

Learn How to Choose HAPPINESS Again and Again!!!

Hello Bob Mack What's up How are you I am doing so well Welcome to The Balance Beautiful Abundant show I know that we met about a a year ago on Good Morning La La Land and I have wanted to to learn more about your teachings and expertise ever since So I'm so excited to have you on the show I'm so grateful to be on this show It was such such a fantastic and serendipitous meeting there and just love to have you on Good Morning La LA and you're such an inspiration Thank you so much for having me on your show You are so welcome I'm gonna tell my listeners a little bit about your background just so they know who you are and how awesome you are So Rob Mack is an Ivy League educated celebrity and he is a positive psychology expert which is awesome because you're gonna be speaking into the mental part of the seven pillars of Balance today So that's so exciting You are He is the author of Happiness from the Inside Out great title Uh He is a TV show host for Good Morning La La Land He has also been featured on huge shows like Access Hollywood Good Morning America the Today Show the E Network Entertainment Tonight the CBS Early Show and so many magazines like self health glamour Cosmopolitan GQ and Forbes magazine Wow when I saw your pictorial in GQ and wow you were definitely looking amazing on those shots So happy He's a former model So that's that's part of why you know how to take such an amazing photograph So um and he also has a master's This is so cool and applied positive psychology from the University of Pennsylvania Only a few dozen people in the entire world have this degree That is so incredible So what does that even mean a master's in applied positive psychology What is that Masters Yeah So it's a face valid time tested empirical study of happiness really the science of happiness and the signs of success the ways in which success does or does not lead to happiness the ways in which happiness does or does not lead to success And so it's about 20 years old Science That's all about what makes life worth living and what was your biggest takeaway from that program Yeah Well the greatest takeaway is that success doesn't lead to happiness but happiness does lead to success And so happiness is not only the greatest success meaning it's the reason that we want to accomplish achieve or acquire anything and everything in the world but it's also it also leads to success right So it's the greatest success and it leads to success meaning more traditional forms of success So the happier people in the world they live longer about 6 to 7 years longer they make more money about 600 to \$700,000 More on

average over the course of their entire lifetime they get married earlier stay married longer Happier in all the relationships whether they're married or not they experience less job burnout really In all ways happiness improves the objective circumstances and conditions of your life That's incredible I love that Success doesn't lead to happiness but happiness leads to success So in my teachings I divide life into seven areas of balance and financial is the last piece of the puzzle But so many people are like oh you know when I make money then I'll hire a trainer or when I make money then I'll have enough money to go out and date or when I make money You know then I'll have time to like socialize with my friends until then I'm just gonna focus on making money but it's actually the opposite Can you speak into that Yeah Um You know it's so interesting and I think a lot of us do that We put the cart before the horse and it's understandable You know we wanna be or feel safe and stable and secure before we go out and do these other things that feel like risk but the problem is is that life can only be lived in the present moment It always shows up as just another present moment even every future moment shows up as the present again And so the challenge and the opportunity is to do what you can to enjoy your life now by doing so you'll enjoy it Of course you'll feel better for it But also that feeling better that those better feelings that you have they actually pre pave a much more successful uh jour journey and a much more happy sort of destination for you as well And so the challenge and the opportunity is to find ways to increasingly enjoy your life Now knowing that you're gonna be more creative efficient effective efficacious at everything that you do from then forward Yeah I agree Rob It's all about having a joyous journey It's not putting our happiness I call it over there Like I'll get happy when I get married when I have kids When I graduate from college when I buy that big house people put their happiness over there and they're like the donkey chasing the carrot They never get the carrot before They know it They're like 85 years old in a nursing home Going wait what happened I never got happy I was chasing the whole time It's true Um I call it Destination addiction but I love the way you refer to it It's beautiful and it's catchy You should patent that Um Yeah I think you know a lot of us really do outsource our happiness to the world to other people to other things to other places events experiences and most of us eventually if you live long enough you begin to see through the illusion and the promise that the world and other people and other things unintentionally um unwittingly make right to make this promise that they can make you happy But if you live long enough you see through that and you realize that

the world can do nothing but break that promise over and over again And as frustrating as that is it does lead you back to the realization recognition that most of happiness In fact scientists say at least 90% of happy happiness is up to you It's voluntary things that you choose to do or choose to think uh voluntary you know relationship that you choose to have or not have And so so much of happiness you know at least 90% I would argue even more than that I would argue 100% is completely and totally within your hands and your control And how interesting that people in third world countries that are living on dirt floors and you know using an outhouse and have no indoor plumbing or showers They're in many cases happier than people in the first world where we can just hit a button and one day later we can get anything in the world from Amazon So just it yeah it's like it's consumerism right Rob Like people are like if you buy this if you buy this cologne or perfume if you go on this vacation if you drink this type of alcohol you'll be happy But that is so false So how do you explain that people in the third world with none of the fancy technology nice cities that we have are actually happier than a lot of people here Yeah it's so true Um It can be frustrating I think to so many of us um a lots of my private practice clients you know they do extremely well very successful They make lots of money they're very affluent and lots of them are very frustrated because they finally get to a place where they feel like man I have more than all of my friends have and I feel less happy than all of my friends are And so you know it's what we call the mar diminishing marginal utility of the dollar And so there's lots of evidence and lots of research But again I want this diminishing marginal utility of the dollar which means that you get less bang for your buck So for every additional buck you get less and less happiness you know as a result of that additional dollar And so when you're making about \$75,000 or less every additional dollar actually does improve your happiness to some extent because you can't pay for basic you know necessities right You don't have a roof over your head maybe shelter or maybe you don't have clothes So that's gonna definitely help But after a certain point when you reach level of subsistence and you can pay for your basic necessities additional dollars don't make a whole lot of difference at all And eventually you reach a point where you totally tap out in terms of how much joy you can squeeze out of money Right And so that's part of it right there You know there's something we call the Hedonic treadmill which is that essentially all of us as human beings adjust to even the best or the worst of circumstances and conditions And so most of us no matter what we achieve accomplish or require or don't achieve

accomplished a choir we end up basically defaulting back to our baseline level of happiness So that's why for instance people get married they experience a little honeymoon period and then before you know it they're just as unhappy as they were before they got married and maybe sometimes even unhappier than they were before they got married Same thing with lottery winners or folks that are paralyzed you know in in a in a positive way They we have to think well if something dramatic like that happened and we were paralyzed my gosh how our happiness would be complex And it is for a short period of time But by and large most people return to their baseline levels of happiness again you know and that's with the exception of taking real intentional or making real intentional effort towards improving that baseline So that baseline level is partly genetic We said that at least 50% of your happiness is genetic means that yeah so so your DNA has like a happiness program in it and that's carried on from generation to generation right And the interesting thing about it is it's perfectly malleable So the thing about the happiness set point is that unlike height or unlike hair color which you can't do anything about with your happiness set point you can actually change it by thinking new thoughts by surrounding yourself with new people by consuming different information by making happier decisions and choices in your life And so it's actually am malleable thing if you've ever read any you know research around neuroplasticity and neuroscience you know that that's absolutely supported by real science And so it's interesting that that 50% perfectly malleable you can do a lot to influence and change it The other 40% is um you know other things like you know optimism gratitude relationship building all those kinds of things They say that the final 10% So if you've got 100% then 50% is genetic that's that's changeable The other 40% are other changeable things And then the 10% is conditions and circumstances And so even when your life is perfect if you can imagine having unlimited money money the perfect relationships perfect health all of that together only accounts for about 10% of your happiness So if you had the perfect life you still are 90% of away from having perfect happiness right And so there's a disconnect there And so most of us we put way too much of our time energy and effort in that 10% getting a perfect light life instead of discovering or enjoying the perfection that exists within our life already So 10% are the circumstances situations and events 90% is genetics in your internal dialogue changing that dialogue And I know uh yeah the research says you can change the neural pathways in your brain that were already programmed for worried out and fear and program them for happiness So

what are some of the practices that you do when you teach your clients to help rewire and reprogram your brain for happiness Yeah So one of the greatest practices is simply a pattern interrupt you know part of becoming a happier person is becoming more sensitive to how you feel So instead of monitoring your thoughts all day which is what a lot of people do Just notice how you feel when you don't feel tapped in tuned and turned on when you don't feel all that peaceful or happy and you're starting to spiral a little you feel unhappy you feel worried and just fearful then use some kind of pattern or some people they just distract themselves with anything else I've got clients that will in their head look into the room or wherever they happen to be situated in that moment and they'll just call out objects in their head to distract them from the unhappy thoughts And other clients are a little bit more um sort of assertive with that And they'll actually just begin to tell themselves a better feeling story based in truth So it has to be based in truth Otherwise it won't be believable But they'll say yes it's been a tough day And that means that because I'm feeling so low I can only go up from here and there's so many things to be grateful for But the idea essentially is learning to positively reframe the negative uncomfortable or unhappy stories that you tell yourself and other people all day every day And if you can't do that if you can't be positive at least be quiet or at least distract yourself with something else that's more positively absorbing and consuming So it's all about changing your narrative changing the stories that you tell yourself and you tell other people And I love that quote change your story change your life So if somebody's in a negative feedback loop and they're in a victim story and they they've told it so many times again that you can like smell it when they walk into the room how would you start with someone who came to you and said Rob I'm tired of being a victim What can I do now to shift from victim mentality Yeah So so many I mean there's so many tips tricks and tools that we could offer up The most important piece of the whole thing is really meaning it when you say you wanna be happy like so many of us say that But we don't that doesn't always we don't always demonstrate that with our action So we say we want to be happy but we're actually much more interested in continuing this drama filled or dramatic story and telling other people It because we get sympathy and we get love back and that feels you know better than not getting any love And so we have to really mean it when we say we want to be happy that's the first piece above all else In fact if you just did that then it's so easy to know that the stove is hot It's so easy to know that those unhappy feelings hurt when you think them or the unhappy story

hurts when you tell other people and you can just stop telling other people or you can begin to reframe it Um And then from that point forward if you can practice just for 66 days of telling yourself and other people a better feeling story based in truth or by doing something as simple as distracting yourself from the unhappy story and just saying look I'm not gonna think about the more positive version of this story because I can't do that very well or I'm not interested in doing that well very well What happened is what happened if you just simply drop telling the story at all and you focus on something else that was at least neutral if not positive you would find in 66 days with consistent effort your brain would make it almost automatic or at least much more effortless in terms of telling that story more positive story or at least distracting you from the negative story over and over again it almost becomes a habit right So that's the most important thing is choosing sort of happiness above all else above everybody and everything else Second using some form of pattern interrupt or positive reframing Um you know the other opportunity is this is that you know at the deepest level happiness isn't really about thinking all the time In fact thinking can be pretty anxiety provoking even when you're telling yourself a better feeling story that's based in truth even when you're focusing on positive thoughts and positive activities and positive experiences So instead you can just simply experience or play with experiencing not thinking at all right So that's what meditation is about How do you not think at all Yeah So we all have moments in the day where we're doing that already So when you first wake up in the morning maybe when you are lasting at night when you're going to sleep there's a moment or two At least when your mind is so exhausted When your body is so exhausted that it's just enjoying being in the bed under the comforter in the sheets It's enjoying the company If your partner or your spouse the puppy whatever happens to be around you and you're not thinking you're just experiencing sense perceptions So the opportunity and the practice that I offer to most people is what we call micro meditation Micro meditation is just one breath It's not an hour it's not 30 minutes it's not even a minute It's one breath that you take as often as humanly possible throughout the day no matter what else you're doing with a simple goal of simply enjoying that breath and not letting thoughts get in the way So for instance when you first wake up last thing at night when you're falling asleep your brain is in what we call alpha beta wave state It means it's very sleepy essentially And it's practically quiet And what you wanna do is you wanna enjoy one breath all the way through your nose and all the way out of your nose without thinking and just

focusing on squeezing as much joy out of that single breath as humanly possible And the way you do that is by focusing on feeling the experience of the breath instead of thinking about the breath or thinking about anything else right And so if you can focus you demonstrate for us Yeah So it's just simply you know you can keep your eyes open if you want but it's easier sometimes for some of us to close our eyes but you just breathe into the nose breathe out you know and as you breathe in you wouldn't just notice little things like what does the breath smell like What does the air smell like What does the breath feel like in terms of temperature But the more you can focus on feeling the less you'll start to think or the less you'll begin thinking and all of a sudden you'll experience this like little gap little pregnant pause between thoughts that pregnant pause is really pregnant with a bundle of joy and it's happiness in there it's peace in there And so the more you practice this micro meditation you'll notice your start to sort of string them together And before long you have an entire hour day weeks where you're simply experiencing a much more peaceful life That is so beautiful I heard this uh spiritual teacher say the mind controls the body but the breath controls the mind So if our mind starts racing and starts getting into fear doubt worry anxiety we can rein it back in through the breath So I love this micro meditation First thing upon awakening And last thing when you go to bed I'm definitely gonna start doing that practice tonight I'm so excited So you have coached everyone from a list celebrities to professional athletes to just you know uh regular people So what is the common denominator What does everybody want happiness They just want happiness You know we use different words for happiness Sometimes people call contentment fulfillment joy Some people call it love they call it peace they call it \$50 million But at the end of the day we only want what we want because we think we'll feel better for having it And so ultimately everybody's just after happiness And that's the one thing all human beings share in common is we all want to be happy And uh you know sometimes we fight and argue over what happiness is But you know words and thoughts and explanations won't give you happiness You need an experience of happiness to know what happiness is It's like tasting honey I could describe it all day But until you've had a real lasting meaningful and abiding experience of a live piece or peaceful aliveness is which which is what I call happiness It's easy to mistake pleasure for happiness or lust for happiness or you know the trappings of success for happiness But none of those things last None of those things are so sort of substantial It's kind of like eating junk food all day It's great and you can enjoy it now and then But

if you spend your life eating nothing but junk food very quickly you create all kinds of other problems for yourself and for all the people around you And so we all really just want to be happy So do you think it's harder or easier for an average person to be happy because you're coaching like a list celebrities and professional athletes in the whole world is going Yeah you're great I wanna you know play a sport like you dress like you be like you walk like you talk like you and they're getting all this outside adulation and where it's just um a regular person an average person has to find that self approval from the inside So do you think the journey is the same or is it harder or easier for celebrities to find happiness Yeah So happiness is an equal opportunity in Denver You know there's no question about it you know Um I growing up I used to think oh my goodness those athletes those celebrities those folks that are extraordinarily wealthy how blessed they must be the charmed lives They lead and then you get to know a few of them or a lot of them And before you know it you realize that what you consider a blessing is often an extraordinary curse as far as they see the challenge as far as they see it when you experience nothing but adulation and appreciation approval from people outside of you All of a sudden it sort of misdirects you and misleads you trains you away from the very source of happiness within you And so in some ways you're hamstrung you know you've almost become so detached and removed from a source of happiness within you that you can't or believe that you can't find it again you know and not just that but then all of a sudden now you're chasing everybody else is liking like likes and love and approval and appreciation and you're just so separated from yourself Sometimes you don't even realize it right Whereas if you have don't have that experience you're not famous you're just an anonymous per person like the rest of us then you don't have to overcome that particular hurdle in the same way And so I would say that you know we all experience our lives individually uniquely ourselves And I would say that happiness is equally easy or difficult Um For all of us there's no um you know nobody really gets a leg up in terms of happiness in this world And the things that you think are obstacles to your happiness are often the very things that lead you to a deeper more meaningful experience of happiness Um Like me you know I was suicidal for a long time You know I was depressed and suicidal I still have suicide test marks on my wrist and believe it or not that experience led me being as happy if not happier than anybody else I've ever met I mean because it's focused me on happiness in a way that other people who are much richer or more successful haven't had an opportunity to do right So you

know it's interesting um I would not call avoiding adversity a blessing or a leg up in this life Everybody struggles and thank you so much for sharing that vulnerability I had a kind of a cry for help fake suicide attempt too when I was 19 And that kind of put me on a spiritual path And I say it takes a lot of suffering to get this happy Yeah it's and that's precisely it It's like they say no um sort of lotus without the mud right So no mud no lotus And it's true too for human beings to a large extent you know there's two ways to sort of come around to seeing both the value of happiness and also being happy and being happiness And that is through suffering intense suffering and that's how most of us live there but also through intelligence and awareness right So you know there so happiness requires suffering and then an awareness of what leads and doesn't lead to suffering and then just choosing the happier path right So it's like you experience enough suffering you begin to it diso it sort of disabuses you of this idea that anything or anybody in the world can make you happy And that's frustrating at first But it's so incredibly inspiring and al livening in the end it's freedom It is it's not being attached to anyone or anything But it's also a daily discipline and a daily practice because everything in our culture is all about attachment to people to things to ideals And it's like it's a choice It's a like you said it's a moment by moment choice once you know the difference you not it And that's precisely it You know it's hard to sell a perfectly blissful person's stuff right You can't guilt trip them very easily You can't you know sort of heap this condemnation and their this guilt on their head and think that it's gonna you know produce a result that is more in your self-interest You can't you know scare them and not because they're blissful They're deeply you know perfectly abidingly blissful And so it's hard to sell people So yes we live in a society in a world where fear and guilt and shame and these things are used to influence people and control people in ways that are self serving Um And so yeah if you're looking for happiness or peace or love in the world or other people it will be very short lived But you and I are two of the happiest people I know and we love to shop So how do you explain that Well well see that's now that's the thing right It's kind of like it's interesting I remember reading somewhere I forget who it was It was a philosopher But he said something like he said I love going window shopping and looking at all the things that I find beautiful but do not need And I think that's kind of a difference There's a you know a question of where you're coming from when you're doing anything in your life If you're coming from a place where you're ego driven and it's all about scarcity and you need to be happy or is it an expression of your fullness and

fulfillment already Like I love clothes like you and I love cars and I love nice things And there was a period in my life very early on where I felt like I needed it to get other people's appreciation or approve it in order to be someone you know I sought myself for those things But as you get older you realize man I don't need any of those things In fact I feel free without them And that being said I love beautiful things I love beautiful people and it you know enhances the happiness I have but it cannot give me happiness right And I think that's the difference Are you seeking happiness through it or are you allowing it to be an expression of the happiness that you already feel inside Yes And I think appreciating beautiful things is good But the differentiation between needing them to feel OK is different So thank you for that distinction So how do you process negative feelings today You know let's say that you got a negative email or a negative phone call or because it's only human to feel some negative emotions What do you do What is your personal process if you start feeling sad or unhappy about something Yeah So I um you know I don't feel bad I don't feel that unhappiness or sadness anywhere near like I did 20 years ago it was like almost an incessant experience Um You know every now and then I might think or notice something that I'm you know someone homeless for instance or someone suffering and you know you feel something about that And also I think for me what I do is I step back from the mind You know I think the whole the whole key to being happy and peaceful is and even self loving is to recognize and realize that you have a mind but you're not it that you have thoughts but you don't need to be lost in your thoughts that you can be in the storm you know yet above it you know be in the world but yet above it And so the challenge of opportunity for me is just to observe my thoughts observe my feelings to notice them but to not add to them don't fuel them don't feed them with all of this attention Right And sometimes we get in there and we try to change everything too much or we just get and then before you know it you start getting sucked in to this negative sort of vortex of bad feelings And so instead I step back and I look at at at and observe the thoughts and feelings I have the same way I do clouds in the sky if you know you don't need to do anything about clouds in the sky If you're frustrated about a rain or an overcast day the best thing you can do is take your attention off of it not get absorbed in it and realize and remember that there's a sun back or behind the clouds that's always shining just because you can't see it just because you can't feel it doesn't mean it's not there And you focusing on the crowd clouds and obsessing about the clouds or focusing on your thoughts and feelings

and obsessing thing about your thoughts and feelings is only feeding and fueling the very unhappiness that you want to escape Right And so in the same way that you pedal a bicycle and when you get tired of that physical trip you just put down the bicycle you can do the same thing with your unhappiness when you you know are essentially feeling unhappy and you're having this negative psychological trip you can just put aside the mind put down the mind walk away from the mind and really just abide as awareness itself nonjudgmental loving awareness itself You don't have to get lost all the thoughts and emotions that is so beautiful So some people say they even allow themselves to indulge in the self pity or the negative emotions and they'll set a timer on their phone for like five minutes and they can hit the pillow and cry and scream and do whatever they need to do to get it out and then go back to their day or people like you who are more advanced you just let it go right through you Like the the weather happening when we started our uh interview it was pouring rain and now it's bright sun It's the same thing that just happened in the weather right now The proof is in the pudding and I love you saying that Rebecca you know every time I talk to you I'm always so inspired and enlightened by what you share and by who you are And that's a perfect illustration Um You know and that's a great place to start Like you said you know if you're feeling like indulgence is always better than sort of repression because if you indulge without getting lost in the story in your head because you just don't want to add an additional level or layer of suffering to what you're already experiencing So if you can do that yes fully indulge go all in and be really present with it and it's amazing how quickly you'll come out If you go all the way in you're gonna come all the way out and all the way through much more quickly Right And that being said you know there's a body of research um around the value and use of sort of expressing or and particularly your anger your frustration like taking out of the pillow taking out on a you know fake Um I think it was a clown like a one of those clowns you punch down and comes back out up and they basically found that you know there are small benefits to it but over the long run you want to be careful of feeding your anger and your upset And so the challenge there again is just don't you're gonna indulge indulge but be very present moment minded about it and don't get into the story in your head about it all Just experience it and feel it intensely without thinking on top of it And you'll be surprised you'll come out of it a lot better and every single time it'll last less and less long Exactly And I find that exercising to certain kinds of music helps get it out if I get really angry just doing like a really

intense like ah like exercise just getting it out of my body is so helpful too It's honestly one of the best stress relievers and happiness boosters in the world is exercise we know that exercising for about 30 minutes a day just moderately you know moderate exercise is the equivalent to taking an antidepressant and anti anxiety pill That it has that much of a positive effect on your psychological and emotional well-being without any side effects only positive side effects Right And so yes exercise for me is one of my you know go to every single day That's incredible So we're just gonna finish with this last thought and we are in a pandemic and you were telling me before the interview officially started that 50% of people are unhappy right now So what would you tell them as your closing message The 50% of people that are unhappy uh due to the pandemic Yeah Stay out of the places where happiness doesn't you know doesn't live you know just try to stay where happiness is And so happiness you'll never find happiness in the future Stay out of there stay out of that forecasting you know how things are going to be or what things are gonna look like or the new normal or any of these ideas there You know happiness is to be found here and now your life is to be lived here and now and you want to do everything humanly possible to enjoy here And now the less time you can spend focused on forecasting trying to predict what's ahead the more time you can spend in the present moment And stay out of your head while you're in the present moment the happier you'll be you'll be surprised because we work so hard and so long to be happy But happiness is actually our very nature It's our true nature When you're not thinking right you're already perfectly happy That's why we love sleep printing so much You know when you're in dreamless state that state of not thinking is perfectly blissful I mean it's so peaceful I look forward to it every single night I think most of us do And so just remember at the end of the day that you know things will continue to improve It's just the very nature of life things will continue to improve You can do your part by simply enjoying yourself as much as humanly possible here and now and you can do that best by staying out of your head I love that staying out of the future because there's so much unknown uh quantities in the future When will this end What will life be like When is the vaccine coming out Will it come back And if you can just ground yourself and rain your mind into the moment you can find happiness now because the future and the past are fiction we have absolutely no power over them anyway So why not just ground ourselves in the present So that's that's beautiful advice you nailed that you're right You can't put a single fin finger on the past or future right The only thing we have

is the now and the now is always slipping between our fingers you know always vanishing and then over and so we want to do everything we humanly possibly human you know possibly can to just enjoy the now And you'd be surprised the more you en enjoy enjoy the present moment the more you take care of the present moment you'll find that the future takes care of itself That is beautiful So I am just I could talk to you all day long but I know it's very busy today So how can people stay in touch with you Yeah So you can find me at my website which is coach Rob Mack dot com You can find me on all social media platforms especially Instagram at Rob Mac uh official and you can also find uh me or my book at Amazon and Barnes and Noble online And what is your book called Yeah it's called Happiness from the Inside Out Yeah So I'll have all that stuff in the show notes Thank you so much for your time Rob It's always a delight I learned so much from you and you're so fun to talk to and your happiness is just coming through the screen So it's been an absolute joy to spend time with you this morning Oh my gosh The pleasure has been all mine as always you're such a lot right You're so full of love and wisdom Thank you so much Rebecca I really appreciate you Thank you and listeners Thank you for tuning in to balanced beautiful abundant If you feel that this episode would help anyone in your life who's not happy please share it with them so we can spread happiness in the world and we'll see you soon for the next show Thanks for tuning in guys