

Episode 5 – It's The Little Things

Barb Knows Best Transcripts

Michelle Maros: [00:00:14] Hi, everyone. Welcome back to Barb Knows Best, the podcast I am your co-host, Michele Maros, and I'm here with the lovely, peaceful barb, my dear mom.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:27] Yeah. Hi everyone. I'm so excited to be here again.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:31] Good afternoon. How are you doing today?

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:34] I am. I'm feeling a little bit stressed because the traffic here is extraordinary right now. And you know me, I can be. I can be moved sometimes by craziness of drivers and traffic.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:49] So if you listen to some of our past episodes, you've definitely heard us talk about our little traffic demon Barb over here.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:58] I know, but taken a lot of deep breaths. I brought myself back to the present moment. I'm so excited to be here with you, Michelle. And with all of our amazingly beautiful guests out there listening.

Michelle Maros: [00:01:09] Yeah, we're so happy to be back. I really feel like what we have on the agenda today is. Is really, well, it's good for us because I think we need to actually, you know, always whenever we talk about things, we generally, yeah, it's things that we need to remind ourselves of. But you know, I wanted to I felt like it was a good time for this episode to kind of dive into the concept of happiness and joy and cultivating these feelings. Because I think, you know, even as a kid, I remember when, you know, people would say, What do you want to be or what do you want to do? People just want to be happy when they "grow up". And happiness can feel really elusive, especially in these times, we're like it feels like there's, and there is, so much going on in the world right now that can make us feel like it's not even possible. And we've talked a lot amongst ourselves, and in some of our work about

differentiating between happiness and joy and what that looks like. And really how we can use some tools to tap into those feelings. And so I think today is a good day to get into it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:02:29] No, I agree. Especially since we're still early in the new year. Yeah, I think it's "up" for a lot of people. We get so many messages about happiness and joy and all of the things. And I think since we're so close to New Year, because let's face it, when we when we turn into a new year, like when we turn over December 31st and come into New Year, we all feel a lot, a lot of promise and optimism and hope and all the things. But I don't know about all of you out there listening, but in this new year, I still felt stress, pressure and a lot of anxiety because we're coming into the new year still in the middle of this pandemic. So I think it's "up" for everyone and I'm glad we're we're talking about this topic today because I think there are ways that we're going to share with everyone today how we can actually get beneath the surface level, all of the craziness that's still happening in the outside world and find a sense of joy and and peace and ease. Ease more than anything else is.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:27] Yeah. Well, so much of what you talk about and a lot of your work is your story of being such a Type-A perfectionist and and you've gotten into your story and past episodes, but mostly that you were seeking happiness from the outside. And I think we all tend to think that when I get this thing or this relationship or this job or this amount of financial success or whatever, then I'll be happy. And we place our focus on happiness being external. And I think these past few years, even the beginning of this year, has shown that. You know, we really can't place our mental well-being and stability on the external world, because it's completely unpredictable.

Barb Schmidt: [00:04:16] And it always has been.

Michelle Maros: [00:04:17] And always has been, but even more so now, like it's just it's a lot. And so. Happiness. Stems from that internal. Strong foundation from within. And so what does that look like for you?

Barb Schmidt: [00:04:35] Yeah, this is a great question, because happiness is... I remember and I'm sure we're going to spend an episode in my story at great length, but when when I was always searching for happiness, I thought I was the only one that wasn't happy. And I thought,

other people are happy. It's just me. So I'm not happy because there's something wrong with me. They all have what they need or they're better than I am or I was. It was always that comparison when I was young. Like, I'm not happy because there's something, something that matters, so I need to go out and fix myself, or I need to get something to make me happy. And I think today, obviously, all these years later, I think I look at it as exactly what you just said. That happiness has to come from the inside out and happiness has to be rooted, I believe, in a sense of strength and of conviction, of believing and trusting yourself completely and in accepting exactly who you are from the inside out. And really understanding that whatever is happening out there, I have the ability to handle it. It may not look pretty. Sometimes it may be really hard. Life is hard, but I will be OK, you know, all is well and I will be OK. For me, that's happiness today. Like that, I have everything that I need. Even though things are maybe really, really difficult right now, or it looks like the whole world around me is falling apart,

Michelle Maros: [00:06:00] It's like that steady level of content.

Barb Schmidt: [00:06:03] Yeah. And I feel like how we get that is really by accepting ourselves and really understanding, you know, that we are good enough. We are worthy enough. We are smart enough. We are all the things that we think were not enough of. We are enough.

Michelle Maros: [00:06:20] So you said a word that I think we should dive into with that is worthiness of happiness. And I think many of us, myself included, can feel like we're not worthy of feeling happy or joyful, especially during these times, because there's a lot of suffering going on and. You know, who am I to feel OK when other people aren't? But the thing is that, we all are deserving of that feeling of joy and happiness. And what I like to think about is, it doesn't have to be so grandiose. You know, like I can find, you know, a silver lining or a smile in something small, and I don't have to feel guilty about that.

Barb Schmidt: [00:07:12] Yeah, and I would reframe what you just said because I love that you, you let off with that. Like, who are you not to feel worthy? Who are you? Not to feel OK, even though there is a lot of suffering and a lot of things happening in the world around us? I would reframe it as, I want to constantly strive to be, to be OK and to feel worthy and to do all of the things that I'm capable of and that I'm meant to be doing here so that I can help lift others up. So if we're going to feel unworthy and we're going to feel like we're not good enough and we're

going to feel like, oh, or feel guilty, which I believe guilt is is a pretty useless emotion. Well, because it holds us back, it keeps us stuck and it holds us back. Guilt keeps us from doing anything. Actually, it just keeps us in that mode of of guilt of, Oh my gosh, so who are we not? And I think if we have that premise of we are all worthy human beings and some people can weather the storms of life better than others. So if we can actually be a person that can learn how to weather the storms of life really, really well and tap into the worthiness and acceptance and goodness that we have from the inside, then we can be here for others. If we can't, then we're all, you know, we're all just still struggling. So I just feel like we have to. It's like our birthright to own who we are, what we came here to do and all the things. And don't feel unworthy. And don't feel guilty. Like really own who you are so that you can one day then help others.

Michelle Maros: [00:08:42] I think that's really important and what I like to think about, too, when I get into that, I go into rabbit holes a lot. It's part of my personality.

Barb Schmidt: [00:08:52] Yes, you do.

Michelle Maros: [00:08:54] And when I get into that kind of rabbit hole of of feeling, the very heavy feelings of everything around us, I like to think about like, just noticing or connecting with like the tiny joys that I was talking about as like these little. You know, it rises you back out of the rabbit hole. And maybe it's just for like a couple of minutes, but you getting yourself out and not living in the darkness really matters and makes a difference. So if you can just keep looking for those things that for even a moment in time, lift your spirits, give you a smile, make you feel at peace or joy. Like it's a really, beneficial thing. And it, I think we take those things for granted sometimes, especially probably pre-pandemic, when life was "Normal" or relatively easier than it is now, but really noticing those things because they do in the whole lift our spirits.

Barb Schmidt: [00:09:57] What is one of those things for you?

Michelle Maros: [00:09:59] Oh, funny, you should ask my daily cup of coffee really gets me, like, I go to sleep at night thinking. "Holy goodness. And a few hours, I'm getting my cold brew." And like that excites me and sometimes not to be grimace like that'll get me through to the

next day. And also, of course, the barb knows best mascot Charlotte the cat. She's a source of joy. Um. Going for a walks. Yeah. What about you?

Barb Schmidt: [00:10:36] I think you're Right, those little simple things. One of my favorite poets. I'm Irish. So one of my very favorite poets from a long, long time ago I was reading him was John O'Donohue. And I remember listening to one of his talks and he said, Always keep something beautiful in your mind. And I remember thinking, Oh my gosh, Isn't that such an amazing thing to say? And so I've never forgotten that. And when we were at the height of the pandemic and I would go for my walk every morning and walk my dog, I would look for that one beautiful thing that I could keep in my mind all day long. And I think as we look at the things that these little simple joys, these things that can bring us joy or bring a smile on her face, like you said, it truly is the little things that we can keep. And when he says, keep it in your mind, I like to think of that as if I'm starting to feel overwhelmed or stressed or sad in a in a way that's starting to bring me down to a place. Of course we're supposed to be. We were meant to be feeling our feelings. We must feel our feelings. But I think you said it beautifully earlier that we're meant to be doing this and feeling this. And if we're sad or overwhelmed or anxious, we can feel the feelings and feel it deeply. And then we want to try to feel the feelings and let it move through us so that we don't actually live in the feeling. We want to let it move through us so that we can live in a place of our choosing. And so when he says, keep something beautiful, I can feel the feelings of the overwhelm or whatever it is that's happening. And then I can picture in my mind that something beautiful that I saw in my walk in the morning.

Michelle Maros: [00:12:09] Please, please, please tell us that something beautiful that you relied heavily on during the pandemic, because I know. Because everyone loves when you talk about this, and it's hilarious, and maybe like, I'll post it on the Instagram a picture. So you all can see, but tell us about that.

Barb Schmidt: [00:12:26] Well, we live in Florida, so it's hot and humid here, very hot and humid south Florida. And so I never imagined that there would be cactus that are that are really thriving in Florida. But my neighbor has a lot of cactus in her front yard. And I would say at least three to four times throughout the year, these cactus bloom, they have the most gorgeous flower, and I'll never forget the first time. You know, probably like April 2020, I was walking ELLIE, early in the morning, my dog, you know, early in the morning and this cactus had the

most gorgeous flower. And I thought, Oh my gosh, this is so amazing. And it was. It really brought a smile to my face.

Michelle Maros: [00:13:10] She was obsessed.

Barb Schmidt: [00:13:11] Yeah. And I took pictures of it. And I just think this is so beautiful. I sent him to all my friends. I sent it to Michelle. So I think that that brought me a lot of happiness, which is what we're talking about right now. In the midst of being locked down in a pandemic and April of 2020, that really brought me a lot of joy and it really had that. That was that something beautiful in my mind. So I think

Michelle Maros: [00:13:33] Though you might not have ever noticed it before.

Barb Schmidt: [00:13:35] Well, I know I didn't notice it before because I didn't even realize she had cactus in her front yard. And I've lived there, so I actually didn't notice it or I just drove right past it. You know, it wouldn't be something because it's a very it's not a very appealing landscape. Let's just say that around around the cactus, it's just a lot of weeds and gravel.

Michelle Maros: [00:13:55] So it is the epitome of like. Pretty ugly things, but pretty beautiful things coming out of the ugly thing. Yeah. Such as life. Anyways. Speaking of keeping something beautiful in your mind, you like to. Say, we like to say that you're kind of like an expert of the mind. The mind has really become your laboratory, and we really believe that so much of our suffering stems from what goes on in the mind and...

Barb Schmidt: [00:14:27] Because everything begins in the mind, if you can. Everybody listening could have that, that mindset. Everything starts in the mind. It starts with that thought in the mind,

Michelle Maros: [00:14:36] Of course. And. In a lot of our work, we use the stat, and I think it'll be interesting for people to hear. But. The Laboratory of Neuroimaging at the University of Southern California did a study, and they determined that we think approximately forty eight point six thoughts per minute. And ninety five percent of our thoughts that we think are repetitive. And 80 percent. Of the habitual thoughts that we think are negative.

Barb Schmidt: [00:15:16] Hmm, imagine.

Michelle Maros: [00:15:18] It always like it blows my mind when we say it, because it's just so mind blowing literally.

Barb Schmidt: [00:15:24] Seventy thousand thoughts a day.

Michelle Maros: [00:15:25] It's about seventy thousand thoughts a day, which when you think about that. Ninety five percent of seventy thousand are negative and then 80 percent are repetitive

Barb Schmidt: [00:15:36] The other way around. Ninety five percent are repetitive and 80 percent of those 80 percent of that, 95 percent are negative.

Michelle Maros: [00:15:43] Yes, regardless, though,

Barb Schmidt: [00:15:45] Yeah, it's a lot. It's a lot.

Michelle Maros: [00:15:48] So what do you think about that?

Barb Schmidt: [00:15:49] I think it's a lot, and I think when we first we first heard that study, but I always..

Michelle Maros: [00:15:53] But it makes sense to we know that we're just like the the script in our mind is just going over and over and over again about worries, anxieties, fears, anger, resentments, everything.

Barb Schmidt: [00:16:05] So what I think about that is and why, why I like to consider myself an expert in the mind is just that I am so obsessed with becoming more and more aware of what I'm thinking. And so I would say for everyone listening, start paying attention to your thoughts. Start paying attention to what your mind is saying to you. We don't have any control over the thoughts that come into the mind. You know, random thoughts just come in our mind. That's

just the way that it is. And if and if you have trouble believing that when you get a song stuck in your head, can you get rid of it?

Michelle Maros: [00:16:40] No, probably not. You can Call me AI. Oh, here we go. It'll be stuck in my head for the rest of the day. No, true. It's like brain worms.

Barb Schmidt: [00:16:48] It is. It comes in. But we do have one hundred percent control over what thoughts we will allow to stay in our minds that we will listen to or that we will believe or that we will think is true. So I think it's really important to start becoming aware of how you're spending your mental energy every day. And if you're not checking your thoughts and if you're not being the boss of your mind is what I like to call it. Then you think about these 80 percent negative thoughts you think about, Well, this is why I'm not happy. This is why I'm not able to find the joy or the beauty that may be around me in every in any given moment of my day. And I think that that's just that's really the place where we have to start.

Michelle Maros: [00:17:28] And I know we've said this in past episodes as well, and I think we'll probably say it to Kingdom Come, but really the first step towards any sort of shift or changes cultivating that awareness. And that's what you're saying, you have to start to become aware of what's even going on in the mind. You know, you can't change anything if you don't even know what you're trying to change or shift or cultivate or anything.

Barb Schmidt: [00:17:53] Right. And I'm going to throw a little caveat in there about that. We want to become aware. And being observant of the thoughts in the mind without judgment, without trying to interpret what the thoughts mean or without criticism of ourselves. And I think that's, you know, that's really key if we can really start becoming getting a slight little bit of detachment from the thoughts and because the thoughts aren't who we are. And so without judging ourselves, without trying to interpret what they mean, and without criticism. And I think that's what being mindful means. How can we actually be in the moment with what's happening around us? So I was in the moment with that cactus flower and I wasn't judging it and I wasn't being critical myself of myself. It's that whole idea of I was taking in that moment when I first saw that cactus flower and the beauty of it and...

Michelle Maros: [00:18:41] Also not being attached to it because it dies the next day.

Barb Schmidt: [00:18:44] Exactly. It only blooms for the one day. Exactly. It only blooms for the one day. It's it's the perfect metaphor. Yeah, it's the perfect metaphor for mindfulness. And so simply what we're trying to say, I think Michelle, is how can we be here right now with what we're doing? Be in the moment with what we're doing, because this is where the happiness, the joy that resides within us and the beauty that we might be looking for in our lives lies.

Michelle Maros: [00:19:10] It's so true. So many meditation and mindfulness teachers say, and it can sound cliché at this point in time, but, the moment that we have right now is the only moment that we have. And so if we can train the mind to be here and not be in the moment that was 10 minutes ago or worrying about something that's happening tomorrow, that is where you can have power and make choices. For your happiness and joy. But I wanted to also take this time to just interject really quickly about meditation and mindfulness in the mind in general. Because so often we have people think that when you do these practices, your mind will just be quiet. You know, how do I quiet the mind? How do I get my mind to stop? Or I can't meditate. I can't practice mindfulness because my mind won't ever stop. That's not in my nature. And that's not the point. And you can't and you won't ever and you don't want it to. Because, like we say, the point of the mind is to think. It gives us creativity and personality and ideas and problem solving and all of the things. So I just wanted to say that, you know, yeah, we have 70,000 thoughts. It's not necessarily to stop the thoughts, but I think our goal here is to see that there's a lot of thoughts going on in those seventy thousand that aren't productive or aren't giving us happiness or leading us into a place mentally that we want to be. So it's how can we transform that percentage that aren't beneficial to us?

Barb Schmidt: [00:21:03] Yeah, I think it's why we're bringing up the thoughts in the mind and why we're bringing up meditation or mindfulness right now with with what you just said, because it really links hand in hand with us finding being happy in the moment, or finding that little bit of joy or that that one thing that we that helps us feel those little tingly feelings of joy or happiness or or noticing something beautiful. And I think what is so powerful about being mindful and trying to trying to really live our lives in the present moment, is that we can just let the mind do its thing. I mean, we can't really stop the thoughts from coming in, but we can let the thoughts come and go and come and go and come and go without us writing a commentary on them or without us trying to hold on to them, or understand them, or believe them. Because

most of them, you know, aren't true. So I think, I think trying to stay, trying to be present as much as possible. So when we notice, you know, you said you go down a rabbit hole often. So when we you're aware, you're aware that you're going down the rabbit hole. So we notice that that's starting to happen. Pause for a second and just say, "Wow, look what's happening? Let me look for that. Something beautiful. Let me remember what it is that brings me a little bit of joy in life", and really take control over what what the mind is doing in that moment.

Michelle Maros: [00:22:32] So good. It's all of these things are simple, but not always easy, but they're powerful. So going into our next little. Tip after you cultivate awareness. Awareness is always number one. Pausing and reflecting and being still. For me, especially, are huge boosts of happiness and joy. And I know that that might sound counterintuitive. Because I think a lot of us think that if we push through and grind and produce and do all the time, that's going to get us the stuff and the external that we want or that we're like really working for. But. So much, so much, Comes through in the stillness and the pause and the reflection. And I think it's important to just. Remember that, and even I know we've talked about this in past episodes, again, creating that space. So that you can think and choose again. Or think about how you want to respond to something. Or think about what you want the next step to be. Instead of always being in that fight or flight knee jerk reaction mode. Because so much of that leads to stress, anxiety and unhappiness also.

Barb Schmidt: [00:23:55] And overwhelming burnout and all the things that that we're all feeling right now, especially during this pandemic. But I think the pause. You're exactly right. The pause gives us an opportunity for that brief moment in time to notice that we have a choice and think about what what our next action could be. And can I control this? Can I not control this? We can really start to develop the skill of wait a minute, I'm starting to feel overwhelmed. Let me just take a little pause here. And take the take the moment. Because we're not talking about go sit down for five minutes or 10 minutes, which people will tell us all the time. I don't have time to do that. I don't have time to do that. We're talking about just take a like a 30 second pause, because this 30 second pause helps you start to reflect for that 10 seconds. And what you're actually doing then, is developing the skills to be able to protect yourself from overthinking, from worrying, from taking things personally. All the things that we talk about on this podcast. And it helps you start to shape, you know, like what actions do I want to take, what's happening for me in this moment and all of our power? I will say this so

often. All of our power lies in the ability to make a choice. We are the only creatures on the planet that have the power of choice, and that is our power. And so when we understand that we have the power to do that, we can choose again and we can redirect and we can say, Wait a minute, I don't actually really need to be in this rabbit hole right now. I can take myself out and and look at some place in my life where I can take one little tiny step forward.

Michelle Maros: [00:25:32] And also just being able to give yourself the permission to do that. I think a lot of people are afraid to give themselves permission to stop or pause, you know, for all the reasons that we said. You feel like you have to keep up and keep going. But. You really do have to say it's OK and do it when you need to.

Barb Schmidt: [00:25:53] Yeah, for 30 seconds.

Michelle Maros: [00:25:55] Oh, yeah, yeah. I mean, that's what I'm trying to say, nothing major,

Barb Schmidt: [00:25:58] I know, No, you're right. And so try to train yourself. I mean, tell yourself, Wait, I'm not pausing for an hour here. I'm not pausing for five minutes. I'm really just pausing to intercept whatever negativity or overwhelm, I'm feeling right now, so I can actually see it more clearly. Can I actually pause here just for a second so I can see what's happening more clearly? You know and so when we do that, we bring ourselves right back to the present moment. As I think I said this in one of our episodes, one of my favorite teachers is Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist monk. And he would always tell us when I would go on retreat. He'd say, Be where your feet are, like, be where your feet are. And so when we can pause for just a few seconds in that present moment to come back to life as it's happening right here right now, being where our feet are, we actually have the space that you talked about to make a choice. And usually we will choose. Ok, wait a minute. Let me think about this. Let me let me just think this through. This is not as bad as I think it is. I'm writing so many stories about it, and I'm making it worse than it is. I can handle what's happening right now

Michelle Maros: [00:27:04] And you're not avoiding or resisting what's happening because that obviously that avoidance or resistance or wishing things were a different way in any circumstance is also what brings so much internal suffering.

Barb Schmidt: [00:27:16] Yeah. What's that Quote? What we resist persists, right?

Michelle Maros: [00:27:20] Yeah.

Barb Schmidt: [00:27:20] So you're right. If we try to avoid it and push it away and resist it, it's just going to keep getting stronger and stronger and stronger because it's going to constantly be trying to get our attention.

Michelle Maros: [00:27:29] Yeah. So that is I mean, that kind of very nicely went into the next little step is to not try, not to avoid or resist what's happening in the present. And again, like you were saying, creating that space to just allow so that you can choose what you want to do next.

Barb Schmidt: [00:27:47] Yeah I just want to throw one other quote from the amazing Thich Nhat Hanh.

Michelle Maros: [00:27:50] She's a quote master. So let's hear it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:27:52] He says sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, and sometimes your smile is the source of your joy. So I would just Think about this just for a second. So if you're having an overwhelming time in this moment and you're we're saying for you just just to pause for 10 seconds, imagine you pause for 10 seconds and just smile no matter what. No matter what you're feeling, just put a smile on your face. Could that be the source of your, of your, of your seat? For me, this putting a smile on my face, becoming the source of my joy means putting a smile on my face becomes a source of my joy. By putting an end to the the thoughts that are ravaging my mind. To me, that is joyful when I can actually put a put a stop to my thinking for a second.

Michelle Maros: [00:28:45] And just smiling in general is a happy thing even. People say they can tell when we're smiling while we're talking and that it has a a nicer intonation. So just thinking about what it means to be smiling and bringing into that feeling of joy?

Barb Schmidt: [00:29:05] Yeah. And I think also thinking about that, we can't control anything happening in the outside world. So I don't want to wait for something to happen out there in order for me to feel joy. I want to be able to be the master of my life and bring the joy into my life when I want, when I want to feel the joy. Which is in my smile.

Michelle Maros: [00:29:25] I like that. And again, remembering that like feeling joy or or any of that isn't selfish. It's not taking away from anybody else or anything else. Like you said at the beginning, it's a birthright.

Barb Schmidt: [00:29:42] Yeah, and cultivating that joy actually is what being able to to come into that joy in the moment when we want to. I believe, and this is from my own experience, that it it makes me feel stronger. It makes me feel like, wow, I could handle anything that comes my way if something negative happens or something, you know, sad or whatever happens, I feel like I have everything that I need within me to to weather that storm. It doesn't mean that I'm not going to feel it deeply. It just means that I'll get through it.

Michelle Maros: [00:30:13] Well, that is the next thing, too, of learning how to manage your emotions. Obviously, life presents us so many difficult challenges and obstacles and things that we can't control, we can never control what happens in the external world. But learning how to manage the difficult emotions can help to reduce our stress and anxiety. Because, Life isn't perfect, right, and we're not going to be. You know, Pollyannas every moment of the day.

Barb Schmidt: [00:30:43] No, no, we're never we're never, ever saying that on this podcast. But we are saying is that you can train yourself to to be able to to choose what I'm going to believe and what I'm not going to believe in the thoughts in my mind and and be able to bring myself back to the present moment and start again. I always like to say, I like to say pause or stop, breathe and begin again. And do that all day long.

Michelle Maros: [00:31:14] And really, mindfulness is that practice of stopping being present and choosing differently, redirecting your attention from maybe. The traffic that you experienced on the way here to something more positive or productive. And helping us to get out of that rabbit hole of whatever darkness is going on to come bubble up back up to the surface. And. I really love this quote, this is a quote heavy episode, but William James says that

the greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another. And I think that's kind of everything.

Barb Schmidt: [00:31:56] Mm hmm. It is.

Michelle Maros: [00:31:58] And which and mindfulness is that tool to choose one thought over another. Of course, not being able to say you're going to just be choosing and curating your thoughts, but. Rather, like we said, redirecting when it goes a certain way.

Barb Schmidt: [00:32:14] Yeah, because when he says choosing a thought over another, remember we said, you can't. You have no control over the thoughts that are coming into the mind, but your power lies in choosing which thoughts you're going to believe. And I think that's where the awareness comes in. And as we said at the top of this podcast, start to become aware of what you're thinking. It is so amazing. I would recommend like getting a little notebook and just maybe for one whole day, I did this so often, so often in the early days of my study, my practice, I would just write down what I was thinking like. I would just spend time and I'd had this little notebook and I'd write down. I was thinking, because you start to realize that that study that you quoted earlier, Michele, is true. Wow. Most of my thoughts are about people pleasing, or most of my thoughts are about, Do I look good enough? Am I smart enough? Or most of my thoughts were about, you know, if the traffic was bothering me that day, letting it actually hijack my whole day. And what starts to happen when you become aware like that, you start to realize, Oh my gosh, I'm wasting my precious life and the time that I have worrying about things that I have no control over and that aren't true anyway. It's so powerful when you start to develop that awareness, because then it doesn't sound like something not doable, like when we say choosing one thought or another or or anything like that, it actually becomes doable because you actually realize, well, my mind is really run amuck here.

Michelle Maros: [00:33:40] Well, certainly I can vouch to for that tool of of just writing down, whatever's going on in your mind as a way to connect with what is going on in your mind so that you can know it's really helpful. So getting a journal and doing that is actually beneficial, but then also again, might sound a little bit cliché or trite, but like the the use of positive affirmations. You know, once you have a sense of where your mind is going. You can then know what to like, counteract the bad stuff with.

Barb Schmidt: [00:34:19] I think that, why this was so far from powerful for me and why you you keyed in on the unworthy, for the longest time, as a child and as a young adult, I thought that I was unworthy. And so my thoughts were always about that, I'm not good enough, I don't measure up, I'm not smart enough. All the things like that. And so when I really started practicing and really started looking at my thoughts. One of the most powerful affirmations that I use for myself when my mind starts to go out of control is, "I am worthy. I am enough." You know, I have the power and everything that I need to thrive. So I think for everyone listening, trying to find those truths about yourself because you are worthy, you are enough, you are, you are smart, you are all those things and not allowing the mind. Because I hope we're weaving a picture for you in this podcast today that is showing you that the happiness and the joy that you seek is there. It's we don't see it and we can't feel it, and we're not partaking in it because the mind is taking us out all the time. It's telling us things that aren't true. And so when you start to declutter the false narratives that the mind is saying, it leaves the space. And it starts to open up the window and letting the fresh air in the mind to start being able to see some of the things that are beautiful or joyful, or some of the things that will bring a smile to your face.

Michelle Maros: [00:35:46] That's very profound. And I think I also kind of want to just break down a little bit the practice of positive affirmation repetition. Because it sounds so cheesy and it's gotten such a like, trite, you know, cliché aspect about it. And really what it is, is that interception of the negative unproductive things and replacing it with positive, realistic or even just neutral things. Like so that you're not taking yourself further down. And one of my favorite affirmations that I've used a ton and you've used a ton. And you even gifted me a bracelet that has an inscribed as like this, too shall pass, which is. Just a it's to me that's kind of a neutral. But just remembering that nothing is final, no feelings are final, no situation is forever. And however you're feeling in this given moment isn't going to last forever. I mean, you gave me that bracelet when I was going through a really crappy breakup. And it helped. So it's just remembering. It's having those little tools in your back pocket to like, lean on when things start to spiral. And that's powerful, it's not like cheesy or cliché, like I think people think of positive affirmations can be, you know.

Barb Schmidt: [00:37:14] Yeah, no, I agree with you. And I think I think when you understand what a positive affirmation is it, it no longer becomes cheesy or just some words. There are actually reminders of....

Michelle Maros: [00:37:27] It's a life raft.

Barb Schmidt: [00:37:28] And there are actually reminders of truth. When you just said that. This too shall pass. We cling on to the the idea that this is, you know, I'm going to feel this way forever. I'm never going to get out of this hole. I'm going to feel unhappy and I'm going to feel unworthy forever. We cling on to those who are constantly repeating those thoughts to ourselves. Just imagine yourself doing that. We've all done that. We all do do that. And so the affirmation that you're talking about, and the idea of what is something that is actually true. Because the one thing that is true in life is that everything changes moment to moment to moment. The one constant that we can all agree on in life, is that what's happening right now in this moment today will not be happening tomorrow. It'll be some version of whatever's happening tomorrow. So change is the only constant that we have. And so when we can actually believe these things, not just only in the head, but believe them in your heart. Like, it takes nothing to get a thought in them in the mind, but sometimes it could take us a lifetime to actually believe it in our hearts. So I think we're trying to help you see that the the faster you can actually believe it in your heart, that this is true, that this too shall pass. And so when you start to remember that and you remind yourself of that over and over, this too shall pass in the minds trying to tell you, Nope, it's going to last forever. You're going to say no. Everything in life changes. This, too shall pass. You start to believe it. And and it's not that you're trying to fake yourself out or, you know, trying to fake it or anything

Michelle Maros: [00:39:02] Toxic positivity or whatever.

Barb Schmidt: [00:39:04] No, this is not. This is the farthest thing from that because people don't understand.

Michelle Maros: [00:39:07] No I'm saying it gets the bad rap because it falls under the vein of toxic positivity, but it's so much deeper than that when you are rooted within what's true and not what's just surface.

Barb Schmidt: [00:39:19] Surface. Yeah. So we're saying, why don't you really believe it? Then it, then then you, then it's your life raft. Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:39:29] I love that. And so lastly, we could talk about this forever. But lastly. Start to incorporate. Things and people. That are joyful, you know, when we were kids, you know, running around on the playground was just like pure joy, or maybe it was like playing an instrument or dancing or something. I know for me, when I was a kid, I used to dance and I loved to dance, and unfortunately, I had kind of like a traumatic dance teacher situation that stopped me from dancing. But like, dancing really makes me happy and I've noticed for myself like, I need to start or not need... I would like to start doing that again because it is a source of joy for me. So it's like starting to identify maybe some simple things in life that do bring up feelings of joy, like going for your walk and looking at the cactus. Or like you, you watched a lot of funny shows during the pandemic that that you were like, living for. So I just think. You know, we're not...

Barb Schmidt: [00:40:39] Identifying those things that bring you joy, like, really take take a moment. I love what you're saying because when you started talking about that, you want to start dancing, get the biggest smile on your face. And I think we all have those little things that bring us joy, start identifying them and seeing if you could take one little tiny step toward that.

Michelle Maros: [00:40:58] So its not like a big undertaking. Like, I'm not going to go back to school for dance to become a professional. You know, I think some, at least for me, I kind of am zero to 60 like. And then it becomes overwhelming. And this is not the point of that. The point is to design your life for more joy. Yeah, so maybe it is taking a dance class or I mean, I bought myself ballet shoes for Christmas, so like I can dance around my apartment if I want to. But it's just identifying those things and doing them or reminding yourself about them. Or being around people that bring you joy. I think that's kind of like the when all else fails, remember that you have you do have some things in the external world that can be of a support.

Barb Schmidt: [00:41:44] And I think I love what you just said, and I think the flip side of that is make sure that you're you're practicing. Saying no to the things that [that's a good Flipside] that don't bring you joy or saying no to the things that bring you down or saying no to the things

that you just don't really want to do. Or not in alignment with who you are or how you're feeling. And just practice saying no in general. just if it's not, if it's not something that's really going to bring you a smile to your face, maybe, maybe take a pass on it. you know, and just say no. And making sure I love what you just said, Michelle, making sure I mean, I believe so strongly. I think I did a whole workshop on this once, about 10 years ago. I believe so strongly that we take on the behaviors and the moods....

Michelle Maros: [00:42:29] And definitely the energy.

Barb Schmidt: [00:42:30] and the energy of the of the people we spend the most time with. So maybe take a mental note of where you're spending your time.

Michelle Maros: [00:42:41] the people being influenced by

Barb Schmidt: [00:42:42] And who you are being influenced by? And are you watching the news too much or whatever it is. Just really becoming more aware of who you're spending the time with and what you're doing. And making sure that you're not spending like 80 percent of your energy in a place that's draining you. Or that's bringing you down. Or that's that's causing you to go home and say that you're not worthy or that you're not enough. I mean, a sure sign that there's an issue is if you're with a group of people and you walk away from that group of people feeling like you're not enough or you're not worthy or you're walking into a situation, and the thoughts in the mind are, I wonder, how do I, what do I need to do here to fit in? Yeah. So just really noticing that and making sure that you're spending time with people most of the time, I know we have people in our lives that we that we do spend time, but most of the time, all of our families and boundaries. Yeah. But just making sure that you're you're bringing the things in your life that are bringing a smile or some joy to your face.

Michelle Maros: [00:43:39] Yeah, it's important. I think that's a it's something definitely to keep in mind and

Barb Schmidt: [00:43:45] Life doesn't have to be. Life is never going to be perfect.

Michelle Maros: [00:43:48] It's not perfect, that's for sure.

Barb Schmidt: [00:43:50] And life doesn't have to be perfect to be joyful or happy or beautiful or wonderful.

Michelle Maros: [00:43:56] It's funny because I wouldn't say anything about my life, especially over the past two years has been anything close to perfect.

Barb Schmidt: [00:44:06] No.

Michelle Maros: [00:44:06] But for me, I do feel like there is like a baseline of like light hearted. Joy, because I think for me, it's been really powerful to tap into this distinction between happiness and joy, you know, happiness is kind of like. The umbrella to joy being like the small moments, and if I can cling to the small moments of joy, I can get through the chaos of everything else.

Barb Schmidt: [00:44:33] You know, I think you're saying too..

Michelle Maros: [00:44:35] It influences everything else.

Barb Schmidt: [00:44:37] I know we have to wrap up but..

Michelle Maros: [00:44:38] If I can laugh. Laughter, for sure. I just want to laugh all day long. That's it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:44:44] Well I think what you're saying, which I really love and I've noticed this about you during this whole pandemic since we spent even more time together, is that you actually you actually found the joy in some of the simplest of moments. And I think that's maybe a good place for us to really, as we wind down this time together is just like, what are the little small, simple places where you could actually embrace and embrace the moment and feel the joy? Because I think you've taught me this, Michelle a lot. That how are you feeling the joy in your body when you're actually feeling joy? It so it's so powerful when you can connect the feeling of joy to a place in your body or just noticing what it feels like in your body.

Michelle Maros: [00:45:31] Being present to it, not just powering through it and going to the next thing.

Barb Schmidt: [00:45:35] Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:45:36] It's again simple, but like you got to do it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:45:40] Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:45:43] So wrapping up, because I think it's nice to just give everyone a CliffsNotes version at the end of some things that we shared to get to happiness and joy. Number one, of course, always becoming more aware of what's going on in your mind every single day. You could pull out a journal and just free write to see what's going on for you. Two, remembering that you can pause at any moment, reflect, start again. Give yourself permission to pause.

Barb Schmidt: [00:46:11] Yeah, and you're restoring your energy. Bring yourself you're bringing your nervous system back into balance.

Michelle Maros: [00:46:17] Three, avoid resisting the present moment and really embracing the present moment and knowing that your power comes from the present moment.

Barb Schmidt: [00:46:26] In whatever is happening, so if you're having a hard present moment, just embrace it, feel it and allow it to move through your body.

Michelle Maros: [00:46:31] Yeah, we're going to we have so many, so many stories about that. I'm just going to come in another podcast. It's going to be good. Not to put you on a cliffhanger anyways. Good all positive affirmations, but ones that actually are in alignment with you and who you are and what you can believe as true. Um, and then, of course, bringing joy into your life through happy practices and people. And remembering that you. The people around you influence you one way or another, so how are you spending time? What are you doing to spend your time? And knowing that you can say no? Tied up nicely into a little box with a bow.

Barb Schmidt: [00:47:16] You did a beautiful job.

Michelle Maros: [00:47:19] I feel better already.

Barb Schmidt: [00:47:20] It brought me a lot of joy to listen to you recap that. Because I think the thing that I would only add at the end here is just that it is. Look for the simple. Yeah, look for the simple things in your life. Just just to start becoming aware of what are the small, little simple things in your life that help you feel joy?

Michelle Maros: [00:47:41] And remember, like, Thich Nhat Hanh said, Your smile can be the source of your joy or joy can be the source of your smile.

Barb Schmidt: [00:47:50] It's a good place to end. Yeah, thank you. Thank you. I love you.

Michelle Maros: [00:47:54] Love you, too. Thank you so much to everyone who is here listening with us today. We really, really, really appreciate and are really grateful for all of your support. As always, please give us a follow on social media at Barb Knows Best Pod, at Peaceful Barb, at Michelle on all of the channels. Make sure you're subscribing to the show wherever you listen to your podcasts. Apple, Spotify, Google. You know, give us a subscribe, and we would always, always be grateful for. Five star rating, a nice little review that does help us out immensely. And again, if you have any requests for topics about next episodes, leave us a message. We read them all the time and we really love to hear what you want to hear about. So please stay in touch and wishing you all a very lovely rest of your day and we'll talk to you real soon. As we know, Barb knows best.