

EPISODE 190

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:02.6] PF: Welcome to episode 190 of Live Happy Now. This is your host, Paula Felps, thanking you for joining us. As we get a little deeper into the new year, it's a great time to pick up some books that can help you make the most of the weeks and months ahead.

This week, Live Happy book editor Sandra Bilbray talks with us about five books that she thinks could change your life in the new year. She tell us why you don't want to miss them.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:26.6] PF: Sandra, thank you for joining us here today, you know, our readers get to see what you've done but it's not very often that our listeners get to hear from you so I'm very excited for us to have this conversation today.

[0:00:37.7] SB: I am too, I'm so happy to be here Paula.

[0:00:40.9] PF: Now, you do a great job of getting out there and finding all the new positive psychology books that are coming out and guiding us through what's going on. We thought this would be the perfect time to sit down and talk about some of the things that maybe people want to read for 2019 to help get the year started or help the year progress a little bit smoother.

[0:01:00.3] SB: Absolutely. One of the first books that I want to talk about is called *Big Potential* by Shawn Achor. This book is so great to start a year out because it's all about achieving your potential through the power of community.

[0:01:17.0] PF: Interesting. What ways did he bring out that we can use community to reach our potential?

[0:01:23.9] SB: Well, you know, it's so, I think this is so true. He just talks about how – you know, so many people feel like they're in their own lane and they have to achieve success for

themselves in their own lane. But he discusses and writes about in this book that you don't have to go it alone that if you surround yourselves with other stars then you will truly be able to shine.

[0:01:52.1] PF: That's something that's hard for us to do I think a lot of times as individuals but it's getting probably more difficult because of our isolation that we've been able to achieve through technology. Does he address how to kind of overcome some of that and find connectivity with others?

[0:02:09.3] SB: He really does. You know, he writes a lot about how, you know, when you pursue success alone, you become stressed and disconnected and you know, while some might say that social media has made us a more connected world, you know, others point out how the one on one conversations, the face to face, you know, those are minimized and then that can actually lead to more feelings of isolation or when people use social media, you know, to compare their lives to others, it can also make them feel very alone or isolated or like they don't measure up.

And he's saying, you know, let's really invest in our support systems. So you know, we know through all the research that Live Happy that the more you invest in relationships, the happier you become and he's saying, our support system's actually make high achievement possible, you know, whether you have a team and everyone on your team has different strengths and that helps lift you up or you have like a support system, it's like a cheerleading squad behind you.

You know, to uplift you and inspire you and encourage you. Those are some of the things that Shawn made me think about from his book *Big Potential*.

[0:03:32.0] PF: That's terrific and that's something that's really important for us to start thinking about right now, kind of plan for it, it's not something that comes naturally now. We kind of have to put ourselves in that situation to connect with others so it's great now that we have a guide book for doing that.

[0:03:47.7] SB: Yes, absolutely. You know, I don't think it's the first thing that would come to people's minds, you know, connectivity as the pathway, you know, to fulfill your potential. Whether it's a gym or you know, it's a reading group or just a group of friends and you get together, you know, that that can really help you accelerate your success.

[0:04:12.5] PF: Terrific. What's our next one? What's our next book that we want to look at for 2019?

[0:04:18.6] SB: Okay, well, this is a great one because it's called, *Your Best Year Ever* and it's by Michael Hyatt. He is the former chairman of Thomas Nelson Publishers and not only is this book a great tool book to design your best year ever but it also comes with a planner and so if – you know, to help you schedule and to just to show you his complete plan of how he does it.

[0:04:48.4] PF: Are you planning for success or are you planning your days or what's – how is it different than say just grabbing a regular old Dayspring journal.

[0:05:00.4] SB: Great question. This book is all about getting back to our big goals or the ones that we put off on the back burner, the ones that matter to us most and we keep just brushing aside because of either daily to dos or you know, our work or we just say we don't have enough time. This book is all about a pathway and to get back to those goals that we care about the most.

[0:05:28.4] PF: That's terrific, you know, we had a guest on a few weeks ago named Andrea GIBLIN. She had a great comment where she said, forgetting our dreams is as human as building them and I absolutely love that because you know, we come up with this idea and then we kind of don't follow through and they slip away. It sounds like this is a kind of book that can put you back on track for the new year.

[0:05:53.8] SB: Yeah, absolutely. I think he pushes us too, a little bit, to ask ourselves, you know, are we really putting it off because of our daily to dos, are we putting it off because of some fears that we have? I love that he shares as he says, you know, stop playing it safe and he says, playing it safe, this is a great quote from the book, he says, playing it safe is not safe. I think that's so impactful.

[0:06:19.7] PF: We've got our *Big Potential*, we've got our best year coming up, what's another book that we need to check out?

[0:06:27.5] SB: Okay, the next one is the *Wisdom of Sundays*. This one is by Oprah herself.

[0:06:35.2] PF: I've heard that name before, it sounds familiar.

[0:06:41.0] SB: The reason I loved this one so much is it's a collection of experts and the book is beautiful, there's beautiful illustrations, beautiful inspiring quotes but they're short passages from numerous names in leadership and spirituality and you know, just thought leaders from Mark Nepo to Brené Brown, Shonda Rhimes to Tony Robbins, Oprah herself. It's a collection of her aha moments from Super Soul Sunday.

For the people that really love to get tips from reading Live Happy online and listening to the podcast, I mean, this is the ideal book because this is a book you can use and turn to over and over again to gain inspiration to read and reread, and study. Because it's really the best of the best from Super Soul Sunday. You know, all packaged in this beautiful book.

It's really so inspiring and it inspires you to not just go through the motions of life but to really align with your purpose and the passages are you know, extremely deep, insightful, you know, things like your life is always talking to you are you're willing to listen.

In any passage, someone might find something that nurtures their soul or you know, leads to their personal growth or inspires them to be more compassionate with themselves, you know, which is really important but they're short passages too, it makes it really doable. If you feel like you don't have enough time to read and I think we all struggle with that. You know –

[0:08:22.4] PF: That's why we have you, we want you to read it for us and tell us.

[0:08:26.2] SB: I'm the walking Cliff Notes. One of two pages, you know, per person, but it's just beautifully written and so each excerpt is from a different thought leader.

[0:08:38.9] PF: This is really something you could use to just have there and when you need inspiration you just kind of pick it up and open it up or find something that fits your situation for that day, you don't sit down and read it all the way through.

[0:08:51.1] SB: Right, exactly. It's so inspiring and in fact, Oprah has a quote in the beginning and I think it really summarizes what the book, collectively is about and it is – all of us are

seeking the same thing, we share the desire to fulfill the highest, truest, expression of ourselves as human beings.

[0:09:12.0] PF: That's very nice. What a great way to do it by picking up a book and seeing what they have to say about it.

[0:09:20.3] SB: Right, you know, readers can also choose which passages they want to read, it's not like a book that you need to read from front to back. You can hop around and look for the names that resonate with you or the thought leaders that you like to follow and read their passages.

[0:09:36.7] PF: Perfect, all right. What's your choice number four? On the right track.

[0:09:44.0] SB: My choice number four is by Laura Vanderkam. She is a time management and productivity expert and the name of this book is *I Know How She Does It*. It's basically a book for – you know, geared a little bit more toward women and how to better use those 168 hours in your week.

[0:10:08.1] PF: It doesn't seem like that many. I don't think –

[0:10:11.1] SB: I know, right? She actually says if you start to look at it that way, instead of I don't have time or this day ends too fast or you know, it's getting dark out earlier now and it seems so late. You know, the 168 hours in your week in your week to have that kind of mindset will actually allow you to better use your time.

[0:10:31.8] PF: Really?

[0:10:33.5] SB: Yes. One of the things that really jumped out at me about this book. I just love it and I share this with everyone I know is that, see, I've never personally been huge fan of life balance because I don't really think it works. I actually think we need to, after interviewing people myself, you know, I've learned that we really need to imbalance our lives towards the things that we care about the most or just tilt our lives toward our values.

Because that life balance is so elusive and I just feel like it's something that makes people feel like failures. Because they don't ever feel like they can achieve it.

[0:11:13.2] PF: I kind of feel like life balance lives in the same area as Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny, you know? It's like, everybody talks about them but none of us have ever really seen it.

[0:11:24.4] SB: Yes, exactly, Paula. That is so true and it can just really result in frustration. This is what I love that she shares. Instead of life balance, let's look at our lives differently, let's treat our lives like a mosaic and piece together your day like a mosaic. I love this because she encourages people, because we often hear how important it is to have a schedule.

But she says we can become too rigid in our schedules and then we all know, we all can list I'm sure the things that pop up in our day that throw us off course or the things we weren't expecting. She's saying, just look at your day like a blank canvas, treat it like a mosaic, piece it together. You know, today might look absolutely nothing like tomorrow or yesterday and that's okay.

I love that because I'm like wow, that's so liberating, it gives – inspires such freedom to design your day however it works best for you. Of course, you know, people often say well, I have to be at work from eight to five or you know, nine to six or that kind of thing. I think she's saying also, you know, well, what could you do in the morning that would change your mood for the entire day or are there certain routines that you're following that aren't you know, nurturing you or they're making you miserable and can you change them.

You know, it really causes you to look at your day entirely different. Then I have a few more tips that I'd like to share.

[0:13:05.6] PF: Yeah, because this sounds really empowering because I know I get caught up in all the, I got to do this, I got to do this and then I end up pushing aside the things that matter, okay, I won't do yoga so I can get this done and I won't do this so we give up what we want to do and then we resent what we have to do. It sounds like this could resolve some of that conflict.

[0:13:29.6] SB: Yeah, I think it does, I think it gives people permission too to be flexible and she uses that word to be flexible about your day and just do things differently in order to, don't feel like if you found something that works that you have to try to make that happen again, just you know, each day, treat it differently. Some of her other tips that more practical specific tips, she says, start your day with a deep dive into a project for an hour or two and don't start your say with email.

She shares this because she says it really creates momentum, if you get up and you know, taken massive action on a project, that will fuel your momentum for the rest of the day, you know, if you get mired in your email, you might start feeling overwhelmed with all of these external requests and then it just doesn't set your day on the right path from the beginning.

She also says, a journal, you know, at Live Happy, we're all big proponents of journaling. He says, use it during unexpected time. You know, put it in your purse or carry it with you or have it by your night stand if you can't sleep well and you know, journal and then go back to sleep but you know, I love that tip, journal during unexpected time.

[0:14:49.0] PF: You know, we tend to think that we have to get up in the morning and journal or I've got to do it right before I go to bed and honestly, it had never crossed my mind in a lot more years than I care to admit, that I should just do it randomly, at any time. I love that tip.

[0:15:05.6] SB: Yeah, any time, you know, maybe during your lunch break, I mean, think about how cathartic that would be if you're having a stressful work day and you enjoy some alone time at lunch and you do some journaling and then you go, you know, go back into work and so, I think that you know, that can be really helpful.

[0:15:24.4] PF: Well, you have one more for us, right? You've got, if I'm counting right and I'm not a mathematician but I think I got this right. One more to go. What's our number five or maybe it's our number one book for 2019?

[0:15:43.1] SB: Okay, this one is great, okay, Emotional Agility and it's by Susan David and she is a psychologist at Harvard Medical School. What this book is about is how to close the gap between our intentions and our reality. Again, you know, this could be in the same ballpark of you know, how to not put our dreams aside.

She's saying okay, how close do our lives look to how we want them to look and she gives us the tools, you know, to make that happen and she says, the power lies in our inner world, you know, what stories are we telling ourselves, about ourselves, you know, what stories are we saying about our lives, our stories have great power over our lives.

If they aren't positive or if we're beating ourselves up in our head, you know, that's going to drive our outer world, we really need to nurture our inner world and make it positive in order for our outer world to improve. She says, of course, we all – she writes, we all have times when we get stuck on negative self talk, you know, but she says it's inaccurate and to be more flexible in your thinking about how you talk to yourself. Shift from positive thinking, you know, to more realistic healthy thinking.

I love that too because you know, I'm a fan of positive thinking and all the positive thought books but some people can be a little bit more cynical about yeah, right, positive thoughts, that's all I have to do, you know? Then my life magically, poof, becomes better and you know, she's saying, just instead of positive thinking, all positive thinking, just shift a little bit, to more realistic thinking and she – this is just so critical to that piece is that self-acceptance is strongly associated with life satisfaction.

[0:17:46.7] PF: Yeah, that's something we need to hear I think every day. Because we do – you know, we beat ourselves up and we see where our shortcomings are and we don't, oftentimes do not equate how that's affecting us in the long run.

[0:18:02.2] SB: Absolutely. You are so right, I think it's all tied to another point that she brings up which is self-compassion and it's interesting how many people, you know, never really put a lot of thought into self-compassion. Yet, they can give tons of self-compassion to friends, family, relatives, strangers.

But are unable or don't think about giving it to themselves and she writes about how important that is, the quality of self-compassion and practicing it with ourselves. You know, treating ourselves like we would a best friend because it gives us the freedom to redefine ourselves, it gives us the freedom to fail and that gives us the freedom to take risks and allows us to be truly creative.

She really writes about how self-acceptance and self-compassion are really the keys to you know, improving our inner world.

[0:19:02.4] PF: I know that these five books are part of a larger overview that you did for us that you gave us the top nine books for 2019 and readers can find that story and the book-a-zine on newsstands right now but we'll also, on the website, we're going to put a list of the books that you've just mentioned and linked to them so people can find them as well.

I think these all sound like really good ways to start out our new year on the right track.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:19:31.3] PF: That was Live Happy book editor, Sandra Bilbray, telling us about five great books to read in 2019 for a better year. To learn more about each of these books, you can visit us at livehappynow.com or you can pick up the live happy book-a-zine available right now on newsstands or in our online store at livehappy.com.

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