fully experienced and enjoyed is lost forever You can't ever recoup it And so you can make more money you can never make more time And so I think for me death is a recognition that life is perfectly priceless and precious and it can only be lived in the present moment And that for me is just everything you know I never I don't want to ever get so caught in my

life that I forget that it's the happy moments when strung together that make for a happy life you know And so I just want to take care and care take this present moment Gosh what a beautiful gift Thank you and Robert I I thank you so very much I am just I'm just so grateful for you I'm grateful that we connected over a month ago And I just I I look forward to continuing this relationship and continuing to learn more from from you and and growing as a result of these types of conversations So thank you so very much for sharing of your knowledge of your wisdom of your story with all of us on business minds Coffee chat the pleasure and privilege is all mine I um and so I'm inspired by you I love your work I love your heart I love who you are You the time we have a conversation I feel like there's an indelible mark left in my heart and my soul man And I mean that from the bottom of my heart thank you so much for inviting me to the conversation Thank you so much for your encouragement and your kindness and you are stuck with me forever Bro So we are gonna continue the conversation Yes absolutely Thank you so much and for the rest of you thank you so much for watching And if you found value in this episode and I have no doubt that you did You know what to do go ahead and like and share and please subscribe to the youtube channel and until next time stay healthy and optimistic Keep learning and growing read happiness from the inside out And remember that transformative change in your life and business begins with you and absolutely nothing happens until you take action and we will see you on the next episode of Business Minds Coffee Chat take care