

EPISODE 188

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:02.9] PF: Welcome to episode 188 of Live Happy Now. This is your host, Paula Felps thanking you for joining us today for the very last episode of 2018. We're taking a break next week and we'll be back in the New Year. We wanted to leave you with some thoughts on some practices you can use to make 2019 your best year yet.

To do that, we're talking with Live Happy CEO, Deborah Heisz, author of the book *Live Happy: 10 Practices for Choosing Joy*. Let's hear what she says are five ways you can add more joy to your New Year.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:33.0] PF: Deborah, thank you so much for coming by again today. It's our last podcast of 2018, so we wanted to make sure we go out with a bang. Of course, what better way than to have you on as a guest?

[0:00:44.4] DH: It's hard to believe that 2018 is already over. I mean, there's so much that went on this year. It was really exciting year in general here at Live Happy and just a ton of stuff going on. I can't believe it's already the end of the year. All the stuff that goes with that, that's coming up, including shopping for the holidays and getting ready to plan next year. It's just crazy that we're already here.

[0:01:07.1] PF: Yeah. When we started this year, I think a lot of people weren't sure we were going to survive it. There was a lot going on this year in the world. I think a lot of people have that fatigue and they're really looking forward to 2019 and how they can make it a fantastic year.

[0:01:24.7] DH: Yeah. I think that people tend to forget that there's a lot of stuff going on every year. The focus shifts from one end to another. Growing up, I graduated in an even-numbered year, I'm not going to share which one. For whatever reason, I've always had the belief that even-numbered years are better years, which is just downright silly.

People go into a year thinking a year is overwhelming. The reality is it's just a step in time, right? I mean, this month, next month, January 1st is an arbitrary change, but somehow we attach this huge meaning to it. Yeah, it's a time to turn over a new leaf and I guess that moment of renewal is upon us, but if those of you who are listening to this in the middle of 2019 because you just got around to it, there's never a bad time to have that renewal moment.

[0:02:17.2] PF: They don't have to wait until the end of 2019 and start for 2020.

[0:02:20.8] DH: No, no. 11:59 p.m. on December 31st is probably not the right time to start planning out the next year.

[0:02:29.9] PF: Well, I know that you're big on making the most of whether it's a day or the year. I thought it would be wonderful to talk about some of the ways that we can go about making 2019 a really fantastic year, make it our best year yet.

[0:02:31.1] DH: Finding the meaning in what you're doing will make what you do all the more enjoyable. We derive meaning from what you're doing. We can just go find more joy in it. It gets you through the tough tasks.

[0:02:44.1] PF: To do that, I wanted to talk about some of the principles that you use in your book *Live Happy: 10 Practices for Choosing Joy*.

[0:02:51.4] DH: I'd love to share some ideas from that. Also, you're right, I do try and make the most of every minute, every day, every hour, which doesn't mean going a million miles an hour every moment. The one thing none of us can get more of is time and none of us actually have an hourglass on our desk either that shows us when we're out of it.

It really doesn't make any sense to me to not take advantage of what we've been given and make the most out of it. The one thing that we can make the most out of is what we do with our time.

[0:03:23.7] PF: Yeah, that's terrific. We get so caught up in what we think we need to do and what we have to do that we forget to just be.

[0:03:31.4] DH: We do.

[0:03:32.7] PF: I think we really go off the rails when that happens.

[0:03:34.7] DH: We do. When you talk about the book *10 Practices for Choosing Joy* and actually when we talk about Live Happy and how it's changed my life and when people ask me, "Well, what has changed your life the most?" What it is is really the practice of mindfulness. We talk about it a lot and a lot of people think when you say mindfulness, they think meditation, they think different things. For me, mindfulness is really creating that awareness, because awareness leads to engagement. Just the practice of being present in your own life, being mindful of the things that are going on around you, being engaged in them and not so worried about hey, I got to do these 25 other things later today, or I didn't do these 15 things yesterday that I need to get done, or what's the future going to hold?

I think a lot of us rush through life forgetting that we're present in our own lives right now and what we're doing matters to ourselves and to those around us at every moment. Giving yourself permission to be present, whether it's present at the dinner table, actively engaged in conversation, whether it's present in a meeting, or you're not on your digital device trying to catch up with your e-mails while halfway listening to a meeting, do something to become present in the moments you're in because if you don't, you're going to look up at some point and you're going to realize you missed everything. You missed your entire life.

[0:05:02.1] PF: One thing that I've learned through Live Happy is really to be able to take that breath and to be mindful. It can be just for a couple of seconds. Something that I've started doing is when I feel myself racing too much and my mind's racing ahead, or I'm thinking about the past, I just take a breath and say, "I am." That brings you back and that's enough mindfulness to recenter you. It doesn't take a lot of time or a lot of effort.

[0:05:30.4] DH: I love that. I love that. For me, it's organization. It's to be mindful, I need to be organized. I need to be planned. It's very difficult for me just who I am. Everybody's different of course. This is just for me. Who I am, it's very difficult for me to deal with spontaneity if I don't know the things that need to get taken care of, or taken care of. For me, a lot of mindfulness is around organization. It's around making sure to –

[0:05:58.7] PF: That makes perfect sense.

[0:05:59.8] DH: Making sure the things that need to get taken care of are taken care of, so I can enjoy the rest.

[0:06:03.4] PF: That's great. I love that. That's great advice. We've got mindfulness, that's a great thing to put on our to-be list. What else? What's another practice that we can implement to make 2019 even more fulfilling for us?

[0:06:17.7] DH: The practice of connecting with other people, of building connections, of deepening relationships, or of creating relationships. I mean, all of the research that we've looked at at Live Happy over the past five, six, seven years, so we've been not only doing this, but planning it, really leads to one conclusion which is that positive relationships, relationships with other people are the one thing that will drive your overall sense of well-being.

There's a great study that's referenced in several different materials, but the study basically says that at the end of their life, 300 men were asked what made a difference in their happiness. When normalized for money, for their personal financial achievement, their job success, even for health, what it really showed was that unless they'd had meaningful relationships with others in their life, meaningful personal relationships, they just didn't have as much joy.

Taking the time to cultivate relationships and be present and be a positive influence in other people's lives and build those meaningful moments with people, not just this year, but every year is something that will drive joy into your life.

[0:07:26.8] PF: That is something that's a little bit getting trickier, I think because of our connection with our phones and things like that.

[0:07:34.2] DH: There's a great quote by Tom Rath that he said out loud at a convention I was at. Tom Rath is the author of *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. A phenomenal book. What he said was the single biggest challenge we may have in the next 10 years is simply paying attention to the person sitting across from us.

[0:07:51.8] PF: Wow. That's so true unfortunately.

[0:07:55.7] DH: It is. What you and I are doing right now, talking, this is not the same if it's by text.

[0:08:02.4] PF: Right.

[0:08:04.3] DH: You text, you go on Facebook.

[0:08:06.6] PF: Yeah. There's something to be said about having face-to-face, or via phone, or even Facetime to actually communicating with people.

[0:08:15.0] DH: We build relationships and we need to take the time to be around people. Barbara Frederickson's book *Love 2.0* talks about it quite a bit, when she goes into micro connections and what it does and how it improves your overall well-being, because it limits your cortisol when you have a positive interaction with someone. That digital positive reaction doesn't have the same impact on your body, right? It increases oxytocin, same thing. Getting a text from somebody doesn't necessarily increase your oxytocin the same as sitting having coffee with them, even if they say the same words.

[0:08:49.4] PF: It can raise your blood pressure.

[0:08:51.4] DH: It can raise your blood pressure. There is that. Very much. It raises a lot of people's blood pressure, but taking the time to engage with people in the real world, not the digital world and taking the time to build some depth is something that we should all invest in all the time.

[0:09:09.1] PF: After connecting better, what's another practice you'd recommend for us?

[0:09:12.8] DH: Well, I think one of the things that we're talking about a lot of stuff, one of the characteristics a lot of people have including myself is our ability to beat ourselves up about what we didn't do. Or even listening to myself talk I'm like, "Yeah, I talked about this, but I need to do more of it." We have a tendency to focus on our failures, we have a tendency to focus on what we can't do or what we didn't do. All of that is counterintuitive to building one of our greatest tools for success, which is building our own resilience.

You can only go as far as the opportunities are willing to take. You can't get any farther than – if you don't choose to try the job, you're never going to succeed in the job. If you don't accept the date, you're never going to have the relationship. There's a whole lot of choices we make which closed doors. I think we make a lot of those choices based off the fact that we're not by nature resilient people. We have a great fear of failure. We have a great fear of rejection. To overcome that fear, you actually need to engage in building your own resilience.

[0:10:18.9] PF: In part of building that resilience is failure. You can't bounce back if you never fall down.

[0:10:24.6] DH: Yeah, nobody really learns much from victory.

[0:10:26.6] PF: No.

[0:10:27.6] DH: There isn't a 20-year-old soccer team around that can't beat a six-year-old soccer team, okay. They aren't going to learn much from that, other than maybe they need to watch where they step a little bit more. You don't really learn that much from success, but you do learn a lot from failure including how to build your resilience. Part of building your resilience is recognizing that you've had successes before in the same realm. I mean, how many people do we know that just say, "I'm really bad at math," right?

[0:10:58.6] PF: I'm one of those people.

[0:11:00.0] DH: Okay, right. You've managed to make change before.

[0:11:02.7] PF: Right.

[0:11:04.3] DH: Okay. You've probably managed to balance your checkbook before.

[0:11:06.7] PF: Once or twice, yeah.

[0:11:07.9] DH: Okay.

[0:11:09.3] PF: It has happened.

[0:11:10.2] DH: These are little victories which is like, “Well, I may not know a lot of math, but I can learn math.” If I need to learn it, if I need to understand it, I can build on that skill because I've had some victories. A lot of building your own resilience is recognizing that you probably are more successful in areas that you consider yourself weak. Then you realize you've probably had more success than you understand.

Building your resilience is build on your victories that you've had, forgive yourself for the mistakes you've made, learn to laugh at them, learn that you're not perfect, learn to move on. Then the third piece about building your resilience and this is really important for a lot of people, and it's important for me is have a workout partner. Have somebody that when you just feel you can't succeed, or you just feel the hurdle is too big, or you wonder if it's worth taking the risk, have that person that you just want to – that you could feel you can talk to and confide in. You need a workout partner. You need someone that you can talk things through with, that you trust their intuition, you trust their opinion, you're in it together so to speak.

That might be your spouse, it might be your best friend from high school, it might be somebody at the office, it might be your mentor, it could be anybody in your life. You don't have to go alone. All of us will encounter crippling issues that make us not want to go on at some point, but you don't stop. Life goes on whether you choose to participate or not. Building that skill set, getting through it is key to having a great year, or whatever it is this year that you want to let go of, let go of it. What are you going to do next year?

[0:12:48.5] PF: We've got mindfulness, we've got connection, we've got resilience and these are all three –We're already in a good spot. Those are three great things to focus on for 2019. Do you have a couple more that we can talk about?

[0:13:04.8] DH: Yeah, I want to talk about one that is I think elusive and critically important for many of us, which is meaning. You have to find meaning in your life. If you feel your life is purposeless, or you feel you're meant to do something and you're not doing it, it's very difficult to have a lot of joy in your life.

Now all of us have – not all of us, but most of us have jobs, all of us have responsibilities, but do we have meaning in our life? Figuring out why you're spending your time doing what you're

doing is very important. Now people think purpose and meaning are the same thing. For me, they're not. Purpose is like, I was put on earth to do this purpose, for this purpose. If you're looking for a purpose, oh my goodness, that's a large goal. Meaning is something else.

There's a couple examples that I've used when I've talked about meaning before. One of them is finding meaning in your work. Now meaning in your work, let's say you're an accountant, okay? What's the purpose of being an accountant? Well, it's to get all the numbers right and show the financial success and provide financial guidance to the company and all of these things. What's the meaning in your work? Well, sometimes you could just doing accounting, which is great. If you can attach a greater meaning to that, you're going to find more joy in what you're doing.

Let's say you work for a company like Live Happy. The meaning you derive for Live Happy is that Live Happy is giving people the tools that they need to create a happier life for themselves. If you look at I by doing the accounting can and is ever working for Live Happy doing our accounting you can take this advice. I like doing your accounting, or the accounting for Live Happy and helping to promote a happier world. I deeply believe that people need the ability to bring more joy and happiness into the world.

There is definitely a way that you can attach a meaning to that. Finding the meaning in what you're doing will make what you're doing all the more enjoyable. Believe me, there's always things you don't want to do. There's always jobs you don't want to do, there's always things affiliated. Nobody really wants to change dirty diapers, right?

[0:15:20.2] PF: Newsflash.

[0:15:22.8] DH: If you derive meaning from raising children, if you derive meaning from what you're doing, you're just going to find more joy in it. It gets you through the tough tasks.

[0:15:34.7] PF: Yeah, it absolutely changes how you view the things that you have to do.

[0:15:39.4] DH: It does.

[0:15:40.3] PF: You got one more.

[0:15:41.3] DH: I get one more, all right.

[0:15:42.1] PF: Close with get one more. You got to make it big; big finish here. What's our fifth practice that we can implement for 2019 to have a better year?

[0:15:53.1] DH: Well, I know a lot of our listeners are already doing this, but I do think that the number one way that we can share joy, spread happiness and really improve our world around us is by giving back. I don't just mean money. I mean, time, I mean, listening, I mean, being that friend. Spending your time giving back – first of all, we know the studies all show that it rewards you. That your personal well-being is improved by giving back; we know that. We also know that when you share happiness, when you share with someone else, the likelihood that they're going to continue to give back, or that they're going to choose to give back is greatly increased. Giving back makes a difference in the world.

I mean, and my view is we all have a responsibility to the world around us, whether we choose to acknowledge it or not. I also believe that we've all got gifts. We all have gifts and passion and we all have things that other people are looking for that we can share. Take the time to give back to somebody, whether it's by being a mentor, whether it's through a financial contribution, whether it's by being part of a charity, whether it's through community work at your church, whether it's at the hospital, being just going around and being nice to people, pick up a litter, clean up the front yard, but make a concerted effort to give back to the world around you, because the world will give you back more than you could ever give. Once you start that practice, you realize what an abundant world we live in.

I mean, one of my biggest frustrations is the mindset of scarcity. When you encounter someone who feels like to win, somebody else has to lose. That's frustrating to me. This is a world of abundance, because somebody else got the job of their dreams, it does that mean you cannot have the job of yours. Because somebody else grabbed the brass ring, doesn't mean there's not a brass ring available for you.

It is not life, for the most part is not a competition. There is no winner. This is a world of abundance. There's plenty for everybody, but people have to take the time to give and share

what they have. I'm going to go a little biblical on you. Nobody please, nobody be offended. The story of the loaves and the fishes.

It wasn't about the little boy who shared. It was about the fact that there was enough for everybody, right? There's enough for everybody if you just look and share. Giving back makes a huge difference in the world and makes a huge difference in your life. I've seen people change remarkably simply by opening themselves up to the possibility they can help somebody else. When you invest the time, you get so much back. It really can change your life and it can change the lives of people around you, because when you're uplifted that way, it's easier for other people to see it and to start feeling that way too. I mean, really giving back is something that will always change your life.

[0:19:01.9] PF: Well Deborah, once again you've given us a lot to think about. If people want to know more about these practices and five more, they can pick up your book *Live Happy: 10 Practices for Choosing Joy*, which can be found on the Live Happy website, as well as on amazon.com. Slight plug there.

[0:19:19.1] DH: I appreciate the plug. For those of you who haven't read the book, keep in mind that this book is filled with specific practices around these. Paula and I are talking, now Paul and I are journalists. Neither one of us are scientists, so we read all this stuff and share how it works in our own life and we quote some scientists, we talk about stuff, but this book has the scientific background around why these things work and they do work.

It's not just a scientific research book. It also has, I think 42 stories of people who have put these practices into action in their own lives. It's got things you can do, the why it works for those of you who have to know why it works and then it's got stories of people who have done this stuff and it actually worked for them. It really is. It's a quick read. You can read three minutes a day and get through this book.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:20:12.9] PF: That was Live Happy CEO, Deborah Heisz, author of *Live Happy: 10 Practices for Choosing Joy*, which you can find on our website at livehappy.com, on Amazon, or in your favorite bookstore. We're proud to announce that we're now part of the Pandora Podcast

Network. You can find us on the Pandora mobile app for Apple and Android phones. As always, you can go to Apple podcasts or wherever you get your favorite podcast, search for Live Happy Now and subscribe today so you'll never miss an episode.

That's all we have time for this year, so please join us back here January 1st for a brand new episode. Until then, this is Paula Felps wishing you a joyful holiday season and reminding you to make every day a happy one.

[END]