

Finding Happiness with Rob Mack

Happiness isn't what you seek It's not what you achieve accomplish or require It's what you essentially are Tell me about it I'm I'm very intrigued Happiness is what you don't think Happiness is not a state of mind It's a state of being right Wow Rob you speak so well I I will bend you Thomas I will be more you with paypal You just let me know I'll send you the money for that compliment but I appreciate it So it's like one person calls it happiness another person calls it joy at the end of the day I'm not so much concerned about what we call it I'm much more interested in the experience of what I call happiness and that's the book you should write I think I've written that book I think I've written it What drops said Positive thinking and no thinking it sums it all up What is happiness Do you pursue happiness Is it worth pursuing or is it in you Is it around you You just have to seize it You know is it everybody around you and you can seize it with them together I have so many questions in my mind from Round us This is living with Sony I'm your host Sunny with my friend Thomas Power Today we are talking about happiness The guest of our conversation is Rob Mac Rob is an IV D graduate and author a TV personality a happiness coach And today he's going to talk about a few quick things we can do to bring happiness into our life Hi Rob Hi Sonny How are you Rob You know when we when we talk about wellness and well-being almost almost every time we we introduce the phrase happiness the word happiness and things around happiness And I saw your Instagram post that got me And I quote you don't have to seek happiness You just have to stop seeking unhappiness And I consider myself the greatest seeker of well-being And for me the phrase that in order to you have to stop seeking something in order to seek something Um Tell me about it I'm I'm very intrigued You went right in I love it Sonny Absolutely You know the challenge I think for most of us is that we think of happiness as something that we need to achieve or accomplish or acquire But my experience my life experience and the education I've taken has sort of let me know and taught me that happiness isn't what you seek It's not what you achieve accomplish or require It's what you essentially are So happiness is a lot easier than I think a lot of us make it out to be Um And so part of the challenge and the opportunity with happiness is to learn to let go and to relax a little bit But I know for a lot of us it feels like hard work Why is it so difficult to focus on joy And another thing do you differentiate between happiness and joy Uh And if if you don't or if you do uh why is it so hard to

focus on these elements of our life Yeah it's such a great question Sonny I mean I think first and foremost the brain is built and wired with a number of cognitive biases that make happiness difficult So it's built with a cognitive bias that we might call negativity bias right So the problem often gets our attention for good reason the brain is wired to keep us alive not necessarily to make us happy right And so when all you have is a hammer everything looks like a nail When all you have is a brain everything looks like a problem to be solved So that in and of itself is a bit of a problem So we can blame evolution for part of the reason that we struggle with happiness so much But the other piece of it is not just you know sort of like nature but also nurture We're not really taught you know how to be happy or how to be joyful Or how to be blissful You know we're taught how to be productive citizens and that's got its place and that's very useful But I think most of us haven't learned where happiness really resides right Where to find happiness Um So that's the answer to the first question the second question And we can go more deeply into that the second question But you know some of the difference between happiness and joy and maybe fulfillment or bliss I don't really see a difference between all of those words I think they're synonyms for the most part And I think it's easy to get distracted um by semantics right So it's like one person calls it happiness another person calls it joy at the end of the day I'm not so much concerned about what we call it I'm much more interested in the experience experience of what I call happiness what you might call joy and what Thomas might call bliss And so in real life experience is the only explanation and the only explanation is experience and it's too easy to get lost in semantics So call it what you want but just do your best to try to experience it So so Rob my my son believes you can't have happiness or a reward a pleasure a bliss whatever label of joy until you've done some work until you've had some pain until you've exerted some energy that's been difficult or challenging or hard or physical or mental and then you're rewarded with the the happiness the joy How do you feel about that as a as a concept that you have to earn your happiness Yeah Well there's a lot of truth to what your son says I mean your son is obviously um very wise I don't know how old he is but he certainly sounds wise for his age Um I would say that without question we tend to appreciate more that which we invest our time energy effort resources and money in And so for that reason yes but also notice how many perfectly priceless things you experience already that are perfectly blissful and happy and joyful that you don't have to put any time energy and effort into How great is it to just simply breathe I

mean how much work and effort do you put into breathing Like none at all The body takes care of that for you right And it's just the right mixture of oxygen and carbon dioxide and other you know um elements in the air And so to that end I would argue that happiness is really effortless when you dive deep enough But in the beginning like so many things it requires a tremendous amount of effort Um So the effort leads to effortlessness But I would um say that it's true that we often appreciate things that we work hard for more That being said happiness is our natural state It's the effortless state it's the state the stateless state So it's a state that exist prior to any of those things not something that exists only after you've achieved or accomplished or acquired what you want And we know that's true because look at how many things you have in your life Now that one day probably not too long ago you prayed for right And know and also notice how maybe barely happier if happier at all You are as a result of all these things you've achieved accomplished and acquired So you think it's a sort of a mental state because you do meet people who are seemingly unhappy who are miserable who talk about their unhappy Yeah And they they talk about their their state Is it is it a state you've got to get into and is it a state you can fall out of Yeah So I'm gonna answer that at different levels right And so much of this conversation and conversations about happiness really are conversations that come down to a concept We we sort of pay a concession to language right So language can kind of help describe things but it can also complicate things you know in the beginning of our happiness journey I think for most of us we come to a realization that happiness isn't the job you have It's not how much money you have It's not the relationships you have necessarily although it's nice to make a lot of money I wanna make a lot of money I'm open to receiving lots of money and I wanna have great relationships and even great health Without question That being said as you continue on your happiness journey you sometimes discover that you've got a really good life but you're still miserable or you've got a terrible life but you still have these moments when you're deeply blissful And so there's a disconnect there It's like how can I be happy in seemingly unhappy circumstances or how can I be unhappy in seemingly happy circumstances So you sort of graduate from this idea that happiness is sort of what you have or that it's even what you do and you come around to realizing that happiness maybe has more to do with either who you spend your time with Ok But also what what you think right That happiness is what you think that it's a attitude that it's a mental state But as you continue along your happiness journey you often discover that the

thought that used to make you so happy when you're 20 makes you miserable at 50 or 60 or 70 or even with the most positive thinking you still experience moments of deep anxiety or stress or overwhelm and you can't simply positive think your way out of the unhappiness or the stress of the overwhelm or the dysphoria or the depression And so you come around you know eventually to discovering that happiness isn't what you do It's not what you have It's not who you spend time with Although those things all help and it's not even what you think Happiness is what you don't think happiness is not a state of mind It's a state of being right And so when you find yourself experiencing those moments when you're thoughtlessly worthlessly aware of what's happening in your life or happening in your mind or happening in your heart you discover this tremendous peace in that in that stillness and silence and that thoughtless worthless awareness and that faceless formless consciousness There's a happiness that's lasting and abiding and meaningful and it doesn't come and go it doesn't come and visit for a little while and then leave It's there all the time underneath even your most positive thinking you know even your most positive experiences it's underneath all of that is a felt sense of peaceful aliveness right And so that's really where the rubber hits the road is that most of us stop at this idea this notion that happiness is a state of mind But if we look closely we'll discover that our happiest moments are often spent when we're not thinking a whole lot at all Wow Rob you speak so well I I will you Thomas I will be you with paypal You just let me know I'll send you some money for that compliment but I appreciate it So we you know parents ask the child the Children the their child Are you happy Or a spouse must ask some other spouse But I'm coming to the kids first Is it fair Do they even have the faculties or is it fair to ask your child Are you happy And can they give can they give an answer or they are the best people to give the answer intuitively because they're so unladen Yeah I mean kids are closer to the source they're closer to the source of happiness right They haven't had so many years and decades of programming conditioning and you know societal messages that uh you know to to sort of cloud and veil and obscure that natural state of felt peaceful aliveness that I call happiness um that we've experienced as adults And so I'd say that kids and that's why they remain playful That's why they remain creative That's why they can have an argument and be 100% in the argument for five full minutes And then next very next moment completely forget about it Be best friends again Rarely Do you see that happen with adults You know adults are still in their mind mind reliving what they said and what happened and then pre living

what they're gonna say next time and how it's gonna go down next time And so they very rarely in the present And so kids are much closer to the source of happiness Um I love um inviting kids into a conversation around happiness Um not in order to impose your ideas upon them but to help them stay focused and clear and centered in their own being and in their own intuition Right I think so much of what we end up doing with kids is we in an attempt a very well intentioned attempt to educate them on the world and things of the world and the practical things of the world we often lead them away from the very source of wisdom and knowledge and intuition that exist within them at all times You know and it's like the more you seek for that outside of you the more you forget that exists inside of you and very you know before very long becomes a slippery slope and you seem to be looking for everything that would make your life whole and happy and complete and full of love outside of you instead of inside of you And so I love the question Um I just think you wanna be careful to maintain and hold a space for unconditional judgment and try not to get in there and impose too many ideas on them because even with our best effort we can sometimes impose ideas that just confuse confuses kids you know more I think that's um and Thomas you probably have views on this too But you know I think this is a mandatory course for every parent to understand what question to ask when you ask a question Are you happy and to understand it properly and to and then to build on it because you know it's like and II I feel that the the kids are our best teachers they they help us grow the most You know when I when I started my first company it was a pursuit of passion And I my second is the pursuit of love So I differentiate between passion and love You do something you're passionate about or you do something that you love What's your point of view on something on this context Something you're passionate about And if you do it something you love that you do it And how does that equate to happiness Yeah Boy Sonny Yeah I just these questions are so great I don't get these questions often And um I so I would say that happiness and love are not two different energies They're not too different phenomena It's the same energy the same phenomenon viewed from two different perspectives seen from two different views right So when you're happy and you're introverted and you're spending time with yourself we just call it happiness right But when you're happy and you're extroverted and you're with other people and you're sharing your happiness with other people we call that love So introverted happiness is what we call happiness extrovert happiness what we call love You can also think of it the other way which is introverted love We

could call happiness and extroverted love is what we would call love right So an easy way to think about this is when you like a rain cloud think of a rain cloud a rain cloud just becomes so full of all this moisture And so you kinda wanna be a rain cloud It's like you become so full of peace love and joy and bliss that at some point you can't contain it anymore Right You're just so full of all joy and peace and love and bliss that you just need to relieve yourself you need to unburden yourself And so you just shower all of that peace and love and joy down on the earth You do it indiscriminately unconditionally without any expectation of reciprocity right There's no quid pro quo in it at all You just do it selfishly to relieve yourself of the burden of carrying this happiness around all day That is love right That is love Um You know I think a lot of things that we think about love is really pseudo love You know it's like fake love It's like I'll do this thing because I'm loving But really I'm hoping secretly to get this thing back from you So it's not really a giving it's not a joyful overflow it's not a luxury it's really um me attempting to get something from you by giving something to you up front And so it's manipulation it's a business Yes and it's conditional That's exactly right Um So Sonny and Thomas I mean fantastic question And I think that's kind of where a lot of us have gone wrong I know that I've gone wrong there I'm a poster boy for that It's like you know you think that you're being really unconditionally loving and you find out later that you weren't at all you were just trying to get something I and I I and I sometimes say you know people say I'm in love or I love somebody but there's a conditionality attached to it That means that oh that person makes me happy Well that's not giving that's receiving Right Absolutely And and this is where it gets tricky in the language again You know you you you really that's why um you don't you want to sort of be able to not just take these kinds of conversations literal but sort of go deeper and hear what's really being said because there's so many ways to say it it's like on one hand I want to say true love is unselfish It's totally unselfish but that's not entirely true because actually the most loving people love loving for loving sake alone It's like I'm in love with loving like I just love and I do it for me not for you It's like if you get benefit out of like great you know but I'm way more selfish than that It's like I'm gonna love on you because it feels so good to me And I'm not I'm too impatient to wait around to see if you're gonna give it back or if you're gonna thank me for it That's just too much And who knows I might not be here tomorrow or the next day or whatever And so I think it takes an authentically selfish person that is willing to love for intrinsic reasons alone to be or to become an

authentically selfless person or unselfish person right To love in an unconditional way If you're doing it for any other reason except that it feels good for you You're going to find yourself quickly disappointed because people aren't on this earth to necessarily give you what you want just because you want want it You know and that's the book I want to read and that's the book you should write I think I've written that book I think I've written it So I I think I've written it I I've written a book called Love from the Inside Out and it keeps getting pushed back a little But it's precisely about that Sonny Um I'll probably need some of your advice and guidance for wrapping it up But yeah that's the idea Sonny you're right about that It's like we all need to hear more of that in a way in a way you know when we talked about love love should be unconditional because that gives a permanence of happiness I believe And that's what you that's what I'm hearing from you And and and I would argue Sony to your point the the only love worthy of the name love is unconditional love Same thing with happiness If it's conditional happiness I don't call that happiness I call that a pleasurable moment You know happiness is pleasurable but it's doesn't equate or equal pleasure Right It's exciting but it doesn't equal and isn't excitement only Right Right And love is the same deal If it's conditional and happiness is conditional what that means is that your happiness is contingent upon or dependent upon something outside of you more than likely And I would call outside of you even the thoughts you think and the feelings you have and that isn't just happiness It's like the way I think it's kind of like um oh a period between two wars we call that peace But is it really peace time It's really just preparation for another war It's like right It's like if you just have a period of love and between two periods of loneliness I don't call that love That's just preparation for more loneliness and a period between of happiness between two periods of unhappiness is really just preparation for more happiness It's not really happiness Um There's a deeper felt sense of peaceful aliveness that exists there all along that's always there It's ever present but you might not be or have tapped into it in quite the way that you could one should tell themselves when they wake up in the morning is take a moment No Is it like the phrase is complete Take a moment to your throughout your day Take a moment and that take take a moment means to stop everything stop the engines right Breathe You know I love that so much Sonny And there was a period you know in my life because you know um I didn't become a happiness coach Um sort of like intentionally so much I was a miserable kid you know and I so so miserable that I became deeply depressed And then I

got to a place where I was insanely incredibly suicidal You know I was experiencing suicidal I dozens of times a day and I got to a place where I eventually decided to do some research about that And I was like you know I'm over this life thing Like I always thought that if I had made friends and I had a beautiful girlfriend and if I made some money um that I would grow out of my unhappiness and none of that happened my unhappiness just became worse and my depression just deepened So I got to a place I did some research I decided I was gonna slash my wrist I went to the kitchen got a kitchen knife dug it into my wrist and you know very strange experience happened You know I dug it in my wrist I still have the suicide test marks there You probably can't see him too well on the screen there But yes in that moment that I dug that knife in there I mean Sonny and Thomas I wasn't expecting this I was expecting really not a whole lot except hopefully at the end of my pain but I experienced in that moment a sort of indescribable piece and ineffable joy and true love that I had never experienced before and for no seemingly good reason Yes Yes Like right then and there like and so at that moment I was like well I don't know what that was but I should probably I can postpone this suicide thing for a little while Now at the time it was just like 15 minutes I wasn't even committed to 15 minutes honestly And now it's laughable because it's like 15 minutes Rob that blows by But at that at that point it's a very tall ambitious order for me I thought there's no way I'm gonna make 15 minutes but I'm gonna just for now Ok I can always do this thing later and I started doing some research and I started discovering like oh my gosh there are lots of people that feel this way have felt this way and there are also lots of people out there in the world like Sonny or Thomas that are happy or that are focusing on happiness that know a whole lot about happiness So maybe I should learn from these smart people I was smart enough to know I was not very smart and that there were smarter people I could learn from right So I went down this path And so it was only because I was being in intentionally selfish and wanted to be happy that I was even led eventually to becoming a happiness coach And so I say all that because there was a period in my journey when to your point I would just stop and notice first of all if I was doing something unhappy I would stop it immediately Like if I just felt unhappy doing something I would just stop it I didn't mean I was gonna stop it forever but just for a moment I would just stop and take a moment and just breathe and just breathe And I discovered that that alone helped me get through a lot of times and periods of my life when I didn't think I could get through it But this taking a moment thing is huge and it's so

huge I actually developed a practice which we'll get to later But um I think it's incredibly important to take and cherish and honor and acknowledge that this moment you have here and now is precious and priceless and irreplaceable So Rob I've been with half a dozen people as they as they've died holding their hands and seeing them out to the next place wherever that next place is if there is another place and they all describe what you talked about with your hand When you put your knife into your wrist that state of love a state of bliss that moment of peace that moment of happiness as they come to the end as if they're falling into that dream that you described earlier that sort of happiness you feel when you know you're going to fall into that lovely dream perhaps dreams are pre prepped for death or the next life When when you when you had that moment of bliss caused from the pain of the knife going into your wrist surely you would have pushed it further in to have more bliss but you didn't push it further and you you pulled it out So how did you how did you Yeah So I will be honest there was very little to no deciphering There was just an instinct just the instinct instinct alone you know and there's intelligence obviously in instinct I mean you you just notice how all of the critical life and bodily functions go on without our intellectual effort right We don't have to think about beating our heart or breathing our lungs And so it was just instinct you know um I just there was a recognition there that I can't explain to this day And what I've been trying to understand since then is partly what you just asked me about But also like what happened there that allowed me to experience this peace love and joy that I hadn't experienced in any other fashion no matter how hard I tried and no matter what else I achieved or accomplished or required or did with my life And it's taken me quite a while But I that's why I've come to this recognition that it wasn't something that I was that I thought ok it it wasn't something that I I wasn't doing anything I was digging something into my wrist but I've had all kinds of things happen before to my body And so it wasn't about my body either being in jeopardy or my body being in pain necessarily that led to the peace love and joy Although I will argue that when you're in severe pain or pleasure the mind tends to go quiet And that's part of the key For once in my life my mind was genuinely quiet There was a stillness and silence that had always been there that was always it's all pervasive but I recognized it and realized it in that very moment You know I was sort of like aware of it and tapped into it And that peace love and joy that I experienced was that stillness and silence felt it was a felt sort of appreciation and recognition of that stillness and silence Um And that is why I call it

happiness right Um And that's also why why I say it's not a state of mind it's not a state of mood It's not a state of relationships right It's not a lifestyle status none of those things It's something that is beneath or prior to all of the experiences and thoughts and feelings and sensations and perceptions that you have And that's why most of us overlook it And that's why you also see in all kinds of scriptures all across the world It doesn't matter what religious or spiritual tradition If you dive deep enough if you look at it through a mystic's eyes you hear things like you know closer to us than our own breathing nearer to us than our own hands and feet right It's not that it's too far to recognize it's too close to see You know if you if you look at most people today we we talked about it struggle with happiness uh uh with with being happy and be with happiness What is this one simple thing We can tell humanity that look you're struggling with happiness you're unhappy for all reasons right and wrong good or bad What's one simple thing they can do or think or whatever to help address that Struggle with happiness You know a simple message to humanity What what can we tell humanity about this Yeah So I'm gonna break it down to two things The first is just simply positive thinking We'll call it that OK But I wanna clarify what I mean by that It's telling a truthful but better feeling story about everything and everybody in your life starting with yourself Right It's critical So you have \$0 in your bank account Are you broke the way I would normally refer to myself I'm broke and my life is over It's a disaster Or is there only up from here It's only up from here That's a truthful better feeling story There's a huge piece of this which is being sort of a selective sifter of experience and being really intentional about the language that you use with yourself and others and doing it simply to feel better If you feel better you'll do better and your life will go better That's what the entire field in science of positive psychology shares with us is that if you can just find a way to feel better even without all the stuff you want somehow magically miraculously you tend to get most of the stuff you want right And you get it easy more easily and effortlessly and Enjoyably by doing so So tell a better feeling story based in truth about everything and everybody in your life including yourself and do it until it becomes a habit That's number one And the second thing I'll share So that's the positive thinking approach Not everybody likes that approach It's difficult in the beginning but it makes everything else easy in the end The other approach is what I would call micro meditation So with this experience of suicide sort of suicide attempt that I had I discovered over time that it wasn't by thinking more or necessarily even thinking positively

that I could experience the deepest peace love and joy It was by actually thinking less And so the first meditation course I took I'm pretty sure I had a panic attack At least I felt like I did And I wasn't very good at meditation like most of us and I realized pretty quickly an hour was too long 30 minutes was too long Five minutes was too long But I discovered I could do one breath And so a micro meditation and this is the most transformative tool I've ever discovered in my 20 years as a coach and a positive psychology expert a micro meditation is one breath for one moment and for one breath you pretend sincerely that it's the last breath and the last moment you'll ever get on the planet that you ever have on earth This is your last moment OK And so you want to enjoy this breath and this moment as deeply as humanly possible while not letting thoughts get in the way So thoughts may surface they may come to mind You might have sensations or perceptions but you just notice them and you let them go away And so you're wanting to milk or juice that one breath for as much joy and happiness as you can possibly experience out of it If you do this one thing and you do it as consistently as you can So just as you go throughout your day just do it as frequently as you can no matter what else you're doing you're swiffer you're folding clothes you're listening to someone you practice this micro meditation in the beginning never more than one breath at a time But if you practice it consistently in about 22 to 66 days you'll rewire your brain neuroplasticity for easier sort of more effortless experience of peace love and happiness right So in other words your your brain rewires itself to do it automatically to do it easily and effortlessly So I'd say those are my two best tips I reduce that and simplify that down to there's positive thinking which is really telling a truthful better feeling story about your life and what's happening in your life And there's no thinking which is what I would call micro meditation Our listeners know that we in every conversation that we do we end the conversation with a call to action What can you do today And so listening to Rob um putting all thoughts together in this conversation I would say the next time that or some time today when you have a negative thought or you're feeling for some reason unhappy live in the now and take a nice deep breath What Rob said Positive thinking and no thinking it sums it all up So the next time today when you have a negative thought and you're feeling unhappy Take a moment take a deep breath Rob Thank you for for what an invigorating exciting just a thought provoking conversation And uh if you want to follow Rob and know more about it please go to coach Rob mac dot com If you want to hear more from your friends you can reach us at living

with sunny at round dot Plus Thank you for being with us Rob Uh It was an exciting conversation Thank you Thank you