



How to change your brain chemistry and feel happier, more balanced
and centered in your life – Laura Lane’s interview with Marci Shimoff
Part 2 – Full Transcript

February 5, 2020 / Childhood Cancer, Hope Strength Courage Podcast

[Music – Sending a Line by Fiz Anthony]

Thank you for tuning into the Hope Strength Courage Podcast. Love and support for parents whose kids are fighting for their lives! A weekly podcast created to support parents and caregivers of children diagnosed with cancer. Where you will find resources collected to help you face each day with Hope, Strength and Courage. From interviews with the top experts in their fields: doctors, psychologists, chaplains and inspiring frontline workers in pediatric oncology as they share their best advice, as well as day to day advice collected from other cancer moms and leaders in personal growth and development. From individuals who understand how hard it can be, I hope you will feel better prepared to cope with the day-to-day challenges of caring for your child.

Hi, I am Laura Lane, and I am your host. My own daughter Celeste was diagnosed with cancer at the age of 12. In 2015 I wrote about our experiences in the book “Two Mothers One Prayer: Facing your child’s cancer with Hope Strength and Courage”. Since that time, I have dedicated thousands of hours to share with other parents and caregivers the resources, tools, tips, skills and strategies I learned that helped our family to stay happier, healthier and more hopeful. My goal is to share with you my interviews with experts to support you as you care for a child with cancer.

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Today’s episode features part 2 of my interview with Marci Shimoff #1 New York Times bestselling author, a world-renowned transformational leader and an expert on happiness, success and unconditional love.

Last week, during part one of my interview with Marci, she shared the 7 steps she learned about being happy and the first of 3 pieces of advice for cancer moms. This week, in part two her 3 pieces of advice turned into 4. We cover how to change our brain chemistry and how to feel more balanced, centered and open through a quick 2-minute exercise you can use anywhere. Marci also turns the tables on me and has me opening up and sharing my daughter Celeste’s story and how we remained positive when her cancer became terminal. I hope you enjoy this episode and try out the exercises with us.

I am pleased to formally introduce you to Marci Shimoff. Marci is the number one New York Times bestselling author, a world-renowned transformational leader and an expert on happiness, success and unconditional love. Marci’s books include the runaway best sellers,



Happiness For No Reason, Love For no Reason, and six titles in the phenomenally successful Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul series. Her books have sold more than fifteen million copies worldwide in thirty-three languages, have topped all of the major bestseller lists, and have been on the New York Times bestseller list for a total of 118 weeks. Marci is one of the bestselling female non-fiction authors of all time. Marci is also the host of the national PBS television special called Happy For No Reason, is a featured teacher in The Secret, and is the narrator of the award-winning film Happy. Marci currently co-leads a worldwide program called Your Year of Miracles, with thousands of participants from forty-two countries, for living a life of miracles. Marci has inspired millions of people around the world, and is dedicated to helping people live more empowered, and joy filled lives.

Marci Shimoff: So, then the other two things I'm going to say, I think of them as that I have two angels on my shoulder. People are always asking me, "what's the most important thing to do for happiness?" And you know, it's individual. For somebody, it's going to be getting enough sleep or eating the right foods. For somebody else, it's going to be surrounding yourself with different people. For somebody else it's wherever your weakest link is. But in general, the universal to... is to think of is two angels. One is on my right. One is on my left. And the one on my right is the angel of gratitude, it has been found statistically that when we are grateful, if you spend two minutes a day in gratitude, think of five things a day that you're grateful for within a month, it will raise your happiness set point. It's been proven because it changes your brain chemistry. It changes your focus. What we appreciate, appreciates us. It will give us more back. So, even when things are in the utmost challenge, spend time. What I suggest is every night before you go to sleep, keep a little journal and write down five things that you're grateful for that day and notice what shifts. And you know, if you are dealing with children with cancer, same thing. Do it together with them. You know, you say five things out loud that you're grateful for the day and have them say five things that they're grateful for and that will help raise both of your set points.

Laura Lane: Sometimes those gratitude things can be little things. Being grateful that... I remember someone came and did my laundry for me. Came to the hospital, collected my clothes and took it off. Washed it for me and brought it back. And another day, it was just having a nurse there who just understood and was willing to give me a hug when I cried and was so overwhelmed. That having gratitude for all of those people who were serving me and my daughter. Sometimes it was gratitude just for the little things that she stopped throwing up and could sleep now. So, just being grateful for all those little things, is so important.

Marci Shimoff: Beautiful. And Laura, you know I've seen you through this process and I want you to know that you are such a great model. And you know, that example for people of what is possible. And you know, dealing with this very in a very real and very, very true way. And saying that I still can have a place for happiness in my heart and I can move forward in my mission, and I can still work on this and it's in honor and tribute to Celeste.



Yeah, I would love to hear what your take is on how, on the issue, how can I be happy even though this happened?

Laura Lane: How I'm, how I remained happy?

Marci Shimoff: Yes. How you approached that how you approached that particular piece you know, some people would say, "Oh no, I can't be happy. I don't want to be happy. It's not right to be happy in anyway." So how do you deal with-

Laura Lane: Okay, so I will share with you. I've had some people who were surprised and pleased to see that even when we were going through the hardest days, when we had the diagnosis that cancer had spread all through Celeste's body, we were filling our days with happy moments. We created a bucket list for Celeste and when we asked her, that became the pure, the simple goal was to make every day that she had left with us wonderful. And so, I asked her what do you want to do? And who would you like to meet? What would you like to do? Just looking for all of those incredible... to create memories together. And we had... she said she wanted to speak to the cast of the Dr. Who TV show, she wanted to speak to Robin Williams, Anne Hathaway and Celine Dion.

Marci Shimoff: Wow.

Laura Lane: So, she got a call. This man called the house and he asked for Celeste, and Celeste's stepmom answered the phone and said well who's this guy calling our daughter, right? And he's like well its David Tennant and she's like oh my goodness it is! So, she gives Celeste the phone and we all get in the hallway on the other phone and we're all listening in on this conversation that she's having with David Tennant and we're jumping up and down, we're so excited and Celeste is so calm, she was the coolest just amazing girl. She just sat there talking to him like she talks to people like him all the time. And they talked about spaghetti bolognese, and just had this wonderful conversation, and the next day Robin Williams skyped with her.

Marci Shimoff: Oh my gosh!

Laura Lane: For like 10-15 minutes, he's barking like a walrus, like a seal for us and making us laugh and he had two calls with her. The first time he called from Salt Lake after a show and then he called from his house in San Francisco and showed up the view of the ocean and introduced us to his dog and his cat, and we're laughing and talking about Mork and Mindy and just all of our favorite things.

Marci Shimoff: Wow.

Laura Lane: Celine Dion called, and she was amazing, she was so loving to Celeste and she dedicated that evening's performance to Celeste in Las Vegas that night.

Marci Shimoff: Oh my gosh I have chills from head to toe. How beautiful.



Laura Lane: And the next day, like day after day, Anne Hathaway called and they talked for forty-five minutes, they became best friends, just were totally on the same level. They loved the same things. Books. Celeste was telling her about grandad's soup party that he has. So, if you hear about Hollywood having soup parties it's because Anne Hathaway found out from Celeste.

Marci Shimoff: Amazing, that is so, gosh, and it came from your spirit just creating these moments, creating these experiences so.

Laura Lane: We set the intention and the goal became to create wonderful things and it was wonderful to see how kind people were to my daughter. A few weeks later Matt Smith called from London England as well, and that was such a pleasure and it was on a day when she was having a hard day.

Marci Shimoff: Yeah.

Laura Lane: And it just boosted her so much, it was so incredible.

Marci Shimoff: Oh I, thank you for sharing that, thank you. Well I, so, gratitude, you know, just as you said it could be gratitude for the big and gratitude for the small. In fact, can we do a little quick exercise right now?

Laura Lane: Sure.

Marci Shimoff: I think is a beautiful thing it comes from a group called the institute of HeartMath, and it just takes two minutes.

Laura Lane: I'll let you know Marci, I'm interviewing Jeff Geolitz from HeartMath as well.

Marci Shimoff: Oh wonderful! Well hopefully.

Laura Lane: Go ahead do it anyways.

Marci Shimoff: It takes two minutes to do, I want everybody to do it with us ok? And it's just three simple steps. So, first step, well first let's close our eyes. That's not even one of the steps, first step is to simply place your hand on your heart. Either hand over your heart. Just a simple act of putting your hand on your heart starts the flow of a chemical called oxytocin, which is known as the love hormone. It's what we have when we feel bonding and connected with each other. Just putting your hand on your heart right now starts that happy chemical in your body. The second step is to imagine that you're breathing in and out through your heart. Just imagine that your breath is coming into your heart and your breath is going out of your heart. And then the third step is on each in breath just breath in the words: gratitude, peace, love, gratitude, peace, love. Take those into your heart. Now you can either just imagine a time when you felt gratitude, peace and love or you can just say the words internally and it will bring about that sense of gratitude, peace and love. Breathing that into your heart on each breath, and now you can just slowly take your hand down with your eyes closed, just notice if you feel any different now than you did just a



minute or two ago? Do you feel any more balanced, centered, open? And when you feel ready you can slowly open your eyes. Now Laura, just as our genie pig here, how do you feel any different now than you did a minute ago?

Laura Lane: I feel grounded, I feel peace, I feel just light and.

Marci Shimoff: Beautiful so that...

Laura Lane: My cup feels full.

Marci Shimoff: Cup feels full. That is an indication of a biological state that they actually call the love response, this was a term that was coined by a Harvard Doctor Eva Selhub and the love response has different heart rhythms, different brain waves, different biochemistry and it's different than the stress response which is also a biochemical state. We all know what it's like to make a stress response it takes just a minute or two to put ourselves back into that love response. Here's what I would say, doing it once was just a nice experience, do this every day twice a day for the next couple of weeks and within two weeks you will start to make a habit of being in the love response and that's a state that you can habituate. And really any time that you want to go back to it, once you've got in the habit you can just go like that. And it starts to bring you into that state because you've trained your body to go there. So simple practice doesn't take more than a minute or two but really have an impact.

Laura Lane: That's so powerful, Marci, thank you. One of the things that I've experienced after everything that I've gone through is that there's that struggle to, for me to be happy. That I feel that I've lost the sparkle in my eye. That it's hard to be truly happy after all of the heaviness of everything I've been through. So, it sounds like this will be a tool that I can use on a daily basis that will help me to bring that true sparkle back.

Marci Shimoff: I highly recommend it a couple times a day. You know just to do that little process. Now the third thing that I wanted, actually it's the fourth thing because I've told you three so far, but I wanted to... I really want to speak a bit more about that other angel which is the angel of forgiveness. Because forgiveness is, I think, one of the biggest means to unlocking greater happiness in our lives. Now forgiveness doesn't mean that you have to condone a situation, condone another person's behavior but it means that you need a spaciousness. You let go of the resentment that you carry, not to help the other person but to help yourself. And there's a beautiful forgiveness practice called Ho'oponopono.

Laura Lane: Oh, I love this.

Marci Shimoff: It's a Hawaiian practice with that's why there's all those O's and P's in it. You never have to say the word Ho'oponopono. But it's a simple practice of saying four statements: I'm sorry, please forgive me, thank you, I love you. Not to another person but internally in your heart. You think about a person or situation that you're angry or upset about and holding a grudge against, and just say, "I'm sorry, please forgive me, thank you, I love you," towards that person or situation and then also towards yourself. Do it for a couple of minutes and I promise if you do this consistently, magic will happen in your life.



Laura Lane: Yes. Thank you for sharing this.

Marci Shimoff: Magic can happen. And it can even be, you know, the forgiveness of the situation that a beloved of yours has cancer. You know, forgiveness of the situation of them having cancer, you know it's the deepest kind of thing. It's the, whether it's towards God, towards you know whatever. Whatever it is that you that is, to just have some kind of compassion and forgiveness to yourself for being upset about it. For whatever, I mean whatever it is. I mean, Laura, you know how best to apply this in this situation, what would you say to apply this?

Laura Lane: So I actually cover Ho'oponopono in my book.

Marci Shimoff: Oh I'm so glad.

Laura Lane: I share the experience that for me when I learned. Someone sent me a copy of Dr. Hew Len's and Joe Vitale's book Zero Limits, and so I learned about it in the hospital with Celeste. And I started applying it. I had difficulty that my ex-husband would be there, or his wife would be in the hospital room. And I would have all these feelings of resentment come up. And now they're just sitting there. They're not doing anything but here I am stewing in resentment. I'm just, it's eating away at me right. And once I learned this technique, so, I would look at my ex and I would remember all the things that I've been through with him and get stuck in that and go "oh God, I'm so sorry. Please forgive me. Thank you. I love you. And then I'd have this peace come up and it was incredible. And then sometimes I'd look at him again and all the resentment would come back, so I'd just do it over and over and over again until finally I could look at him and not feel that anymore.

Marci Shimoff: Beautiful, what a beautiful thing. I, you know, you as I said you are the example of this and I'm so glad that it's in your book. You know these things that we're talking about today, they're not hard. I mean they're simple kinds of things. They don't take a lot of time. I mean, I gave you four things. One is to ask yourself what's the most loving thing I can do for myself right now? Number two was to spend some time in gratitude, write down five things a day that you're grateful for so change your brain chemistry. Number three you know do that inner ease technique, put your hand on your heart breath into your heart breathing in love, gratitude, ease, and then number four forgiveness, do that little Ho'oponoponon practice. Don't try all of them at once, just pick one.

Laura Lane: One thing a day

Marci Shimoff: Do it for a little while and then it becomes a habit, and then pick the second one and do it and it becomes a habit. And these little things you can do that will feed you. And you know, ultimately Laura, people always ask me the question "isn't this selfish for me to do this?" In order to focus on my own happiness, especially if you're a parent of a child with cancer, you might ask yourself or you might be thinking, isn't this selfish? You know I've got this child that I need to give to. When you are giving to your child, absolutely the best way you can and I think that you need to also, you know. I think it's critical for each of us, no



matter what our circumstances are in life, to also spend a little bit of time on our own happiness. Because when we focus on our own happiness, we affect everyone around us. And ultimately, it's the biggest way we can affect the world. There's a beautiful Chinese proverb that I'd love to share that speaks to this, the unselfishness of happiness, it goes like this. It says when there's light in the soul, there will be beauty in the person. If there's beauty in the person, there will be harmony in the house. When there is harmony in the house, there will be order in the nation. And when there is order in the nation, there will be peace in this world. And my prayer and my wish for all of us, is that we feel the light in our own souls, and with that we're able to share that with the world. And I just want you to know that I'm so deeply honored and feel such inspiration, feel such, you know, awe for the parents of children who have cancer because I can't imagine that there is anything more challenging in life to go through. And I want you to know that I send you my gratitude and my, as much strength as I can and as much love as I can your way to help feed your hearts. You are the heroes of the planet.

Laura Lane: Thank you so much Marci. So, there's one last question that I have for you and that is what website can we send our audience to so that they can learn about you and your work um what website can they go to?

Marci Shimoff: So there's two of them, one of them is your it's just my Happy for No Reason website, it's called happyfornoreason.com and on there you can there's a free workbook that has all twenty-one of the happiness habits and an exercise or a process to go through with each of them and that is my gift to you from that website happyfornoreason.com. I also teach a program called Your Year of Miracles and you can go to youryearofmiracles.com

Laura Lane: Well that's terrific thank you Marci thank you so so much.

Marci Shimoff: Thank you Laura, I love you, I love what you're doing and I send my love to everyone.

Laura Lane: Terrific.

Wasn't that amazing? I love how Marci shares with us tools we can use every day to remain positive and happy: the daily gratitude exercise and the easy HeartMath technique, forgiveness and Ho'oponopono. These are tools and exercises I have used myself over the years. I kept a daily gratitude journal for years and it was a lifeline for me. I learned about Ho'oponopono when Celeste was in the middle of treatment. A friend sent me a copy of Zero Limits. I share the whole story in my book, about the impact it has on my life at the time. It's something I share with my clients during our sessions together as well. And HeartMath... well you just got a taste for it with Marci. Next week, is the first of 2 interviews with Jeff Golietz education curriculum developer, senior trainer and education specialist with the HeartMath Institute. We'll not only discuss more about HeartMath but also strategies to cope with trauma and everyday stress.



Before we end our show today, we have one last segment. Over the last few years, I have asked other cancer moms what advice they wish they had known when their child was first diagnosed. I have compiled that information and will be sharing their advice each week. You can download the top 101 pieces of advice that I put together as a mini E-book at www.twomothersoneprayer.com.

Today's advice comes from Lisa and Judy,

They both made the same point. Lisa said, "I also wish I knew that some friends you thought would be there for you as you go through this with your child; stop talking to you and you are left feeling like they don't care. I wish someone had told me the reason why some people do this is because they are afraid and don't know what to say to you. So, they say nothing, and friendships are lost because you really don't have time to do anything but care for your sick child. I wish I could have told some friends back then that it's ok and you don't have to do or say anything, but a call to say you are thinking of the person would be wonderful."

Judy agreed, "I think people are sometimes at a loss and don't know what to say and they end up not saying anything, but it hurts. Then there have been people who I didn't expect a call or message from reaching out. It's hard not to feel hurt by the ones who don't make the effort."

Thank you both Lisa and Judy for sharing that. This is a great example of when as parents we can be practicing what Marci shared about both forgiveness and gratitude and using the Ho'oponopono process. When friends just don't know what to do or respond badly – have that conversation with God and pour out your heart to him "Oh God, I'm sorry. I'm caught up in the feelings of anger or resentment or hurt or loneliness because so and so wasn't able to be there to support me. Please forgive me, thank you. I love you." Forgive them and remember all the wonderful people in your life. Write those people down in your gratitude list. You will feel more peace and will be able to better focus on your most important job – looking after your child.

If you have advice you have learned along the way that you wish someone had told you weeks, months or years earlier, I invite you to fill out the contact form on our website www.twomothersoneprayer.com and I will be sharing your advice with our listeners on future shows.

[faded Music in background]

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule today to listen to the Hope Strength Courage Podcast. I look forward to sharing more experts and advice with you again next Wednesday. Please remember to take a minute to subscribe to the show. Thanks also need to go out to our Hope Strength Courage Production Team which consists of Kyle Outridge Productions and music by Fiz Anthony. To learn more about myself, Laura Lane and to order my book please visit www.twomothersoneprayer.com.



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