

Unlocking Happiness with Friends with Robert Mack

Hi there I'm Mindy Stearns and I'm JD Cargill and I'm Michelle Argo Welcome to friends and we are three besties who met over two decades ago in the Los Angeles local news scene And now we started a podcast really focused on friendship and kind of getting through midlife with the power of friendship That's right And we have wildly different points of view but we embrace each other with humility honesty sometimes brutal honesty and a lot of humor And we hope our listeners feel the love get inspired energized and walk away or drive away with tons of life hacks tips and tricks to get you through this crazy thing we call life We are midlife A f and blossom A H So here we go Oh thank you so much for joining us everyone Today we are here with the gorgeous May I say Robert Mac Thank goodness this podcast has video because then you can all keep you guys forever I tell you well we're keeping you forever too I feel like we should really paint a picture for the listeners at home because you got to see it to believe it so beyond just the physical beauty There's also so many accolades here You were ily educated you're an author you're a show host you're an expert but most importantly you are a celebrity happiness coach Robert Mac What is a celebrity happiness coach And how do I get the job Lots of debt bro Lots of debt to sign up for some debt man I mean I know I I really became a celebrity happiness coach Kind of like the hard way I was suicidal for years I was yes really depressed I didn't mean to start off the show that way but that's kind of the way it was you vulnerable Thank you That Tell us about that Yeah I feel like I was sort of I felt like I was born unhappy I was really depressed Very sort of skeptical pessimistic about life itself you know and uh I did pretty well in school I had a great family very healthy but as time went on and as I got better and better at school and like you know at sports I just felt worse and worse for it Yeah So eventually I got to a place where I was just seriously seriously depressed and uh you know suicidal So I was experiencing in life What when did you identify that this is dangerous Yeah Um so I'd say that at 678 I was aware that I was you know different and then I'd say it started getting bad At 13 14 And then by the time I was like 22 23 I started researching ways to kill myself Yeah Yeah Yeah I like that happiness coach Maybe that is right So it's fascinating to me Exactly I um got to a place where I started researching the suicide and like how to kill myself and I didn't have like access to a lot of the means and ways to do it Um so I just decided I was going to slash my wrist So I literally went into the kitchen got

a knife and I just you know slash my wrist I still have the suicide test marks there Yeah And um but something very strange happened when I did that as I'm like digging a knife in I suddenly felt like this indescribable peace and joy and bliss like wash over me for no good reason My external like the external circumstances and conditions of my life didn't change at all But on the inside I felt differently in that moment So I was like oh I can postpone the suicide thing for like an hour And I didn't I didn't even commit to a full hour I was just like uh I can postpone it for a little while but maybe I'll just do a little research right And then you know the hour basically bled into several hours into several days into several weeks and now decades and decades later you know and the whole time I was doing research and like really trying to apply what I was reading And um you know it was like two steps forward three steps back But I learned so much so much that you think there was some grace That was definitely what do you attribute to that Yeah So um I didn't understand at the time and it took me years to finally come around to realizing that I would call it divine intervention But really was my mind was finally quiet for just long enough to experience the peace that's always there Do you feel were you diagnosed with I mean back in our day there was no I had self diagnosed I self diagnose and my parents get mad at me but I said I have a DH D I had dyslexia Um and I believe I have it as an adult too Like it's not I know they say sometimes you can grow out of a DH D but I can tell my focus or the voices in my head or things like that I still struggle with as an adult and learning was hard for me I had things backward Did you do you feel like that noise was something other than depression or was it something you were struggling with as you Yeah I would say that um I definitely was a ruminator right So you know statistically scientifically women tend to ruminate more than men which means you just you know you're sort of self reflective but not in a necessarily positive way You think about what you're thinking about you think about what you're feeling and you go around and around in circles and I was definitely experiencing that even as a little kid you know I would just remember going in circles about that It's like having your will stuck in the mud and just keep hitting the gas harder and harder to try to get out But of course that doesn't work So that grew over time And then you know you sort of as you grow in knowledge you start to look at the entire world and the little tiny self you were doing when you're 10 or 12 you look at the whole world and say oh my goodness it's not just me but the whole world is mad The whole world is a mess You know So what's the point of living and all the gifts Do you feel that way

Sorry The gifts of you having those issues as a child has made you You know we've talked about shadow Look at all the things that you went through just getting to the other side though Thank God you're here I wanna say that thank God you're here and you made it to the other side But all of those struggles you had look at all the work you you become you you made your whole education around it Yeah it's fascinating Right I mean life is wild Like you couldn't I could never see this from where I was at that point in time You know and as they say you can't you can only live life forward but understand it backwards You know the dots all connect now but it did not connect at all at that point in time And I look now at my life and say oh my goodness I wouldn't have you know I wouldn't have met Vanessa Williams I wouldn't have been able to write the book I wouldn't have been on the show I wouldn't have been on the own show I wouldn't be able to help other people through exactly what I was experiencing decades ago Had I not been through it myself So it's kind of profound the ways in which sort of life is just like perfectly woven tapestry Um that you can only truly appreciate once you've lived it Yeah I do have a question Um Rob you know let's talk because there's a lot of people who might be listening right now who have a child who is struggling with some kind of depression that they cannot put their finger on it and they're gonna hear you say that and they're gonna say to themselves OK how did he do it How did he go from that place where my kid is right now To the place where I would love to see my kids someday where you are now talk talk to us about your journey Yeah Uh Great great question So you know I'll answer that in two ways So for me once I started doing the research I eventually started basically making different decisions So in the very beginning it was all about action So I was like ok I don't like the job I had I had a consulting job great people terrible job Um I didn't love the city It was cold it was in Philadelphia great city and I didn't like the weather Um and so I was basically reading like every book I possibly could on happiness and finding your purpose and all this stuff They were all great books but I couldn't find a whole lot of answers there But the one piece of data that I did have at the time was like hey you like being in the sunshine like that was it I was like ok this is it this is all I've got is I like being in the sunshine and I like women That was the other one I was like oh my God that's all I got You know that's all I have to go on man So you know it's more about this sunshine Yeah he's like I'm not interested in that other part at all So it's interesting I just took basically took action on those two things but especially the sunshine and moved to Florida and all of a sudden then the

next step unfolded and the next step and the next step So for me it was just putting 1 ft in front of the other and acting on the information I had at the time there are people that do are affected by weather that I have an actual physical reaction to You're in Oregon I grew up in Oregon and I moved to California and I never knew that there was a sadness until I moved I didn't realize that I was carrying around this heavy weight Now not everybody is affected that way There are some people that love the rain in the dark and the you know my brother and sister in law have been there and I know they struggle She is she is a California girl and she's like I need some sun I mean she just comes alive when she's in the sun So that's a real thing She's an effective disorder I'm sure I was suffering from that as well No question about it Um You know in respect to the question around like the parents like my parents were great because they were loving and I think one of the best things you can do for anybody is just love people through things And uh you know I didn't share what I was really feeling or going through in terms of the depression or suicidal with my parents Um You know and I'm not sure they could have done a whole lot about it I do know now the one thing that's sort of most healing and transformative in any kind of relationship whether it's like a therapeutic relationship or a mother daughter relationship or brother sister relationship is unconditional regard Right So it's unconditional love And so that means non judgment and that also generally means not trying to fix it which is a little difficult especially for the guys because these guys and you can't fix it So you just have unconditional How is that difference between unconditional love Do you think it would I would call it exactly the same thing The feels like more of an active action statement It does it does I think they use regard in the therapeutic setting because unconditional love sort of has you know connotations and undertones that um might challenge boundaries right So but the idea essentially is holding a space for the other person to be themselves fully and truly without judgment without condemnation and without even necessarily trying to change them or control them in any way um that in of itself is healing So if parents can do that you know over and over again of course to do that Well you've got to practice on yourself That's the first challenge I think many people have self love is probably the most difficult love unconditional regard to deliver spoken like a chief happiness He mentioned that my husband just started a new company called Kind Lending and I am the Chief Happiness Officer Cho for short I like to call myself the chief I mean I only I can say that you can't call me that but some people are born for a job We've been friends for 20 years He can

get away with that I see that he's built that bank of goodwill with You will walk out of here with his testicles intact because he's not here Exactly Oh I'm so brave when I'm a mile away Um Rob can I ask you when you said that Um What what is so so you got through this dark period and now you're a successful well educated really you know popular and thriving celebrity happiness coach for people who might not understand what that job is What is it that you do And how did you do it Well can you also before you answer that can you kind of tell us how you got the degree because you're you're not just a someone who chose to be a happiness coach because you found happiness And again you're not just a life coach who you've disappointed yourself I can help you You literally went through in a rigorous study That's right I've got those tuition uh bills to prove like I so it's a good good point So at the time I was working for a consulting company I was doing management consulting and some executive coaching And um I basically you know went back to business school And then part of the way through that I discovered this other program that I wanted to do later which was a master's in applied positive psychology program at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia And it's really the science of what makes life worth living But it's really yeah the study in science of sort of where happiness and success intersect So like what leads to happy life What doesn't what leads to a successful life and what doesn't And of course most of us won't be surprised But like we tend to think that being extraordinarily successful or making a lot of money or having great relationships will lead you to happiness But of course that's not true right Um But and and that instead actually what they found was that when you're happy you actually increase the sort of the um objective conditions and circumstances of life in terms of like how good they are right So the happiest people are happier people they basically live longer 6 to 7 years longer They make 600 to \$700,000 more on average over the course of their entire life Um they experience less job burnout they get married earlier stay married longer are happier in all relationships whether they're married or not uh they experience better health Um But in all ways happiness really improves Is it a state of mind Uh So great question So I would say I I want to answer d of course But just about how you could become a celebrity happiness But is it a state of mind Yeah So I would say that um in the beginning we tend to think that happiness is what you do It's like oh if I can just do more of the things I love and if I can just do more of the work I love and that's partly true But then as you kind of grown this happiness thing you really you come around to sort of believing and feeling

that it's a state of mind that it's happiness is what you think Um And I lived that through for a while and it's very helpful but I would say that ultimately happiness isn't what you do It's not what you think it's what you are So when you not thinking and when you're just being that's when you feel the most peaceful joyful and loving and it's lasting and meaningful and abiding But you really have to practice that until you get to a place of really experiencing it Because if you've noticed even when you're doing something or thinking something there's an anxiety there's like this under sort of lying anxiety that's still there that's like not perfect peace that perfect piece that we're ultimately all after is underneath between beneath above below those thoughts And so you've really got to practice that for a while But that's one of the reasons that for instance we all love like the dreamless state of sleep when you're just sleeping and you're not dreaming it's perfect peace There's no anxiety or stress or nightmares or activity And that's also why people like sex like intimacy like orgasm because you're finally for one second or two seconds or whatever completely quiet or not or not quiet So J DJ D had asked I mean how do you become a celebrity coach I mean I mean I would imagine or happiness coach to the celebrities That was his question And I mean I mean imagine people look at celebrities and think oh their lives are great They're famous they have lots of money they have all this stuff they have accessibility of voice I mean there's some people really struggling Oh my gosh what was it that said Oh I want everybody to become rich and successful so they can finally realize it's not the answer Right Right It's like I mean so yeah so you know celebrities public figures you know popular people experience the exact same issues and challenges that we do with that Well look at Robin Williams who struggled who brought so much happiness to others but couldn't bring it to himself Somehow there was a link missing in that self love And how do you Well no not necessarily mindy That's just because he could have a medical condition where you know it might not be a link that Messina might just be a you know a lot of people who suffer from depression have a serious chemical imbalance and unless they know how to maneuver through that um it can be detrimental obviously Like Robin Well I think that I mean I you know what I agree I would I I echo that that that is in some ways a link medical your medical state is a big link to the whole picture of how life is I don't mean it as he wasn't I know he had clinical issues So those are very important to address obviously And then that where you come in is beyond those Yeah it's it's a good you guys are making such a great point here It's pretty profound and important to highlight which is that

you know um at the end of the day you know we could talk about happening in lots of ways I was pretty sure in fact I was completely sure that I had some kind of I guess just lack of like neurotransmitters that I had a sort of you know like it was a physical yeah I really felt like it was a chemical issue right Like a biochemical issue in my brain And what's interesting is because I didn't have access to or take advantages of you know opportunities to access like you know a psychiatrist or psychologist or any of these things I came around to discovering that I didn't need any of those things Not that people shouldn't use them But as much as I thought that it was something chemical I found out that it wasn't And part of the problem with the science is that you know sometimes it's hard to know you know correlation isn't causation So sometimes you will have folks that are experiencing depression and they and you tend to find that oh my goodness they're lacking this or they're a little deficient in that Um But at the end of the day did the depression cause it did it cause the depression they if there's a you know sort of a feedback loop and so it's a little challenging Yeah At the end of the day the one thing I can say with certainty based on my own experience is that unhappiness is just overthinking It's unwanted thought Happiness is over unhappiness is over Yeah it's unwanted thought It's just unhappy thoughts We can complicate in lots of ways But at the end of the day without the unhappy thoughts you're happy So if you I read somewhere I heard what was I listening the other day Someone said if you give a thought power it becomes part of you Like otherwise you just recognize it It's just a thought Don't hold on to it It's a thought recognize it as a thought and let it go It's just a thought Your feelings aren't facts That's what people say all the time Your feelings aren't facts You don't you don't have to regard them as if they are these unchangeable permanent things that exist in your life Um I think people would probably listening would be curious to know like because I just want to define it for people because it's not something we hear all the time We hear life coach we hear a therapist but a celebrity happiness coach What do you do Maybe give us an example of a client who might call and that way you understand the actual process Great question So you know folks will call Generally folks don't say I'm unhappy Usually they say I don't have love or my partner sucks or I wish I had a partner And so you know I just meet them where they are I don't try to convince them that they're really after happiness but they're calling it in a relationship right now So I meet them where they are and then essentially there's this like Ivy League developed like you know positive psychology profile or sort of assessment they fill out Um And you know I

basically begin to like reduce that down to something that I can share back with them So they'll take these this battery of assessments things like you know how resilient they are and how much gratitude they feel on a daily basis and what's their like positive and negative emotion ratio and things like that Um The relationship style but that's sort of often where we start not always but often where we start and then most of you know being sort of a happiness coach means just having conversations with people uh 30 minutes 45 minutes an hour where they're sharing what they're thinking and feeling And I'm doing what I can to basically hold a space for unconditional regard and unconditional love And I'm nearing back to them their own thoughts and their own wisdom and their own insights and their own questions Um But I'm doing that in ways that it helps them to positively reframe it or think of it in a new and fresh way Right And so ideally and I tell all my clients this and I've been telling them for 20 years if they had one session and they just applied the one thing or two things that I told them in that session they would never need to ever come back But I can count on one hand the number of people that have actually been able to do that just because we've been practicing thinking and feeling and behaving for decades So you're not going to turn that around always in 45 minutes or an hour It is a habit It is a thought process is a is a habit You've been perfecting for years years to unwind that So if you could give a tangible like someone could walk away that they could start practicing right now Someone has a it's maybe someone who's in a loop a negative loop that's never gonna happen right now in the in the midst going on crazy crazy fear feeders So how what what's one thing someone could take away and say you know what Just try This Is there a general I mean or is it individual can give a couple for sure I would say that not sort of number one when you're feeling especially negative the best approach in tech and technique is to distract yourself Like what often people try to do What I used to try to do is get in there and fix the thoughts and change the thoughts and think of things positively that does not work well at all And that's like having a car in like you know fifth gear and trying to suddenly trying to jam it into reverse drop a train that way you drop a transmission that way you know So instead distract yourself with something that's positive ideally off topic or a different topic or a different theme Um I'd say that's number one folks are feeling especially you mean like maybe get off Facebook get off uh the social media for like an hour for a moment That that mindy so wonderfully overbooked herself which she often does And I was the glorious recipient of Oprah Winfrey's visionaries This was two

weeks ago which was a whole another time I was in a giant forum and Coronavirus It was love and hugs and bodily and no distancing That's what like of you being on own magazine and on uh own network with your expertise But one thing she really that resonated with me is she was talking about her friendship with Gail and our show is a lot about friendship and I really want to find out was there a friend in your dark time that helped you come to the light or maybe your greatest influence now But um she talked about how she is a person who really likes to be a homebody Whereas Gail is a fear of missing out the FOMO kind of person And she said I'm a Jomo and I love that term Jomo She has joy of missing out Oprah Oprah has joy of missing out And so in this time where we're all hunkered down and we can't do the things we love and we all often find identity in the things we love So we're not just home with our kids freaking out We have a loss of identity right We're not going to the job that we identify with We're not going out to our favorite restaurant or going to work out at the gym because that's who I am I work out every day and that's not me I'm giving my I can still do that You have to go on So we have this loss of Exactly So our actions aren't our identity but we often reflect what we do as who we are And that's not the case But how do you maybe suggest how we could have more I love I love what you just said And I completely agree and there's an expression that I share sometimes which is that every case of unhappiness is a is a case of mistaken identity every single case And um by that I simply mean that like you know we don't think of it this way but like you know you have a reputation or you have a job or you have a position but you're not those things you have a mind but you're not your mind you have a body but you're not your body And as long as you think that you not only have a body but you are a body and that you have a mind that you are a mind that you have these other things and you are them you will always suffer always there's there's no exceptions to that rule And so part of the challenge and the opportunity now right especially with you know everything that's going on in the world and self quarantining and all that is to begin to try to dive deep enough within yourself to experience a broader healthier happier existence and identity And I would say ultimately it's not something that you ever really can grasp well but if you can think it or observe it it's not you right And so the easy way that I put this is like you know can you enjoy everything you do simply by not thinking as much as you do it Right So instead can you make and turn everything that's usually an end in and of itself into a mean So for instance something as simple as washing your hands

like can you wash your hands and enjoy washing your hands and just enjoy it without feeling that you have to get it done and over with Enjoy it Sing a happy song You have to do next Right Exactly Exactly So if people it sounds like such a little poultry like little cliché thing Yes Yes Yes Exactly And it sort of brings us full circle back around to the question that you asked earlier around Like what can people really do One is they can distract themselves when they're in a really unhappy place But secondly they can practice something called micro meditation So I don't know if you guys done me meditation before but it was torture for me the first time I did it Yeah me too It was five minutes Commit to five minutes Yeah I would say one breath because honestly when I started 30 minutes was way too long five minutes was still too long because most of the five minutes like four minutes and 59 seconds I was not meditating Yeah I was mostly just thinking when will this be over I mean literally right But when you do one breath if you do one breath you can do it 100% effectively and efficiently and enjoy it Just one breath in I was listening to a deep chopra meditation You interrupted my meditation I hadn't yet I mean I can have one breath breath He said 44 breaths in through the nose Hold it for two seconds and then blow out through your mouth for six So go in for four go So we have 40 seconds four seconds in six hours 40 seconds You want to do it four times or just no just one time Take a deep breath Four seconds Hold for two released for six I like my medicine I'm just it it really honestly I know it's a little silly thing but even with like our new Apple watches and things that remind us to breathe that kind of approach to life to just remind yourself to slow down stop stop running at everything But I do have a question Rob So how I think that word happiness can be It could be this sense of like a lot of people like don't feel like happiness maybe is the goal Happiness is a byproduct of a wonderful life but there's contentedness There's like a sense of peace What what do you how do you define happiness Yeah Um So I love that I would say that um experience is the only explanation so we can get real quick real quickly We get lost in semantics and language And I every time like I do a seminar our coach and people are like happiness Don't you mean commitment or don't you mean fulfillment or What about joy What about bliss What about love I'm like yes yes yes All of that and and it's an experience and an experience that you can not explain but you can only enjoy the second that you start getting to a space and place where you're trying to figure out the differences between it all is the second And again the mind just fooled you back into pursuing happiness instead of simply enjoying the happiness that you are

Yeah So yes So if you do the micro meditation something as simple as that and you do it for the simple joy of it and most people don't because what most people do almost right away is they're like I'm gonna get good at this I'm gonna be spiritual about it all of a sudden put conditions on it and you're not unconditionally regarding yourself I love unconditional regard Do you know how many times I'm gonna say it like oh yeah great Just like with um uh back to Oprah's visionaries JD made us watch us This is a couple of months ago Lady Gaga and her term was radical acceptance that her neurologist because she had fibromyalgia and it was a lot of neurology that was creating this manifestation in her body Um But radical acceptance was such an amazing term And I'm telling you unconditional regard is right up there I love radical sex And I think that quite frankly they're the same thing aren't they They're really the same thing because if you're radically accepting someone you're in unconditional regard you are unconditionally loving I mean it's the same you're breaking through there It is Well back to our our midlife and I know you're not quite in your midlife Where are you in math With this wealth of education Doing the math I was about to reach across and slap you but I'm maintaining the 6 ft distance right now So I'm gonna have to virtually slap you right now But you're youthful and in spirit and mind and probably not as much age because of you not doing the math So what was we want we want to lace our show al always through the lens of friendship and midlife Was there someone in your life a friend or an un a person that was unexpected that came and helped you through your dark time or was a wonderful influence Yeah Um So my mom for sure is always that wasn't unexpected though right Um You know she's just a model for she totally Right Yes She's she is my unconditionally loving um model right Um But there was a guy named so when I was working in a consulting firm there's a guy named Bruce Rogel and Bruce was a partner and I remember one day literally He was like hey Rob first week hey um hey Rob uh you got a minute and I'm like oh no I'm definitely fired Like first week partners talking doesn't happen I'm definitely done Yeah Yeah Totally Totally So he took me aside and started talking to me and he said hey I wanna give you a recommendation to a book give me a recommendation It was like Sarah and the forever of friends of a feather and the forever of a of a feather And yes so I look it up look it up It's a children's book So I'm I'm extra sure now that I'm fired Like I'm like ok he thinks I'm super slow Like yeah like I'm just really slow and boy he's like recommending this children's book to me Exactly At least it was a good night moon See Exactly I love that Chief Happiness

Officer right there So she so I look up the book and I start reading it I realize that it's really written just as much for adults as it is kids and it was an Abraham Hicks book you know and Abraham Hicks uh you know Oprah I think um you know featured them on her radio show and stuff but it was all that was the first real opportunity or invitation I suppose I had into a different way of thinking And from there I just sort of I became like a voracious reader of all the Abraham Hicks teachings and that led me to everybody else That was a life changing recommendation Yes it was And I don't think he to this day I've said it to him but I'm not sure he fully understands the full import of that moment What was the core theme of that book I'm just curious Sarah Um so Abraham Hicks teaches like love of attraction stuff But basically the idea is you know you can there are two ends to every stick and you can focus on the positive end or the negative end And if you focus on focus on the negative end you will be a feather like a feather It can be a feather Yeah I mean the one end is much softer than the other Exactly See there you go Exactly That's a great example But the idea is you know the book itself is a story of a child in this really wise owl and her friend who you know like she has all kinds of bad things but she finds a way to see the best in everybody and everything Hey I've cried every episode I'm I'm trying to get through this one I got a call from my cousin She's like you gotta stop crying You're killing me because it makes her cry Do you ever have contagious cry I get contagious cry funny You should say this because the one thing everything's going on emotion is the most contagious element on the planet So it's I mean viruses but it does go both ways So it's interesting that you say this because when she asked you about the mentor we we're part of an organization the Horatio Alger Association And that um gives for these young kids who have come overcome incredible adversity And the one thing that I think that I've noticed a lot of these kids have is a mentor someone who believed in them a counselor an older brother a family member an uncle an aunt or an uncle And the question lies in is you've kind of answered that in a weird way I just had this conversation yesterday is a negative attitude Are you born with it And and because can you undo it Can you undo it And you've given me some hope today because in some of the stories they they you you have these kids and families that are just broken like nobody I just the worst possible scenario and they're siblings one sibling goes into a life of crime in the streets and gangs The other one finds education as a as an as a ticket out of the cycle And you we've always wondered are they just why does one sibling go that Why does another go that it Are you born unhappy

Because I just had this with Glenn Yesterday's conversation Are people born negative or positive So um from a scientific scientific perspective there is a bit of a genetic predisposition to like pessimism It's interesting But can it be yes it could definitely be uh pessimism could be unlearned Optimism can be learned you know the ways in which um positive psychologists talk about optimism and pessimism is a little bit different than the the lay person does You know um optimistic explanatory style is this idea of the ways in which you blame good and bad events in your life So if you're optimistic you have an optimistic explanatory style then you have a very persistent personal and um pervasive way of looking at positive events So in other words when something good happens you think it's about you it's personal and then it persists through time and space per persistent and pervasive when bad things happen you impersonal it you don't think it's gonna last through time and space pessimists do the exact opposite of that but you can be taught to do it and you can learn to do it I certainly have learned to do it And if you can learn to do it then you become resilient and in your resilience And when you face adversity and you face challenges you actually don't just find yourself traumatized You actually find yourself growing from the experience in better and more blissful ways And so it's kind of profound and they um University of Pennsylvania now does something with the army and the military where they basically teach them how to develop an optimistic explanatory style So they be resilient and so they can experience less ptsd and more post traumatic growth So it's interesting that is and so this is so fascinating to me because I know friends some just they look at the same event and one just is like how was it It was amazing The other one's like oh my God just the traffic to get there and or they just you know that they focus on things that and and it's I love you saying that And what's interesting about it is you know they've done all these studies and they basically have found that optimism predicts outcomes in life right It predict it predicts in terms of money in terms of health and relationships in terms of job earning all that stuff and success also um predicts like sports outcomes individual sports outcomes group sports outcomes or team sports outcomes and even presidential elections And yeah they're able to to basically remove the candidates and make that part anonymous and just look at the speeches and they can say this probably this person has the most optimistic speech So they probably won and they look and they did win I find that really interesting and we we have kind of made it a rule not to delve into politics a good idea but I will not yet not yet We're not there This this is just beginning but what I

have always found very hard to stomach is the negative campaigns And I've always like why can't someone run on positivity And you know we've been in that realm where I've actually questioned candidates like why can't you run on positivity I've I've questioned the people around it and they said it doesn't work I'm like well because you've never tried it Why don't we try it in a competition It is a competition and there's like price and and the the ugliness of human you know uh what do you call it The human the dark side of human is to find better shadow you're lesser You know what I will say that it's unfortunate An example where this it actually worked is in the city of Anaheim Our dear friend Tom Tate is the mayor of Anaheim He ran his campaign on Kindness and he won on a huge landslide he won and guess who is one of his best friends now is the Dalai Lama because he took notice of this political figure who actually he made his political platform on kindness Anaheim is the city of happiness at Disneyland and it's like they created you know this was his platform and he won with such an overwhelming embrace and people are I think we're hungry It is unique I I just love that that is so is so inspiring to me You know it's interesting um you know part of the challenge here is that you know the sort of human brain has a bit of a negativity bias you know So problems tend to get our attention because they that's what keeps us alive So the brain is really the mind is designed and sort of works the same way the century of a ship does So like the century of a ship goes looking for problems in order to validate its position the mind does very much the same thing It looks for problems to solve That's its job So it's an incredible problem solver But it's just as much if not more a troublemaker right So when a kid find problems it will create new new problems all the you know to solve Well I think our culture too with kids I have kids I have a eight year old and an 11 year old And as I'm definitely wanting to have their comedic juice is practiced I love comedy and and it can swing into inappropriate or not the right time or or not harmful The culture of memes that we have right now I can't help but laugh at some of them But I'm wondering if it's creating a culture for our kids of that making fun and putting down almost like you said that political thing of of saying being a negative campaign See you I mean look at the end of the day the one thing we're not taught as kids that we should be taught first is self soothing skills So all of this is about self soothing skills You know at the end of the day when you're unhappy when you're miserable when you're stressed when you're anxious when you're in fear you're looking for a way to soothe yourself Sometimes the only thing that people know to do is to put other

people down compare themselves compete with other people not a constructive way of self So we have another guest coming in on another episode and she's doing a documentary on anxiety anxiety nation And it is exactly addressing that issue Our kids don't know how to self soothe And so we're having more and more teenagers and others going through depression and suicidal thoughts and we come back to the beginning of your own thing Now I mean thank God you you were able to get find a way out whatever divine intervention happened to find this path because the gift you now give us is so necessary today in this world and what I am so grateful for your work and that you took that and you were your life was spared by whatever means however it happened it is you are such a gift to humanity and what you're doing Really Thank you so much I so appreciate that I fully received that I've had to work on saying that hard very difficult JD Um When we did our introduction show he was so uncomfortable receiving our praise and our love even though we're two of the people who you know love him the most He was uncomfortable He was so much more comfortable giving And that that's my issue too And I think there's a lot of midlife who are going in a second act of maybe career second act of relationship I'm going through a divorce I don't know if you know that but like receiving love is uncomfortable when you've been labeled a giver or someone else has been a taker And usually why does that happen Why does the taker find the giver or vice versa You need to be able to touch upon that But that ability to receive Can you give us Yeah it's um I struggle with that most of my life I think you know so there's um in psychology we know that you know people tend to prefer information that confirms their self concept OK you're much more comfortable with that information In fact you will weed out information that contradicts your self concept So if you have a negative self self concept will actually go out and seek unwittingly unconsciously sometimes wittingly unconsciously information that validates the negative view you have of yourself That's why it's so important to help shift that you and you need support What do you need What are the most important tools for shifting that negative self dialogue I would say that most importantly just a deep desire to do it like that desire has to be strong You want to get out of anything else in the world The reason I feel like I was able to sort of dig myself out of this deep dark depressing hole was because it was literally life and death For me life and death I was like if I'm gonna live I'm going to live full out full tilt Super happy Well I'm not gonna live and that desire has remained in fact deepened over time And so like I suck I can't tie my shoelaces But there's

one thing that I feel like I know as much about as anybody on the planet And it's this happiness thing because it's literally life and death And so I think really at the end of the day lots of tools lots of great techniques lots of great teachers But if you don't have the desire to change and you want it if you want if you want it like life and death if you want it as much as you want to breathe you'll find a way any path will pretty much take you there Like that's the other thing I discovered I started reading like all these different books and reading all these teachers And I discovered that if you go deep enough with any of them they all lead back to the same place So you know it's um desire I'd say that's most important there is I can you speak desire is most important Are people addicted I have I know there's people that are addicted to misery That is a that's a thing Right Yeah Um sort of identity Right I mean it's partly that it gives them purpose right about their lives Um and it's interesting you say that because I say that to my clients all the time I'm like oh if you prefer the story the unhappy story and you prefer the unhappiness you're always welcome to keep that we don't have to you know and um you know part of the challenge I think is um you know the mind is very very it's it's trickster you know and so you always get drawn back into the stories and and take control back that you gotta tell that mind what it's what's up Yes Yeah I mean it's like you know what I think about it often is like this life thing this unhappiness thing It's like a game of whack a all we're just convinced if you hit enough like if you solve enough problems or you just hit enough that you eventually like win the game But that's not the nature of the game The only way to win the game is pull the plug Oh I like no more Whack a mole no more Whack em all pull the plug What what like you know so much of our our podcast is about giving um our listeners really helpful life hacks and this is a topic that so many people can relate to Personally I can absolutely relate to um um experiencing some severe depression and anxiety and having to learn a full toolbox of kit Like I have a whole kit you know from hot baths to reading to a gratitude list to calling a friend who I know loves me unconditional or has unconditional regard for me Either of these lists now because I've gone through a lot of the work What are the for someone listening right now who may be thinking I'm not feeling the best whether it's happiness or contentness or joy or whatever whatever the word is I'm not feeling it and I want it What are the what is what are some really helpful tools that they can take away from this That will get them there I love that So number one seek professional help There's just no way of getting around that It doesn't have to be a therapist It doesn't have

to be a coach You can literally find authors and find youtube videos or whatever you go books are sold Amazon Barnes and Noble You have to find I need to do the there's no audio book available yet You have the best voice you should be So I'm staying here forever I said page one from Vanessa Williams I might add I love her She's amazing So that's number one Number two is actually if you create a Happiness Islands list So just notice the things and the people is yes Notice the people and the activities Um and the places that just naturally easily and effortlessly uplift you make you feel inspired and make you feel alive Write those down and don't make hard you know don't make it hard work just write it down It should be to fun Exactly Ok And the key is yes That's right Exactly Right No just on that side note I remember doing an exercise where we went to find our definition of success and we went through from like when we start having obviously conscious thought from 5 to 10 what do you remember is the most exciting point of your life What was the most happy memory And then 10 to 15 do you remember What time do you remember when you were experiencing Just that unbridled joy What happened And then you start connecting what kind of events and experiences bring you joy whether it's an adrenaline rush or excitement or being with friends or a party or a pony or I love that and you start looking Exactly And then you start to ask yourself and you nailed it right there You start to ask yourself the w questions um which are like what when where why and you start to get at the root of the essence of what it is about those activities or those people that make you feel uplifted or inspired or happy Right So that's the second step with that And I'd say the most third um most important thing you can possibly do is drown yourself in like positive material like consume as much happiness material as you can like So ideally something that's educating you But that because literally if you left to your own devices and you left to your own mind you're going to be miserable I need to shut down my Facebook page It's tough Right Paralyzing for midlife is when you're a kid you think you're going to get to this and check off all those boxes and feel happiness Well then when we get to this age it's elusive right It's fleeting We we don't understand it I think what's really important for survival as a midlife is to really identify what it does bring you joy But also know you're forever a student It's a journey not a destination You don't come to an end of figuring out or you're not in a dead end job Don't think about that You can reinvent your job yourself or if you're feeling down like God I did such a bad mom fail There's so much mom shame out there and it breaks my heart because we those voices go in and

judgment of ourselves You can wake up tomorrow and and have a mom victory You don't have to sit in that You can make shifts and changes where I think that we thought that everything was done and figured out I just love that and I agree with you there it's uh interesting to me because one of my favorite expressions is that there's no happy ending to an unhappy journey Like no happy ending to a I think we should end our podcast on that Not a happy ending I'm the Chief Happiness Officer I'm here for happy endings Wait say that one more time Yeah There's no happy ending to an unhappy journey Wow I love that I have a feeling this is gonna be one of many times We must have you back I love being here and I love what you guys do seriously And I love the way you do it and I love each of you I didn't mean that so much like you guys made me feel at home You are always welcome in our house You're a part of the friends You are officially a member of the friends and then welcome to you guys We're gonna make him physically make him get an audible right now because there's got an amazing voice and has a recording studio in her house She'll be happy You can come Well she'll make one for you but I'll make it right in the bus I have an extra bedroom too Two cute little boys running around to make you feel good about Well thank you so much Thank you Thank you for giving it a blessing Thank you to you No more handshakes We rub elbows with all the right people Very nice JD We love you I love you guys Thank you I love that Thank you so much for giving our listeners some helpful tips on how to make you know their lives as positive as possible Peace out friendship at friends some out Oh honey Hey George