



Wake Up Happy with Dani DiPirro

HOST

Kym Yancey

SPEAKER

Dani DiPirro

PRESENTATION

Kym

Well, good morning. I hope you have survived this incredible holiday and celebration to all the men and women that have served our country. I just want to say to everybody this is the beginning and start of a whole new, incredible week and it's wonderful to have you here, part of *Wake Up Happy*. My name is Kym Yancey; I'm the co-founder and CEO of Live Happy.

I know that many of you are subscribers that are tuned in—that's how, in fact, you learned about *Wake Up Happy* is through the magazine and our website. But for those of you that this is your first-time experience, you can learn a lot about happiness at livehappy.com, and you can also, with

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our magazine which is on newsstands across the country, it's there for you to tap into authentic happiness. We're so proud of our writing group and our team and what they've put together to really celebrate and educate and inform and enlighten people about what real, authentic happiness is all about.

To continue that, with our *Wake Up Happy* series, we have a fantastic guest with us today. Her name is Dani DiPirro. She is an author, blogger, and designer living in a suburb of Washington D.C. In 2009, she launched the website PositivelyPresent.com—I love that, PositivelyPresent.com—with the intention of sharing her insights about living a positive and present life. Dani is the author of *Stay Positive*, *The Positively Present Guide to Life*, and a variety of e-books. She is also the founder of Twenty3, which is a design studio focused on promoting positive, modern graphic design and illustration.

Now, Dani's second book, which is *The Positively Guide to Life*, is available at Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, and at your local bookstore. Dani, it's wonderful to have you here as a part of *Wake Up Happy*.

Dani

Thank you so much for having me.

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Kym Dani, in your *Positively Present Guide to Life*, you've dedicated an entire section to just the home. What are the best ways to have a happy home?

Dani Well, some of the best ways to have a happy home involve making sure that you feel like you're surrounded by things that you love and a look and feel that you love in your home. That could be anything; it doesn't matter if it fits in with a stereotypical design look or feel, but whatever makes you happy. So it's surrounding yourself with pictures that make you happy or artwork, colors that really appeal to you—anything that will make you feel good right when you walk in the door is so important.

I also feel like it's very important to get rid of the things that don't make you feel happy. Usually that's clutter, anything that you look at and you're like, uh, I need to take care of that, or you feel frustrated by it, or stressed out by it, get rid of that stuff. That can be kind of a hard thing to do, but in my book I talk about some steps and ways to do that.

Another really important part about having a happy home is doing the best you can to have good relationships with the people that you share your home with. Many of us have spouses, children, roommates, a variety of people we live with, and if you don't get along well with those people, it can be really hard to feel calm and happy at home. Of course, those

relationships can be challenging, so that's another thing that I talk about in my book is how to make the most of those relationships, because they're not always going to be perfect, especially if you're dealing with somebody who's going through a very stressful time or if you live with—

Kym

For a lot of us A personalities, we're moving and we're doing things, clutter creates—I mean, in your research around the whole notion of clutter and some of the things it causes in terms of your feeling about your day, about your life, what can you tell us about any of the scientific facts around the impact that clutter has on you that we might be surprised to know?

Dani

[Indiscernible] or when you look at, you feel excited by, you know do this versus do that, and it just sort of weighs on you. So it's a really important thing to take care of. For some people, they have trouble identifying what is clutter versus what they really want to keep and need. In the book, I sort of walk through steps for figuring that out. But, staying organized, even if it doesn't come naturally to you, is such an important part of keeping a happy home, and some people have to work on it more than others.

Kym I also want to share with the audience I discovered—I had a bunch of guests at my house. It was my mother’s 80th birthday, so we had all of our family—it always tickles me when you start to—[audio disruption].

Dani Exactly, exactly. That’s what happens with a lot of people, when they move or something that has to motivate them, then moving is a great time to do that, because you don’t want to take clutter to your new place. But if you’re not moving, that doesn’t mean that you can’t go through your stuff and look at what you don’t need.

One of the tips that I talk about in my book and I think it can be really helpful when you’re struggling to let go of things—because a lot of people, I’ve found, really have a hard time letting go of things because of sentimental reasons or they think they might need it in the future. But what I try to do, and what I try to tell others to do, is to think about how much somebody else might love something that you have sitting in your closet and never use or you think you might use someday. Well, somebody might use it right now and it might mean the world to them. You can really donate a lot of your stuff to other people who are in need and that can feel really good and rewarding and make it a lot easier to let go of things that you might be tempted to hang on to.

Kym

Yes, and the bottom line, getting rid of this clutter and organizing things in your home is going to make you feel happier. These are the things that, I think, Jeff Olson with his book *Slight Edges*, talks a lot about slight edges, the little things that you can do that, in the moment of doing them they seem insignificant, but over time, compounded, they really make a huge difference. This is another one of those things that oh, I'll get to it later, or it doesn't have the impact that you think that it does, and it does.

I'll tell you something else—tell me if you agree with this, Dani—a big win, I think, is just making your bed. Just making your bed in the morning is a huge win.

Dani

Yes, absolutely. I feel like it makes such a difference to the way the room looks, to how you feel when you come back. If you go to work, or if you work from home like I do you might go out and run errands, but you come back and your bed is made, it is a small thing, but it makes a big difference.

The same goes for putting things away. In my book, I talk about finding a place for everything and then, as soon as you're done using something or you get something new that fits into a certain category, you put it away. Again, that's a small thing, just taking the time to, for example, put your

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shoes back in the closet instead of just leaving them by the door, it really doesn't take very long, but over time those little things add up and make you feel happier.

They also save you time. When you know where things are, you can easily find them, it saves you so much time and, as we all know, having more time is definitely a great way to be happier.

Kym Tell me about your specific focus with positively present. This is a huge, obviously, deal to you and something that you really practice, but what's behind your movement around being positively present and what that all conjures up for you?

Dani For me, being positively present is about trying to make the most of every moment. I tend to default to more of a negative attitude, so when I started the blog it was to document my journey towards being more positive, trying to focus on the good, and trying to stay more in the moment and not worry so much about the past or stress out about what might happen in the future.

So I decided those are the two things that are really important to me: staying positive and staying present. It really impacts all sorts of aspects

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of life from home to work to relationships, and particularly dealing with change and difficult times. Since I started the site, I've been through all sorts of things in life and sort of had to find ways to stay positive and stay present during those times and I've shared those with my audience.

Kym Was there a tipping point for you, Dani? Was there something that, whether it was early in life that you said to something to yourself, I'm going to make sure—what was the trigger for you making this focus into being positively present?

Dani I think, for me, it was sort of a quarter life crisis. I was 25 and I just felt like I had reached the point of I was somewhat of an adult, still kind of a young adult, but I didn't feel happy with my career or my relationships. I didn't feel like I was really passionate about what I was doing.

I felt, for a long time, that I could try to find things outside of myself that would make me happier. That would work momentarily or even for days at a time, but nothing was really lasting. It occurred to me that I really needed to do some work on the inside if I really wanted to be happier more often. I realized that I couldn't be happy all the time—that's just impossible—but if I could try to maintain a positive attitude and try to

stay in the present, then I would have a better chance of being happier more often and I've really found that to be true.

Kym You said something earlier, moments ago, about how you said you tend to default to the negative. First of all, thank you for saying that. This is a big deal when I hear you say this. I say this because I know I had my sister—let's see, what would she be? She would be my sister-in-law? What do you call—? I can't believe it, right after the holidays. My brother's wife, that would be my—?

Dani Sister-in-law.

Kym Okay, thank you. Thank you. Okay. Anyway, she was telling me the exact same thing. At her office, the employees were negative, her superiors were negative, everything around her was negative. Negative, negative, negative. I noticed that even when she would talk, it was just about all the things at work—really, to your point, defaulting to the negative.

It's so easy to get into this cesspool of just recycling all these negative thoughts, right? But I applaud you. I'm just glad you used those words; that you had a tendency to default to the negative. What advice would you give other people, taking your positively present concepts about

defaulting to the negative, that you use for yourself that help you to rise above?

Dani

I think the first thing for people to do is to be open to the idea of being positive. For me, for years I kind of thought of positivity and happiness as almost being naïve and sweeping things under the rug and pretending everything is fine. I hesitated to even be open to the idea of positive thinking because I thought, oh, people that are thinking like that are not really thinking critically or they're not intelligent enough to see what's really going on.

So for me, it was really I got to a point where I was open to it and thought to myself, being positive and seeking happiness isn't naïve and it's not unintelligent. It's actually a really smart thing to do.

The next thing was I really started becoming aware of my thoughts. I know that sounds like an obvious thing—they're your own thoughts, you'd think you'd be aware of them, but sometimes we really get carried away with what we're thinking about and we don't even realize how negative we're being.

So I try really hard—and I'm still a work in progress when it comes to this—but try to pay attention to what I'm thinking and how I'm viewing a situation and ask myself, is there a more positive way to look at this? Or, when it comes to, as you mentioned with your sister-in-law, dealing with negative people, that can be a really big challenge when you're trying to stay positive. But I try to think is there something positive I can take from interacting with this person or is there something that they might have, some positive qualities that, at first glance, I don't see, but if I pay closer attention I might find them.

In general, I try to avoid negative people and negative situations, but as we all know that's not always possible, especially when it comes to work and even sometimes in your family. There are people that you need to be around that aren't always positive influences. But I've found ways to sort of make the most of whatever situation I'm in, even if it's not a great one.

Another really important thing to think about is focusing on gratitude. I'm sure a lot of your listeners have heard this before; it's certainly not a new concept. But the reason that so many happiness experts and people in the field of positive thinking focus on gratitude is because it really does work. It's almost impossible, if not completely impossible, to be negative

and unhappy if you're thinking about all the things that you have to be grateful for.

Kym Well said.

Dani It really is hard to do. When I find myself in a low mood or really struggling to stay positive, that's one of the first things I do. I think, okay, what can I be thankful for? The fact that I can walk around, the fact that I'm alive, the fact that I have family—I mean, it can be as simple as that. Once you start listing those things, you're like, wow, things aren't really as terrible as I thought, or okay, this situation might be terrible, but you know what, I've been through really terrible situations before and I've overcome them and it's gotten better. This will get better, too.

Kym I want to move into how do you deal with difficult housemates. I just want to get some of your thoughts on that, inside your home, right, as it relates to the happy home. But I just want to comment, I love this—I also want to comment, with my sister-in-law, that one of the things that I told her, everybody, was I told her, "Listen, you've got to be the change you want to see. Be the change you want to see."

I'm telling you, if I had a Bible here, I'm going to tell you that it was just a couple of months later we saw each other again, and she talked about how the office is completely different. But see, what's different is her attitude. She posted a board, right there in the office, with nothing but happy quotes on it, and she says people look forward to seeing, every single Friday when she changes the quote to a new happy quote to lead into the following week. She is on fire with happiness because I told her, "You get to make a choice, everything that you're talking about, here, the choices and decisions that you have to make to bring that happiness into your life."

Let's move into some of your tips around staying happy when dealing with difficult housemates—you know, your siblings, roommates, spouses, etc. What are some of your tips there?

Dani

It can be, definitely, a challenge to deal with difficult housemates because you have to live with them. You can't always escape them. I definitely advise staying away from negative people as much as possible, but sometimes you can't.

When it comes to dealing with people at home and trying to make the most of those relationships, I will bring up the point that I was just

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discussing, which is gratitude. That's one of the most important things you can do when you're having a tough day with somebody or they're driving you crazy is to be thankful for their presence. No matter how much somebody is bothering you, you're probably happy that they're in your life. That's important to be grateful for them, for the good times you've had with them, even if you're not currently having a great time.

Another thing that I really try to advise people to do is try not to take things so personally. A lot of the time when people are having fights at home or people are just not in a good mood or they're cranky, a lot of times it doesn't have to do with you, it has to do with something either going on with them or, in some cases, they've had a really hard day at work and it's hard to turn that off when you come home. They might be a little snippy. Or, if you have kids, they might have had a tough day at school or just be really tired or something. Things can really escalate if you take things personally. Somebody's snippy remark or something, sometimes you just have to let it go and realize that it might not be about you and often isn't.

Another point that I want to make sure I bring up is trying to speak in a loving way to the people that you live with. Often we take these people for granted because they're around all the time, that we don't really,

necessarily talk to them the way that we should or with the tone that we should. So even if you're having a difficult conversation or you're arguing about something, you can still speak in a loving way. You can still keep your tone in such a way that it's not going to escalate things into yelling or a combative environment.

That's a challenge and something that you have to practice, especially if it doesn't come naturally to you, but it can make a big difference in how you talk to people and being aware—same thing with being aware of how you're thinking—being aware about how you're speaking to other people. I know I've found—the people that are around you the most, you tend to be the sassiest with and the most comfortable, which can be great sometimes, but also you have to remember that these are people that you love and care about and your tone can do a lot.

Kym

I'm going to piggy-back on this. I'm so glad you brought this up. That tone of voice—everybody, your kids, your spouse, they come in—you know what, your family members deserve your best you. Don't they, Dani? I mean, they deserve the best you. To your point, if it means treating your family like they're a guest in your home, then. If that's the mental picture you've got to have so that your tone of voice, the sweetness in you, the kindness in you, all of that. How easy is it for us

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parents, when our kids drop a glass or break a glass, you know you just go what did you do? But you would never do that to a guest. If a guest did it, first thing out of your mouth is, it's okay, it's okay, not a problem.

Dani Right, exactly, exactly. A lot of us don't even realize that we're acting differently to the people that we're closest with because we've had them around for a while or we're closely related to them or something. So really being aware of the tone of the things you're saying—just a basic question, am I being nice? Sometimes we're not nice, and that's a basic, human thing that we can do for the people that we live with.

Kym Dani, I have this thing that I like. I always picture that everybody has a little sign right on their forehead. Only I see it. But that sign says different things. That sign sometimes says, I could use a hug. Or that sign says, I just wish someone would say something kind to me. You can almost tell in how people talk back to you what they need, right.

Dani Yes, you can.

Kym Listen, I want to go to—I want to call this kind of like my lightning round with you—and that is I just want you to pour into us, in terms of there's a lot of content around what you do—but I mean, I have different thoughts.

I have thoughts around I want to know what your thoughts are about finding tranquility in the home. But what I'd really like you to do is I know our audience really wants to hear from you some of your best tips overall, so I just want you to kind of freeform for us and just tell us things that you think are important for us to know going forward with our day?

Dani

Well, the most important thing is trying to be grateful, particularly when things aren't going well. That can really help. I think awareness, being aware of your thoughts, being aware of the way you're acting with other people and reacting, being aware of what really causes you stress in your life, because we all have different things that stress us out, and being aware of what those things are and trying to find ways to minimize the stress.

Sometimes you can't completely remove it, but let's say whenever you come home from work, your kids are often fighting and that stresses you out. You've had a long day and you don't want to deal with them fighting. What can you do, what proactive thing can you do when you get home to make them not fight? Maybe it's giving them each a different activity to do to separate them for a little bit so that you can kind of relax and take care of things when you walk in the door. Really trying to be

aware of what causes you stress and then how can you fix it, or make the most of it if you can't completely remove it from your life.

I've mentioned this briefly, but really getting away from negative people as much as you can. This can be very difficult if these people are close to you or people you have to work with, but if it is possible to avoid negative people, I really recommend limiting or getting rid of those relationships from your life because the way other people are really can impact you.

You've probably heard before you're the sum of the five people you spend the most time with. Well, think about those people. Are they positive influence on your life? Are they encouraging and supportive and loving? If not, you might want to think about why you're spending time with them and if it's really beneficial to you and really helping to make your life more positive.

Kym So what do you do—give me your thoughts about in a work environment. How do you turn a negative attitude from coworkers into a positive attitude? What would you tell someone?

Dani Sometimes I recommend talking with the person. Sometimes people don't even notice that they're being negative. Sometimes one of the

best things that you can do, because sometimes talking to people at work about something like that isn't appropriate or maybe it's just awkward, is really leading by example. As you mentioned, that's something that your sister-in-law, what she did with putting up the quotes and people really looked forward to.

If somebody's looking at a situation, let's say you're in a meeting and that person is just seeing all the ways this situation can go wrong, you can lead by example by pointing out the things that might go right or saying how oh, this might go wrong, but here's how we might come up with a solution to that problem.

Really, leading by example at work is one of the best things you can do. If you're in a situation at work where it's incredibly negative and you feel emotionally drained all the time, you feel like it could be borderline abusive, if it's emotionally hurtful to you, the way people are acting, I would recommend getting a new job. Or, if that's not possible, talking to the human resources department or something, because it really can have a terrible affect on you if you're surrounded by negativity that's bringing you down emotionally.

For most people, that's not the case. Most of the time it's just people that are slightly on the negative side or tend to be a little stressed out at work and for those people, leading by example can really make a big difference.

Kym Just like positivity and happiness is contagious, so is negative is contagious. You know what, you made me think, though, I will tell you, for all of you, this is one of the reasons why we created the Live Happy Notes. I'm telling you, a profound effect—and Dani, you might not be aware of these, but we created these little Post-It notes—

Dani Oh, I have some. I love them.

Kym You know what I mean.

Dani They're great.

Kym Anybody that's got a negative thing going on at their office, order some of those Post-It notes ASAP from the Live Happy store. So just go to livehappy.com, go to the store. Now, you get those Post-It notes, they're ten custom, handwritten messages, repeated five times in a deck. Get them, be anonymous with them. Put them on people's computers, put

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them—they're all positive notes. I will tell you this—Dani, would you agree with this—that most often the person who is feeling all this negativity doesn't have anything [audio disruption].

One, I love your statement earlier when you said become aware of your own thoughts. I'm saying, to your point, a lot of them aren't even aware of it. They've gotten caught up into a cesspool, and they just need somebody doing something positive to them. Something to kind of trigger positive emotions and thoughts out of them, because they want it. Ultimately, they want it. What are your thoughts, Dani?

Dani

Yes, absolutely. People want—ultimately, everybody wants to be happy. For some people, they're really struggling with it. You really have nothing to lose by being positive, by being nice. Even if they don't respond in a good way, you're getting more out of it by putting good vibes, positivity, trying to make them happy, than you would be by responding the way they are.

You don't have to—it can be hard, sometimes, but you don't have to act the way other people are acting. If they're being negative, if they're angry, if they're stressed, it's tempting to mirror that behavior, or the way that they're speaking. It's almost human nature to do that, but you have

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the choice of saying you know, what, I'm not going to be angry. I'm not going to be stressed. I'm not going to respond with more negativity.

Kym Alright, so Dani's book, her second book, is *The Positively Present Guide to Life*. I love that. How long did it take you to write this, Dani?

Dani I would say about a year, year and a half.

Kym First and foremost, let me just say, bravo, outstanding. Writing a book is no easy feat.

Dani No, no it's not.

Kym Kudos to you, and especially the topic and what you've focused on, here, with this. She's got incredible, incredible tips in this, and we just got a touch, a flavor of it. Also, become a friend of hers on Facebook. It's Positively Present Dani, D-A-N-I. Twitter is @positivepresent. Then her website is danidipirro.com—which is D-A-N-I-D-I-P-I-R-R-O.com.

Dani, as we wrap-up here, is there any last parting statement or anything you'd like to share with the audience before we sign off on this session of *Wake Up Happy*?

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Dani I just want to remind people that staying positive is a choice. You can make it at any time. It's not always going to be easy, but it's always an option and it's always going to be the best option.

Kym Always going to be the best option.

Dani Yes, always.

Kym With that, you have a fantastic day. Listen, one thing I promise you, keep smiling. It does make a difference. Bye-bye for now. We'll see you tomorrow. We have—who do we have with us, Brittney?

We have with us tomorrow for *Wake Up Happy*, we have Arthur Woods tomorrow, *Purposeful Work* with Arthur Woods. Look forward to being with you tomorrow and spread the word. Let's keep this thing going; it is contagious.

This is Kym Yancey, signing off for now. Bye-bye.