

Happiness and Resilience

with Katie Millard

6th July 2020

TRANSCRIPT

Please note, this is not a verbatim transcript:

- Some elements (repetition or time-sensitive material for example) may have been removed*
- In some cases, related material may have been grouped out of chronological sequence.*
- The text may have been altered slightly for clarity.*
- Capitalisation and punctuation may be erratic...*
- There may be errors in transcription. If something appears odd, please refer to the recording itself (and let us know, so that we can correct the text!)*

Steven:

Great starts with great week. We're going to be talking about reasons to be cheerful with Katie Millard. Great to have you with us well, and a topic, which is probably something that's quite important at the moment with all the stress and angst that's been going on over the last few months. First things first, how did you get into this business? I know you told me you were an environmental project officer taking people with mental health problems out into the environment. Now your happiness trainer how'd you get into that?

Katie:

Okay. It's a bit of a long story to be honest, but I went to university, I worked first of all with the national trust, taking a family out into the environment and getting them engaged in nature, I left the national trust to work as a community project officer. And that was with specific funding to help groups who have mental health issues to go out and to build their capacity, to build that skill, but also their confidence. So I've worked with a group of ladies who self-harmed. We go off into the woods and we do bush craft skills. Sometimes we give create things encourage those kind of outlets that we could express themselves in a way they might not have done before. And I did that for a very, very long time until I had my little girl in 2013 after that I ran a family, a community interest company that was a family centred cafe and in my local town.

Katie:

That was about bringing families together under the stress of having a new baby and hosting classes and workshops and things taking place they found kinda safe. I did that for quite a while until my little girl went to school but ironically it stopped making me happy and I was becoming more and more unhappy cause I was spending more time away from her. And I was noticing that when she came back from school, she would tell me stories of things that people had said to her or things she'd seen done. And it just occurred to me. You know, these children were dealing with these really big emotions, but didn't necessarily have the skills or the vocabulary to express themselves properly or to take on responsibility to help themselves. So I've known Jo, who founded the Happiness Club for quite while by this point and she was looking for trainers. So for me, it seemed like a natural progression to go with Jo and become a Happiness Club trainer, which is what I've been doing for the past two, two years now.

Katie:

So it's kind of a gradual process to get to where I am. Before that, I think lots of people who are physiotherapists or chiropractors or osteopaths or counsellors, they might have seen things in the past that encouraged them to be helpful and wants to help people. So my family background is I have a family member with quite severe mental health issues when I was growing up and I became interested in how the brain works and doesn't work for some people, and how I could help on a very basic level, some of the people in society to kind of with all our own emotions a bit better. That's how I came to be here.

Steven:

So the happiness club then founded by a lady called Jo what exactly is the happiness club?

Katie:

Okay. So Jo Howards founded the club, I think six or seven years ago. She's lives in Saint Helen's. The club itself is a membership body, so you pay monthly and there are daily messages, daily techniques, there's a monthly webinar, pretty much 24/7 support. So whether you have problems with your confidence or imposter syndrome or anxiety or depression whatever it is there's always help there. And it's a really, really lovely, supportive kind of environment, really. And then Jo also has happiness trainers such as myself all over the country I cover Shropshire, Herefordshire and Paris, but we're dotted around and we personally go into schools corporate bodies and care settings and teach people really simple techniques that they can use on a daily basis to improve mental health and their wellbeing.

Steven:

So there's two sides to this then. There's a, there's a phone inside from members, which makes it sound a little bit like in parallel of Samaritans. Obviously Samaritans don't offer advice. They just, they just listen. But, you know, but it's, it's phoning in for people who feel that they've got some sort of mental health disorder a mental health problem. But on the other hand, you're going out to people and actively training them in techniques which can improve their mental health.

Katie:

Yeah. So the clubs a membership thing, you pay monthly and there's a Facebook group and webinars and all those sorts of things you can access. And Jo is always really helpful if you're having particular issues. I know she was phoned by somebody, I think last week, who was having a panic attack and she sort of talked them down from that and help them through it. And then, yeah, then the other part of it is the actual training, so there's people like me on the ground to go into schools and give people practical advice and techniques and show them that we are responsible for ourselves all the time, children, adults, even adults, we're like, "Well, when we need five pounds, I'll be happy" or, "When so-and-so speaks to me this way, or this happens, I'll be happy", but actually a lot of the work I do is about taking responsibility for our own things and making yourself happy or putting things in place to improve our lives and not wait for other people to get that done for us.

Steven:

They're all quite a few mental health organizations around in one form or another on that. What sets the happiness club apart?

Katie:

I think, well, I think, I suppose I'm always supportive in their own way. I find this really accessible to people. Jo's always at the end of the phone or on Facebook or messenger. And the fact that we are going out as trainers into different settings and arming people with techniques they need is probably the main difference. It's just such an amazing support to have daily messages and techniques that you can implement. And sometimes just to have someone say "Just because you have thought about it like this, have you thought about it a different way?", rather than just getting kind of stuck in the grove of one way thinking, just having someone tilt your perspective sometimes can be really helpful. And Jo happens to be really good at that.

Steven:

What about the name? This might sound a stupid question, but I was gonna say, is there any significance in the name? By which I mean clearly happiness emotions is important in our overall

health, but the happiness club doesn't sound as technical, as scientific as, you know, other mental health organisations I'm thinking of MIND for example, or things like that. So was that chosen deliberately?

Katie:

Well, I didn't choose that, it was Jo who would have chosen it. I think it's because we talk to people in layman's terms, hopefully anything I talk about today, or when she talks to other members of the happiness club, or when I go into schools or corporate settings, but you know, I don't use big words, that's not my background, I'm talking to everyday people about everyday things. And if you're putting scientific terms on things, sometimes it can be a barrier to people learning the actual technique, as long as people know the basics of what's going on. And I think the Happiness Club is a little bit like, it does what it says on the tin. You know, it is a club for happiness and all the techniques we improve your resilience and will increase your happiness. So I think that's probably why it was chosen, although like I said, it's not my name.

Steven:

No, no. I just, I just thought you'd have an insight into why it was chosen then. So how do people discover the happiness club? Because if only you were feeling unwell, I wouldn't type happiness into a Google search engine. So how do you find, how have your members found you?

Katie:

A lot of the work that we do on Facebook, I have my own personal business Facebook page. People actually do type in happiness or anxiety and stress and those sorts of things in search engine and the Happiness Club will come up. But obviously they have a website, which is www.thehappinessclub.co.uk, where you can find certain information, it's on Facebook. Jo Howard is actually on LinkedIn as I am I but I'm not very good on LinkedIn. Twitter, Instagram, all the normal places, and I find with a lot of people it's word of mouth. And I get asked a lot of the time, "Why am I so happy?" But obviously I'm quite a cheerful person, and it's because I use these techniques. So I think people, when they see it put into practice and used properly just become intrigued. So I think that's how people have come to find Joanna.

Steven:

I suspect you wouldn't be a particularly good ambassador for the happiness club, if you weren't a cheerful person to be but

Katie:

Haha well it's one of the things I talk about is, we all have days when the alarm goes off, we fancy throwing it out the window and burying our head under the covers or just feeling not so great. You know, we all have days when, we're feeling a bit miff compared to all the days when we're, you know, dancing around. And I use the techniques to help me through it. And I know they work because I use them, but I think it would be, I think when I speak to children and sometimes even some adults, they kind of think the human experience sort of up here or on a consistent level, whereas we're a lot more up and down and just allowing ourselves to roll with the punches as it were and to go, "okay, so today I'm not being so great. What can I do to feel better?" And sometimes to just let the feeling flow, I think is really important rather than feeling stuck in it and the thing with letting it flow it's more likely sort come through us and go out longer than you know keeping it all

inside. So yeah, I also have days when I'm not feeling, you know, overly cheerful but I do get over that.

Steven:

We had an interesting question from Ikbar, and Ikbar says, "do you have to be unhappy to join the happiness club?"

Katie:

No, no, no, no, no not at all. I sometimes have that when I approach school and say I'm happiness club trainer, well actually what I run with children is called the emotional management program, and they say, well, school's happy. And they're like, brilliant, excellent. That's great. But now you don't have to be unhappy, but it will definitely, definitely increase your happiness and help you cope with things that just, you know, life throws us curve balls, you know, all of a sudden you'll have a plot twist in our life and we'll be like "Oh my goodness. Not sure how to cope with that." No you don't have to be unhappy to join the happiness club at all, you know, it's just a skill. It's just the thing we use. We go to the gym to keep our body healthy. We eat the right things and all that, you know, go to the dentist. But actually, just keeping our mind healthy and our coping techniques, and I resilience and all those sorts of things, but just as important, to look out for. So yeah, no, you don't have to be unhappy to be a member of the happiness club.

Steven:

Somebody else's has sent in an observation. They haven't given me their name I'm afraid, but they've said that they've always thought that aiming to be happy sets you up for failure as we can't be happy all the time. You got any thoughts?

Katie:

Well, it goes back to what I just said, which is no, we're not happy all the time, but we can move through it. As our experience isn't like I said, it's more up and down and that's okay. But emotions constantly change. And when you feel angry, you feel like you might be angriest person in the world or the person most anxious, but feelings are temporary, like do this activity with children when I'm in school. And I talk about what day of the week is, and they'll say it's Monday, Monday, today, Monday, tomorrow, and Monday yesterday, just to get them to realize that things are always moving equally when you are happy and you're having a great time, it really helped me just take hold of that feelings. We literally squeeze all the joy we can out of it because things are forever changing. I think, I think saying wanting to be happy to have to force yourself to be happy because that would be on unnatural, we have to let our feelings flow. But we all deserve to be happy. And if there are techniques and skills and things we can do to improve that, then it would be madness not to use them. On the days I wake up and feel not great after using techniques, I might, I might not feel great for an hour. I might not. I might have a day where I know it's like use the technique and get back to looking after myself. I'm practicing what I preach and I will definitely be happier. And I think that everyone deserves that.

Steven:

What are the techniques based on?

Katie:

On how our conscious mind and our subconscious mind works. So some stuff just works with the subconscious mind, but we use a variety of techniques. So I teach them over four weeks so I'm afraid I can't go into all of them. But if I wanted to just talk a little bit about the brain, if that ok, how the brain works. So how the mind works rather. You have like the conscious mind and the subconscious mind. Our conscious mind is on a rational, logical, analytical, discerning kind of discriminatory cells, if you like, its the kind of grown up self. And then you have this subconscious mind and subconscious mind, is emotional, natural, and entirely visual, our subconscious brains are entirely visual, there are stall houses - so that's where we keep our loaded information now.

Katie:

And the really important thing about the subconscious mind is it doesn't recognize negatives. So if I say to you please do not, any circumstances, please do not do not, do not, do not think of a purple elephant; What does your brain do? Hopefully it gives you a purple elephant because we put the word don't in front. Your subconscious doesn't like negatives. It made you think of a purple elephant. The whole thing that it heard was 'Don't' and 'Purple Elephant' and it thought, "Oh a Purple Elephant, I know what one of those is. Let me show you." So it didn't hear the don't at all. You're walking around saying, I don't want to feel like this. I don't want to be an anxious, but don't want to feel stressed. All that your subconscious mind is hearing is I want to feel like that, I want to feel anxious, I want to feel stressed. Because our subconscious is also the way that we learn things. Okay? So we get downloaded onto the planet, we arrive and it begins just to store the information so that it learns everything that it needs to learn to be human, ok?

Katie:

It can learn how to put on socks, It can learn how people react to each other. And that's what it does. It just soaks it all up like a sponge. It watches everything, record that and download that. So it can be this is how one adult speak to another adult. This is how an adult speaks to a child, this is how this type of adult speaks to a child. This is how men and women interact, all of these sorts of things. It also learns all the practical stuff, like putting our socks and shoes on, which is great. I think if we consciously decided to think about putting on socks and shoes on every day, it would just take forever. Our subconscious mind goes, we'll put these on, you think about what you're gonna have to for tea, will you think about what you need to do next. So that's great, however, because it sucks everything in and learnt everything, it's learning things that aren't particularly helpful. It's learning those behaviours and it's keeping them in. It puts them into the store house and something happens, it downloads the program as to say, "oh I've seen this, I know what happens next, I need to react a certain way". The thing, the cap that goes between these two is we call the critical factor. The critical factor always makes me think of the Mitchell brothers, from Eastenders, who look like bouncers from a nightclub.

Steven:

Bouncers I can identify with, EastEnders I've never watched.

Katie:

Yeah a bouncer, kind of like a roughy, toughy bouncer. And the critical factor is kind of between the subconscious and the conscious. So for example, with a bouncer I would say after this lovely, lovely session with you guys, I am going to hit the bright lights of the small Shropshire town where I live, and I'm going to go to a club, not going to happen. Never gone, never going to happen anyway, but

I'm going to go to a club. I'm going to get to the club and the bouncers are on the door and he has a list of rules and regulations and on his list of rules and regulations it says nobody wearing a kind of a happy face T-shirt, right. So I can go up to him, the same works with our critical factor; We make a statement "I am happy" for example or "I am in love", okay? We make the statement consciously, it gets passed through the critical factor and it goes right into the store house, right into the blueprint, which is where we keep all our beliefs.

Katie:

If there's one belief in there that says we're not happy, we're not worthy, we're not good enough, it gets booted out, it makes no difference. Okay. They say, no, you're not because you have this belief in here. So you're not happy, you're not good enough, you're not worthy. So it checks it against the blueprint. Why does this matter? This matters because of the age of our subconscious and our conscious. Okay. So our conscious mind is the age we are today. Okay. It ages with us. So just to be Steven and the people who were watching, I'm going to share that my conscious mind is actually 40 years old, gasps and shocks of amazement ripples across the nation. So my conscious mind is 40 years old.

Steven:

Okay. So you wouldn't tell anyone whoever many thousand choose to watch this recording.

Katie:

Well, I guess, I guess we'll just keep it to ourselves. So my conscious mind is when I'm 50, it will be 50 50. Your subconscious mind is always around the age of six. Okay. That's just how old your conscious mind is so important. That's all those messages and things we take in around the age of six and before the age of six, that's why they wear a lot of our blueprints. So the age of their important animals are how much of these are. I'm sure you could just throw a lead that people will like. And we were about 10% conscious, 19% subconscious, always a bit of body with things, but in neuroscience, I think we're about 5% conscious and 95% subconscious. So lost the times we all just churning out these old patterns of what we believe and what we do. We can say a hundred percent. We want to be do, or have something in our life and then behave completely differently. And it's because it's 95%. It doesn't mean that it might believe that you actually don't deserve.

Katie:

What can we do about this? What if I just go back to the bathroom for a moment? I want to get into this club. So I go with my tee shirt on this time, I take my friend, Mary who's beautiful. It's fantastic. Just to like, get to the door, the bouncer are going to catch it and I'm going to be dumped into, so what we do with the critical factor, particularly with lots of conscious techniques is we distract them long enough to make changes to the blueprint. When we go into the subconscious unconscious 10 to 15 every night, it doesn't make as much impact some don't stay in there as much. Does that, does that make sense? Yeah. So that's why I'll bring this so amazing. A lot of this stuff, changing in our cultures and also conscious in our teenage years when a whole, a lot of us are running on these old programs that we received when we were really young, we just slept. And then when stuff happens, we just push it all out again, because we've seen it before. So the happiness club, we teach conscious and subconscious techniques to work on those levels, to increase people, happiness, breathing, relaxation, meditation. It could be a whole host of things to build off and some Jenks missing to the beliefs that reforms really, really need to go in many cases.

Steven:

Yeah. you mentioned a number of broad areas of techniques there. You're going to be able to give us any sort of more specifics on how you would take people down an appropriate route to improve their levels of happiness.

Katie:

Yes. It's one of my absolute favourite things. So gratitude. We talk a lot about gratitude or people talk a lot about gratitude, these days there was, this is not get onto technique in a minute, but there are loads and loads are studies that you can look up online if you want to, that links gratitude with better happiness, better mental health, alleviating depression and those sorts of things, there was a study by and they took two batches of people, the first batch of people, they asked them to write down in a journal every day, the things that annoyed them,

Steven:

Oh God, that would be easy for me. Writing in a bloody journal every day would annoy the hell out of me.

Katie:

Yeah. Maybe that was one of the things maybe that was one of the things, um for the second group was writing a journal of everything they are grateful for every day. So they did a gratitude journal. The people who filled in the gratitude journal, we're also tested for other things. And they were found to have a greater attention, span, greater enthusiasm, greater energy, and really, really interestingly less physical ailments, or when they did feel not a hundred percent, wow, um, they recovered a lot quicker, but gratitude is a massive, massive thing. I teach something called the glad exercise, which is well, it's just such a beautiful thing I do at the end of the day with my family. We couldn't do it in a journal. If you wanted to, if you don't want to express yourself, we do around the dinner table. If you have children in your life, this is such a beautiful thing because they come up with the most amazing, amazing things. So, the glad exercise is at the end of the day, you sit round and you go through your entire day and say out loud, [inaudible] of all of the things you're grateful for.

Katie:

If you ask an adult, or when I do this with adults, I say, can you get five things that you're grateful for? It can be tiny things. It can be massive things. It doesn't matter, but can you get by? So when I do it with workshops, a lot of people get five and don't get any more, even though they probably could. When I do this with children in schools they just, they just go on and on and on of all the things they're grateful for, which is beautiful, and when I do it in a school, um I personally say, Oh, wait, we're ten to two, on a Monday morning, Monday afternoon, I'm going to count all the things that I'm grateful for in my life, or already today, and I want you to count them for me.

Katie:

And by the end of the day in one school, my list will be up to 50 or 60 things that I'm grateful about that I'm glad about and have gratitude for. And I say to the children, and I say in the corporate workshops as well, can you imagine how many you're going to have by the end of the day? Gratitude is a massive, massive part of helping us see the build in our lives. So we're not saying it has to be a massive thing. It doesn't have to be a massive thing. It can be little things. It can be just, it's part of a

mind thing I suppose, enjoying your morning coffee, taking things, taking time to notice things. Yesterday morning, I was up really early, because our dog started to wake up at a stupid hour in the morning. And it meant that I wandered myself and stood in my garden and I watched the sunrise and that's that moment I remember thinking this is useful, but I remember thinking, I must remember this for my glad, later on.

Katie:

So the glad exercise, if you want to do in a journal, you completely can, it helps to say it out loud, definitely more powerful to say it out loud because you get into your heart and your head. We do it around the dining room table. My husband constantly has to remind me that our daughters only seven. So maybe I don't have to be quite so competitive about how many glads I get. Maybe it be a good idea to get more of them though. And we take turns and we talk about all the good things in our day. And even on the days where you really think you had a so-so day, it's amazing. The power that has, and children just love doing this, and they'll come out with the most amazing things. And it's something that you can do forever with them and they can pass it on. You know, brother and sisters, if they do with their friends. I taught at a school last autumn um and the head teacher phoned me and said just to let you know, one of our teachers goes on the same route as some of our year six boys on their way home. And the year six boys she says, you wouldn't actually think that they you know, would do this. They were saying their glads on their way home. And I thought, that's just such a powerful, powerful thing, that you can get kids doing this and doing it with their families. What an amazing, what an amazing thing that is, just this beautiful ripple effect. So I would say definitely do the glad exercise as much as humanly possible. And it doesn't really matter how many you get. As long as you have a go.

Steven:

I'm sitting on an observation sentence, several of the viewers have said this broadcast doesn't seem to be making me happy. This is my resting face. It's not that I'm unhappy at all. I'm enjoying this conversation, people watching this are a cheeky bunch of buggers. They really are.

Katie:

I thought they meant that I was making then unhappy, and I was like oh my gosh, that's terrible.

Steven:

Yeah. They're just complaining about me cause they like doing that, um when we had our the conversations beforehand, you said you worked quite a bit with healthcare providers, caregivers. What have you been finding has been going on in the caregiving community? If I can call it that recently.

Katie:

Yeah, I think when it's part of the nature of care givers, because like I said, I do this because I'm a helpful person and I'm sure the people who are watching this are caregivers in some form. I think uh, it's difficult to give and give and there's a saying, I'm sure, I'm sure you guys all know it, but you can't pull from an empty cup. You can't give and give and give of yourself. Because there'll be nothing left for you and your family. It can be called also compassion fatigue, or having like a compassion handicap that you withdraw, and withdraw, and withdraw from, particularly in times like this because of helpers [inaudible] we want to do. We want to help people. Um, and we often give so

much that we don't need, we don't have anything for ourselves. And then the compassion fatigue sets in, because you are literally just exhausted. You know, it's really hard to keep caring at that level, which is why one of the things I do talk about in happiness,

Katie:

Because it's one of my personal, personal things is self-care and self-care isn't selfish and self-care isn't me first, it's me too, which I think a lot of compassionate people, and the people who watch this broadcast struggle with sometimes because we care so much for other people that sometimes we don't realize when we're going down, because it needs to top ourselves up, in order to keep giving to people. Well, I think, you know, we've been through such a loss. I mean, it's been such a hard slog for so many people. And equally, I should imagine if you have practitioners who want to practice, but they can't practice in the traditional way that must be very difficult because want to, and they're maybe unable to, and again, frustration is just so exhausting. I'm not sure where we are at the moment so it's coming out to things now, but I would say self-care, self-care, self-care, and it can mean you know, sitting in a bubble bath with a bar of chocolate, but it can also mean the really rubbishy bits. Like, you know, watching what you watch on the news, what you listened to, who you spend your time with, it can be looking at your life kind of holistically and see what builds you up and helps you against also what doesn't,

Steven:

We've got a couple of questions from Simon. One of them, he says, what happens if you are naturally an eeyore, and you would like to look at the problematic sides of things.

Katie:

Oh, a natural eeyore, oh well naturally eeyore, um I would ask does that make you happy? It's really easy as adults. Yeah, they do. Do you like [laughs] my father says he's belligerence and likes being grumpy and the day he's not grumpy is a day there's something seriously wrong, but he kind of takes kind of pride in, pride in that, he quite likes himself being a grumpy old man. I would wonder what being grumpy, now this is my personal thing, what being grumpy actually gives you or what being an Eeyore gives you? I would much rather, and days, aren't always like this, it's not always rainbows and sunshine and kittens and all those sort of-. I would much rather look on the brighter side or at least find way to make myself feel better. But a natural eeyore I would say try some techniques and join the happiness club let's see if I can change your mind.

Steven:

Well, maybe at the end of the day, when their writing their happiness journal, their gladness journal, they can be glad because they were cross about this thing or whatever.

Katie:

Maybe.

Steven:

These other questions, a bit more clinical and specifically said, what do you, what would you do about somebody who has a clinical diagnosis of depression? Presumably you must have people who have been diagnosed like that to a member.

Katie:

Yeah, well obviously they still need to seek the professional help that they need to, they need to still have their professional guidance. I mean, I'm not, you know, I'm not a clinical psychiatrist, psychologist, or anything like that. Um, I would say use techniques like this alongside the professional help they're getting from their GP or their clinical psychiatrist or whoever helps with their medication, I would say use these techniques as well as doing those things as well. Yeah, I wouldn't dream of saying don't do those things, but it's another, I think it's another way of support. And also if these techniques can help people before they get to the stage that they need serious help you know I would try anything, but yeah, so carry on seeing your professional um, people who help you. Keep taking the medication, if that's what they've asked you to do, and maybe try some of these techniques around you and keep a gratitude journal, I mean it all helps, doesn't it? I mean, I would try anything, I would throw anything at the walls, if you ask me, to be honest.

Steven:

Yeah, I suppose another question is, I mean one we're we've got two sides of this and ugliness, we've got ourselves, now we can assess ourselves whether we think we're happy or not, and whether we need to get something to help us improve our mental state, the other side, being the patients. Now, many of us will have patients who we instinctively think you're a miserable bastard. How do we, how do we, how do we take this conversation on how do we, how do you introduce the idea to somebody who's a bit like of that taking the step of joining the happiness club?

Katie:

Well, I would, um, well, I would say if it was me personally, and I do meet people who are struggling, that I personally, just suggest some of the techniques as for me, like if someone's not been great, I'll say so have you tried doing the glad exercises, have you tried, you know, journaling, or whatever and then people tend to join the happiness club, once they've tried a few things, but you have to be open minded to it. And some people may never, may never be like that. I think sometimes being grumpy or being angry all the time, it gets something from that, whether it's something and that's our culture sort of thing then get some sort of rewards. Well I think if you don't like being grumpy all the time, or if you feel unhappy, if you try some of the techniques and you actually practice them, cause again, you have to keep at it. It's not something that happens over, overnight. They'll make you feel better, and then you know, and then you can join the happiness club, or you could join it when you're feeling rock bottom and see how it helps you. But there are lots of ways to get involved. One of the happiest of things is they send out a technique in a daily, daily post every day, there are webinars and all sorts of way to access still. So even if um, you know, talking to somebody face to face, isn't your thing. There is loads of other resources that can help you sometimes it's that finding a thing that's right for you, but it takes practice, and it takes commitment I think, because on the days that I know that I don't do some of my techniques, some things that help me, like when I don't bother I feel rubbish. And I know when I start them again, I feel a lot better.

Steven:

Yeah. We've had a number of people ask whether there's a crossover between the sort of things that you're describing and cognitive behavioural therapy. Do you know about that?

Katie:

Um, now, Joe would be the person to ask about this. There is a crossover, I think this gets more to the subconscious things and tries to make changes to the blueprint, but yeah, I suppose there are lots of crossovers with what we are teaching in terms cause I know lots of people thought that last year I mean that kind of field there is, there are crossovers, but if you'd like to know more, please do ask direct questions to Joe or Joe Howard, on LinkedIn. But everything that I do in terms of my work is about presenting things in layman's terms and practical ways to help people, cause that's what I started as my, I think I said at the beginning, I have mental health issues, so I had that at the very beginning of my childhood. So I've always been interested in why some people are the way they are. And that's, that's sort of, that's my stuff. So I do practical stuff, but if you'd like to know real nuts and bolts that I've talked to Joe, who's the founder.

Steven:

Question from Lucy or an observation from Lucy. She says that her daughter at the age of eight was struggling and was filling in a happiness journal. And what she did was she crossed out all, scribbled out all the positive things and drew unhappy faces and then chucked it across the room.

Katie:

Right okay. Does she know what she was unhappy about?

Steven:

That I don't know at the moment.

Katie:

No, okay.

Steven:

I'd like some information on that, but um, before, you know, particularly in children, perhaps

Katie:

Yeah, sometimes, sometimes they can subvert it. It depends whether it was, I don't know whose idea it was to get the happiness journal, um whether it was the little girl's idea, or whether it was the parent's idea. Maybe, yeah, maybe that's not her thing. Maybe that doesn't work for her. Maybe she doesn't want to write it down. Maybe she's feels it's quite invading, writing it down where anybody could read it, rather she might want to do it in pictures or just do it in her head. It might've been the medium that was problem and she thought people were going to read it or access it, I'm not really sure. Um, it sounds like she might be quite cross with doing the journal, a lot of anger comes from fear. So there might be things that she wants to keep to herself or she's fighting talking or expressing it a bit more but I'd see if she would give it another go or she could get to the bottom of why she wants to scribble the things out. But it might if it came from somebody else that she felt like it wasn't hers or if she's got sisters who aren't doing it, it might feel like she's being picked out. But I don't know, without knowing more about it, I'm afraid I can't be very helpful.

Steven:

And I don't know the case history, I don't know how old his daughter is now. It may be many years ago that this happened. So perhaps she's gone beyond gone through that stage and she's okay now.

Katie:

Yeah, and could be about anything, I think it could be about pushing boundaries. It could have been that someone suggested it or mumbled to help. And actually she didn't, it wasn't her idea. So she didn't, she didn't like it.

Steven:

Alister has asked a question, probably like me. He's thinking you've bent on endlessly in your happiness report about how many things you were positive about that day. And he has said, well, can you have the same things more, more than one day in a row? Does it help to reinforce the effect?

Katie:

Yes. Yes. Repetition repetition. Every day when I do my glads, um, I'm happy for coffee, in the morning. I'm happy for waking up early, cause I do wake up early and I'm happy for walking my dog. Yes. Yeah. You can completely have them on different days, but it's about-, days are different. So there are going to be things that similar things are going to be different. But what I find, like I said earlier about watching the sunrise, is you start to notice things in your day, when something looks, nothing happens and my daughter brings me a flower from the garden or realise I've grown a courgette, for the first time ever. Um, it just, at that moment you see it, you go wow that's amazing, and then you go, I'm going to do this much later. So it's like the double whammy of that positivity, but yeah, you can have things daily. Like I say I'm glad for coffee quite a lot.

Steven:

I made some cakes for the first time, a little while ago. And so I got a real double whammy from that because I got to eat the cakes and I was satisfied that actually made some cakes for the first time in my life.

Katie:

There you go. Perfect, perfect.

Steven:

Not ideal for my health but,

Katie:

Well, everybody tells me that courgettes are like the easiest thing to grow and everyone can grow them and I've never had any luck, so this time probably because of lockdown and because I've been able to like water them properly and all those, I've actually got courgettes. So, um yeah, I'm actually massively happy with a very small achievement.

Steven:

Iqbals asked whether happiness is a very relative term. How do, I mean do you bother to define it? Is it necessary to define it?

Katie:

I don't think it is. I think it's whatever happiness is to you. And it varies from person to person. You know, some people are happy with the norm as well. Some people are happy with you know, doing jobs that they love, which don't pay well. I think he doesn't, I don't think it matters. I think what matters is knowing what makes you happy, and what doesn't make you happy equally. But yeah, I don't think there's one size fits all in happiness. So no, I would say whatever makes you happy, but decide what that is, try and think of what that looks like and how it would be to feel like that every day or what you need to, you know, move you forward to have more happiness in your life. I think that's always a good thing, but it depends on person to person. You can't say there's one thing that makes everyone happy.

Steven:

I'm struggling to frame this next question, but it's, I guess it's based on what you were just talking about, but how do you determine whether somebody is going to benefit from the happiness club?

Katie:

Oh well they'll definitely benefit. How would they benefit? Because the testimonials and then loads and loads of members that get something from it, and um loads of, quite an interactive group as well. So Joe, who does a webinar once a week, will ask people, what is it are you struggling with? Are you struggling with anxiety? Are you struggling with imposter syndrome? You know, what is it? What is it? Should we talk about? So it's really, really useful, really, really um responsive. I don't think that I've ever met anybody who has come into contact with the club as in actually, you know, done some of the techniques or become a member and has not got anything from it. But I would say that obviously, but I genuinely believe that I wouldn't do it. I've never done jobs where, or calling that I don't a hundred thousand percent believe are important. But yeah, I suppose I would say that.

Steven:

Charles has asked whether you can recommend a good book and I'm assume, I'm assuming he means on the topic of happiness.

Katie:

Well, the topic of happiness, let me see, what would I recommend? Um, there are books you can buy from the happiness club website. You can buy your own journals, obviously, Joe is the prolific author what would I suggest on happiness? Oh my gosh. There are so many books about being happy and being awesome. You know what, actually I would go onto the website, obviously look at Joe's books, but I would start with getting yourself a gratitude journal to begin with and starting with that personally. And then if you just go and look at some of Joe's books, they could give you a starting point. But I'm, I'm trying to think, well, what I read what am I reading at the moment? I don't know but, probably lost on my disgusting dining room table, but um, the more you read obviously it's such an interesting thing. Our brains are such amazing things, such an interesting topic I can't think of one now, but if I think of one, I will let you know Steven and you could always let other people know by email, however you talk, eventually.

Steven:

Okay. So what about things that you might have observed are typically making people unhappy?

Katie:

Um, well it comes back to responsibility, I think, a lot of people think that other people are making them unhappy. Whereas actually it's us, a lot of the time and our responses that makes us unhappy. So generally, there are external forces. I think I've spoken earlier about when I lose five pounds, I will be happy or when I'm richer, I will be happy. Part of the gratitude is being happy right now. I'm finding reasons to be happy now and realizing that we have the responsibility for ourselves and we can't always [inaudible] a difficult situation, particularly at the moment, things we've been through. Whereas I think taking responsibility is the biggest thing that any of us can do, to make sure that we are happy because I think a lot of the time it's about other people and other people do other things that we think are affecting our happiness, or causing us to be unhappy, but it's us that have the power to respond to whatever that thing is. Does that make sense?

Steven:

Yes. Yeah. Probably got time for two more things. One is an observation from me about books. I came across a book called humankind recently written by a chap called Rutger, Rutger Bregman, and it's quite a thick book, but it's a very, very interesting one because it excludes a lot of the myths which we have in society about how things are getting worse and how everything's going to hell in a handcart. And he's a very academic type and he's, he puts out the real statistics for things like levels of poverty and levels of social dissatisfaction and so on. And it's astonishing because even when he put his questions to very well educated audiences, including political leaders and others, almost all of them had no idea of actually how much things were improving across the world and across society. And he uses a lovely analogy and says that they did no better than chimpanzees. If you gave a chimpanzee a choice of three bananas, which one would they choose? It's completely random. Well, these politicians and academics still they're influenced by the media, particularly over what they think is happening. But of course the media only singles out those things, which are bad things, which are extraordinary and very rarely gives you good news stories. So yeah, it's a useful book called humankind, yeah just really enjoyed it.

Katie:

Again, that's pretty interesting. Actually I read the news this morning. I said to my husband don't bother to read the news afterwards, because there were two stories, particularly in the kind of kind of world situation that we're in at the moment, were about coronavirus type things that we knew were happening elsewhere and I said to my husband, don't bother to read the news, but then actually when you read both of these articles, they weren't really saying what they're saying, but the actual headline was really sensational and really negative. So yeah, completely, I completely agree with you.

Steven:

And interestingly, as you say that I'm thinking that all of the, the best statistics we have, showed that excess mortality is currently back to where it normally is. And yet all we hear is about the number of deaths due to coronavirus, but excess mortality is back to where it normally is at this time of year. It doesn't really can add up does it? Last one, and I apologize, we're going on slightly off for two o'clock now, but uh, Lucy's come back in with more information about her now, 10 year old daughter, and she says that she still struggles with anxiety and she's waiting for a paediatric assessment. Mostly at bedtimes, it was a special journal for kids that she was doing with mostly pictures to help them understand their feelings. And she asks whether you can change from a naturally happy bouncy person to the other or vice versa.

Katie:

Yes, I think, I think it goes, I think it goes both ways. Um, anxiety without knowing where it it's forming, is a tricky one to deal with, but I'm glad she's got a referral. Obviously, I don't know, but I hope she's doing lots of, lots of breathing and relaxation and trying to find where she feels the anxiety in her body. To make sure it is anxiety, and not something else, sometimes when we're young it's really easy to get our emotions mixed up thinking of emotions being like really messy spaghetti. And sometimes we think it's one thing, but it's actually another. Um, with anxiety I'd say definitely loads of mindfulness, loads of relaxation, loads of lung breathing techniques. Children's yoga is also really good. And she didn't want to do the journal, then that's fine, that might not be her thing. I'm glad she's getting help, particularly the relaxation, the breathing, I would say would be really, really useful to take some anxiety levels down, hopefully.

Steven:

Maybe your gladness exercises as well.

Katie:

Yeah, just, I mean, if you can do it as a family, around the dinner table but if she doesn't want you to express it. If she doesn't want to say it out loud, she could just do it in her head before she goes to sleep, but it is a really powerful thing.

Steven:

Katie, that's just been great. How much does it cost to join the happiness club?

Katie:

Twenty five pounds a month and there's messages, some of which are from me access to techniques, all sorts of weirdness. And I'll send you the link if that's okay.

Steven:

Yeah thank you, I'll put it on the website.

Katie:

Yeah, that'd be great. Thank you so much. I was so nervous before I came on. Thank you so much for having me.

Steven:

It's hasn't shown and you've looked at this decidedly happy throughout the broadcast and my besides my external, I've been very happy as well. Katie lovely you to have you on the show. Thank you for that.