

EPISODE 181

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:02.6] PF: Welcome to Episode 181 of Live Happy Now. This is your host, Paula Felps, thanking you for joining us today. This week we're talking with Andrea Goeglein, who combines her innate entrepreneurial spirit with a passion for positive psychology. She's an author, publisher, media personality, and founder of Serving Success, a Las Vegas based advisory that teaches business leaders to apply positive psychology principles to their business practices. She's here today to share some of her top secrets for flourishing.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:34.1] PF: Andrea, thank you so much for joining us on Live Happy Now. I've been wanting to have you as a guest for a while, so I'm really glad we're finally able to make it work out.

[0:00:42.8] AG: And I, thank you so much for the invitation.

[0:00:46.5] PF: Well, there's so many interesting things to talk to you about and so we could actually just do a whole series with you but –

[0:00:53.9] AG: You know I'm always open to those kinds of things.

[0:00:57.1] PF: Exactly. You know, one of the things that we want to focus on today is the business side and you know, what's so interesting with you is that you have this amazing business background and so I wanted to know how and why you decided to combine your business sense and that success with positive psychology.

[0:01:16.4] AG: Well, you know, the gift of positive psychology came into my life decades after the love for business. I fell in love with business as a child because I came from a family that — they were the plumbers, my dad was a butcher, everyone was an electrician, everyone had something that was their business. I just fell in love with and assumed that that was always going to be a part of life.

Then the psychology of what makes people want, what made me? You know, we start with ourselves, everyone who is listening, I hope, appreciates that they are their greatest teacher and for me, you know, life was throwing me more bumps than I knew what to do with and I'll be very honest, I got into business very young because I had been sexually abused as a child and going to work separated me from that situation. So I started working at 14 years old.

Paula, I'm always honest about myself. I was driven to earn money. I came from a family that was well provided for at the most minimal levels. We ate, we had housing, we had dental. We went to church, we had it all as far as our world knew it and I wanted more from the time I was a child and money was the way to do it.

[0:02:40.6] PF: Yeah. How then did you take that love of business and that drive and then start meshing the positive psychology? Where did the positive psychology come in?

[0:02:50.6] AG: Fast forward 25 years into my adulthood and I've owned everything from a Häagen-Dazs ice-cream store to working for corporations. I love corporations as much as I love small businesses. What happened was life had beat me down more times than I knew what – I think by the time I ran into positive psychology, my husband had already been fired no less than three times during our marriage.

You know, things just weren't going good and he actually sent it over to me, I looked at it, I already had my doctorate and something just clicked and once I got involved with that and was taught by Marty Seligman and Ben Dean at the time, the impact of attitude on your ability to traverse all things and for me, my world was business so I had the most practice in that environment. It just — I kept studying and applying, studying and applying. There was never a day that went by that I didn't do both.

[0:04:00.9] PF: How do you? I love that you talk about that study and apply, study and apply. How do you apply these principles in your daily work? Because I've met you, I've seen you, and it practically jumps out of you. There is no mistaking that you are living, you know, you are walking your talk.

[0:04:17.8] AG: Yes and thank you, because I do. Because my life — you know, I'm going to think above a word that I can actually use. My life is as stinky as everybody else's life. My step

son had cancer, my husband gets fired, my adolescent daughter at the time didn't talk to me for that decade. We lovingly call it the "dark decade" in our house. She is now very much in love with me and the most magnificent human being doing a most magnificent work.

But I'm telling you, the amount of loss and continual loss — my younger brother, he was one of the first thousand people in the world to die of AIDS. My middle brother, I grew up in a home where he had his challenges. My older brother came back from Vietnam as — I don't need to explain what that looked like. So that was life and positive psychology, the application for me looked like this and this, is how I've given it back to everyone I work with. It came to me through books and the difference between me and those that work with me learn. Don't just read the book, use what they're telling you to do.

So when I was reading a book and it said, you know, "In the case of positive psychology where," — there were 12 set exercises. One of them was developed gratitude, whether you have it in your top five strengths or not. I happen to have it in my top five strengths but I was pretty shocked that it was there because I remember first hearing in the early 90's how much that mattered and I think it was someone in the self-help community that had the "an attitude of gratitude". I was like, "Are you kidding me? My husband is fired, my step son has cancer, what are you talking about here?"

[0:06:02.4] PF: Yeah, you're like, "Thank this."

[0:06:04.0] AG: Yes, and how writing was so important. All these very things that were being taught in positive psychology 10 years later because they had now married the science to it. I actually started using, and this is the important part for myself and for everyone. I used it whether or not I immediately got results or not. I trusted the science. I trusted sources.

So what I always suggest to people, and particularly the cost is such a well-grounded field. This is something you don't have to be embarrassed about, one iota. Because for everything from gratitude to why you savor a day to how you change your negative thoughts by using the ABCD disputation, how you dispute with yourself. All of it is perfectly grounded. Because of that, I'm going to be honest, I'm a snob. I needed it.

No, Paula, I'm serious. I needed the credentials, there's a reason why I have two master's degree and a PhD in then I also have love of learning as a natural attribute. So for me, every time life got tough, I went back to school again. Your question of what does it mean to apply? It means to trust, for some period of time and for me, I always give a minimum of 90 days. It took you way more than 90 days to be this unhappy. Please give it 90 days to see if something can make it different. As you well know and as you well teach, you know, I follow what Live Happy teaches both for children to do — writing, reflection, these are the things that really move you forward.

[0:07:55.6] PF: Is it important to note that it's not necessarily linear? Because you might be going progress, progress, progress and then kind of do the U curve and that doesn't mean you're failing or that you're losing your journey.

[0:08:09.1] AG: Right. Okay, so the greatest thing I had learned and again I will you know, give you what I have learned the hard way. It is not linear in any way! The fact that you did fabulous yesterday doesn't mean you're going to do fabulous today. But what is important is that you try, that you hold on to that feeling of yesterday and how incredible it was and you use it to find a half ounce of energy to help you do better today.

I was the most resentful because I didn't want to buy into the statistically proven fact that meaning and growth happens at both psychological level and the learning level after strain. You know, all learning theory is about stretching and the strain part so that you can have something else. In the meaning literature, it's really clear. It is after traumas and tragedies that we begin to wonder, "What is my life about? What does this mean?"

[0:09:14.8] PF: It is when you have the strain and it is when it's difficult. How important is it for you to be able to accept that you resent it and accept that you're not comfortable with where it is but still know that it's going to get better?

[0:09:32.1] AG: Okay, so the last words you said, "and still know it's going to get better", I would use the word "believe". That's where the early literature and hope came. You may not know what tomorrow holds but if you can hold on to the premise that no matter what is happening this second, there is still a potential that it will get better, that's the little leap. So how important is that? 100% important. You don't have resilience unless you have that.

[0:10:02.8] PF: What makes that difference though? Because you can say, "All right, I think it's going to get better," or I'm going to go out there and say, "I know it's going to get better but there's no evidence in front of me, it will and what if it doesn't?" I mean, that's our human nature is that's how we're going to be like, "I can say this, but here's what I really think."

[0:10:22.3] AG: Yeah, here's the deal: when we say the word "no", we really don't know. What we do is hold on to the potential, we believe the potential is always there. That's what you're holding on to. That's what you can't give up on is the potential that it will get better and you know that as long as you hold on to that potential, there's a reason to try again.

It seems nuanced, but it is very critical that you can put your attention in one of two places because you can't fragment, you can't have it both ways. You can't say, "I believe it will get better," and have your brain saying, "But there's no evidence, there's no evidence." This happens very much in illness and in job loss, economic loss. I see it all the time where you have to be able to say the words, "I know there is something, somewhere, somehow that can shift this," and you release needing it to be a specific thing time or place.

You know, one of the most interesting pieces of research and I don't believe it came out of the initial work and positive psychology, it may have been just a leap before but it was the research that came out of the POW's in Vietnam. One of the high-ranking, not John McCain but one of the other high ranking officers was asked, "How did you know the difference between the ones that would make it out and the ones that wouldn't?" and he said, "The ones that set a specific date of when it would happen those are the ones that had a problem. The ones that just kept holding on to knowing, we can and will get out of here, are the ones that survived."

[0:12:23.1] PF: Wow, that's really powerful. One thing that I did want to get to before we have to let you go, is your concept of work as a playground. Now I think that is so interesting that you used that because for a lot of people it's more like a prison than a playground.

[0:12:40.3] AG: Everything starts in your mind.

[0:12:43.6] PF: Yeah, exactly. So, can you tell us first of all what that concept is and then tell us how we can create that?

[0:12:50.7] AG: Okay, we are adults far longer than we are children and we for some reason give up the concept. It's like we are allowed to play as children and then someone forgot to tell us we're actually allowed to do that going forward and as adults, we spent the bulk of our time whereas children, we may have spent especially early in our lives in the playground. We, as we grow older, spend the bulk of our life which speaks specifically to the business of flourishing why I use work and business as the place for you to grow your greatest strengths and flourishing is because you spend the most time of your life there.

So, what that means to play where you work is that no matter where you're starting, know your top five strengths and from there on a moment by moment daily basis, make sure you are seeing those strengths or using them to help convert how you think about a situation and an example would be, I use this in a presentation just the other day. So a boss comes in and let's say one of your top strengths is curiosity and a boss comes in and throws a report on the desk that you worked really, really hard in order to do and so he says, "Are you kidding me? This is all wrong!"

[0:14:12.6] PF: Just what you want to hear.

[0:14:14.1] AG: Right? "Okay you need to redo it!" Now your mind is immediately going to go to a lot of other things other than, "Oh my goodness, I have curiosity as a strength. I think I'll be curious about what this person I saying." No. That isn't where your brain goes but if you can even come closer. So instead of reacting like, "What do you mean?" say, "I am curious." Actually use the word of your strength so that you are reminding yourself you are actually giving your brain a moment to pause and you are doing it with one of your own known strengths. So you say something like, "I am curious. You know, that I want to do the best I can. Tell me what you think I need to improve on."

[0:14:59.6] PF: That's a great way to do it because that's not where we naturally go.

[0:15:03.7] AG: No and you won't naturally go that the first or the 50th time but if you can get closer and if you could use the hint of using your strengths in your own language, what you are doing first and foremost is reminding yourself that you have natural strengths to use no matter what the situation is.

[0:15:22.6] PF: And how long does it take to really learn how to integrate your strengths into any environment where it becomes second nature?

[0:15:31.3] AG: Yeah, the more you work it the more it works and that is the closest I'm going to come to that. I will tell you that for me, the habit of reading and writing and reflection on a daily basis took me close to 20 years to put into my life. The last 25 years have been magnificent because of it. It's really not a race to the finish, it is a daily commitment to improvement.

[0:15:58.7] PF: Andrea, I wish that we had a couple of hours but we don't. Thank you. Again, thank you so much for giving us your time today and I really appreciate that.

[0:16:09.7] AG: Thank you very much for the invitation. I very much enjoyed the conversation.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:16:18.6] PF: That was Andrea Goeglein, also known as Doctor Success. If you go to our website, livehappynow.com, you'll find a link for her free ebook, *The Five A's of Successful Relationships*, which includes a free self-scoring happiness quiz and speaking of happiness quizzes, here's a guy who always aces his. Here is Live Happy Editor, Chris Libby.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:16:40.1] PF: We are here to talk about our favorite subject, which is?

[0:16:43.0] CL: Work.

[0:16:43.9] PF: Work! Oh my goodness yeah. It is not the first time that we've broached this subject. So it seems that it must be kind of important to people.

[0:16:53.6] CL: Oh yeah, I mean if you think about it you spend 30% of your life at work. The other 30% is with your family and then another 30% is supposed to be sleeping. So it is a big portion of your day.

[0:17:05.7] PF: Yeah and you know what? It used to be that people didn't really worry about whether or not you are happy at work. It just wasn't like you work, that's what you do. They call it work, it is not fun for a reason but that mindset has really changed. Now you just ran some interesting stories on our website at livehappy.com that looked at work and some of the changing mindsets about it.

[0:17:26.9] CL: Yeah, one of the biggest problems with work especially with younger people who are the millennial age is burning out. Work burn out, which means your employees are getting disengaged and dissatisfied in the work place and why that's bad, especially with millennials, is because they're becoming the biggest working segment of the population and it costs companies a lot of money when employees are engaged and they're calling in sick or they are looking for another job or not enjoying themselves.

So Gallop recently recent a poll that said 30% of millennials say they are burned out often and 70% experience some sort of burn out.

[0:18:05.5] PF: Let me ask you, how does that compare to the rest of the population? Do you know? I mean, because I know a lot of people who are not millennials and who are purely pre-millennial and they're burned out as well. So do you know how that compares?

[0:18:20.0] CL: I don't. I don't have that right in front of me but being the biggest working the population. Of course burn out is a problem with all employees but for the millennials because it is such big segment of the population, I think the important thing here is something that needs to be addressed so it doesn't carry onto further into their career.

[0:18:38.7] PF: Is there a difference in what causes burnout for millennials versus say someone like you and I? Because we're just made the path to cut off for millennial.

[0:18:47.9] CL: Yes, well I mean the 18 and this is a former report from the Robert Half and Associates I believe and it is the secrets of the happiest companies and employees. They released that from millennials, the top things they need to be happy, which would of course avoid the burn out, is feeling appreciated, having pride in their organization and having a sense of accomplishment. Now these factors as the same for other generations like 35 to 54.

They like accomplishment as well but their biggest factor is pride in the organization and their feeling appreciated that really doesn't seem to register in that age group but when you get to 55 and up, the baby boomer, which is the second largest working population, their biggest aspect for being happy at work is fairness and respect. So you can see there is different things across the board but for millennials the number one thing is they have to feel like they're valuable and that their work means something and people appreciate what they are doing.

[0:19:43.6] PF:

[0:20:14.2] CL: It does because I think and I don't have anything to back this up but in my opinion I think as the workplace becomes more technologically advanced, you rely less on machines and it's more about people. People interaction, relationships and things like that. So the core foundation of most businesses now is people and so, you have to figure out a way to make that work but of course, if you were in a factory and you had a machine that was broken you could fix the machine then it keeps going.

If you have a person that is broken mentally and it's just not there, that is a lot more difficult to figure out and so places like Gallop they say if you want to avoid these things, the employees have to feel appreciated. They have to have a little bit of freedom and autonomy and you have to be a coach instead of a drill sergeant.

[0:21:04.1] PF: Interesting because I think that would benefit not only the employee but the individual who is managing that, I think you feel a lot less likely to blow a gasket if you were encouraging and mentoring someone than if you are ordering them around.

[0:21:20.0] CL: Oh sure, mentoring — there is a lot of benefits and there is just studies that suggest even that the mentor gets more benefit than the mentee.

[0:21:28.1] PF: Oh really?

[0:21:29.0] CL: Yeah, just by being able to help somebody being somebody who is more experienced in taking somebody under their wing. That's a valuable resource that I think is under appreciated and I think it is something that businesses should look more into as mentoring younger associates.

[0:21:43.9] PF: That's interesting to think that that could improve the workplace environment, make the employees happier, both the managers and the underlings and that as we know, happier employees lead to more profitable companies. Man, it sounds like total win-win.

[0:22:00.0] CL: It does and you know, it is not a one fix solution for everything. I mean, what this report that Robert Half and Associates report says, "Is employee happiness pivotal to your organizational success? Yes, is there a one size fits all approach? No," so you have to figure these things out and balance in weight where the things that work for you because not everybody's personal happiness is the same but understanding that engagement levels and workplace satisfaction are important. It is very important for businesses to figure that equation out.

[0:22:37.4] PF: That's terrific. Well see? Yeah, we've just solved the problem, the workplace problem. Do the tough stuff first right?

[0:22:45.0] CL: Yeah in less than 10 minutes.

[0:22:47.0] PF: There we go. How awesome is that? Well Chris, this is so interesting. We need to talk about work again because I know we do a lot.

[0:22:53.8] CL: Sure, yeah.

[0:22:54.5] PF: We already talked about it so we might as well have a microphone in front of us when we do that. So all right, thank you so much for all the insight once again and tell us where we can go to find out more about this.

[0:23:08.9] CL: As always, livehappy.com is full of great information not only about work but life, lifestyle, everything you need to know about happiness is on livehappy.com.

[0:23:18.5] PF: And more. It's everything and more.

[0:23:20.8] CL: And more.

[0:23:21.4] PF: Right there.

[0:23:22.4] CL: Yeah.

[0:23:22.9] PF: All right, Chris, we'll talk with you next week.

[0:23:25.6] CL: All right.

[0:23:26.4] PF: All right, have a good one.

[0:23:27.6] CL: You too.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:23:28.9] PF: That's all for this episode of Live Happy Now. Be sure to visit us at livehappynow.com to learn more about Andrea Gigline and how you can use your strengths to flourish and if you like what you've heard here today and want to hear more, go to Apple Podcast or wherever you get your favorite podcast, search for "Live Happy Now" and subscribe today so you'll never miss an episode.

That is all we have time for today so please join us back here next week and until then, this is Paula Felps reminding you to make every day a happy one.

[END]