

MARCI SHIMOFF

Creating Happiness & Living in the Miracle Zone

Jason Prall:

Hello and welcome to Awaken the Healer Within. I'm your host, Jason Prall, and with me I have a very special guest, Marci Shimoff. She's a number one New York Times bestselling author, a world-renowned transformational teacher, and an expert on happiness, success, and unconditional love. Her books included the international bestsellers *Happy For No Reason* and *Love For No Reason*. Marci is also the women's face of the biggest self-help book phenomenon in history, is coauthor of six books in the *Chicken Soup for the Women's Soul* series. With total book sales of more than 15 million copies worldwide in 33 languages, Marci is one of the best-selling female nonfiction authors of all time. She is currently leading a one-year mentoring programming called *Your Year of Miracles*, and her opening seminar has been heard by more than 70,000 people. Marci, thanks for joining me today.

Marci Shimoff:

Oh, I'm so happy to be here with you, Jason.

Jason Prall:

You know, it's funny. I first got introduced to *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series in my high school calculus class. A very eccentric teacher of mine, he would read these, and I'll never forget it. It was so impressionable. It made such a big difference for me, so I want to start there. When you were writing for this series, what were some of your takeaways, because you interact with a lot of people that gave stories, right?

Marci Shimoff:

Right.

Jason Prall:

What were some of the things that you took away from doing that work?

Marci Shimoff:

Well, I feel so blessed that I got to coauthor the women's series in the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. I'd say there were really three big takeaways. One was just the incredible strength of the human spirit. It's just incredible what people can go through, can survive, and can come out the other end transformed. I'm in awe of that.

Marci Shimoff:

The second thing is I took away the absolute awareness that miracles happen in life. I would say that 25 to 30% of our stories were really miracle stories, things that just absolutely were phenomenal and we would all call a miracle, so how commonplace that actually is, and then the third thing I took away is how the idea of love, the feeling of love, it is unmistakable, no matter where you are. It's universal. I would

give Chicken Soup for the Soul talks all around the world, and the same things touched every human being, and it's the idea of love, and the idea of ... Not the idea, but the reality that love is foremost in life.

Jason Prall:

I love that.

Marci Shimoff:

That sounds a little woo-woo, but it was really real. I read probably 20,000 stories, and it was just inspiring. Human beings are amazing. We can also be not amazing, but we have a great, great capacity to be amazing.

Jason Prall:

Yeah. That was one of the things I loved about those books, is the inspiring potential. Through some of those stories and through those anecdotes that you hear, it's like you recognize, man, the impossible becomes possibly all of a sudden, right, and seemingly the only limitation is myself, my mind, my limited viewpoint. Some of those stories, to me, are just ... they make a huge difference in awakening to a bigger reality, a more whole reality.

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah.

Jason Prall:

It's funny. Your book, Happy For No Reason, I can hear some of the groans, like oh my gosh. It's a self-help book, and we can just be happy, and all these things, and it's funny. I want you to hit on some of this misconception about happiness, because I did a project, the Human Longevity Project, and this is intimately tied with happiness and some of the things that go along with happiness, and boy, we're off the mark a little bit in the West, I find, and happiness that I found traveling the world in Icaria, Greece, in Okinawa, in Costa Rica, it's a different happiness than I would say that I was conditioned to recognize. Tell me what you mean by Happy For No Reason. What's your book really all about?

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah. I love that you've had that perspective of traveling around the world and seeing what happiness is in different places. I actually was fortunate enough to narrate a movie called Happy that-

Jason Prall:

I love that move.

Marci Shimoff:

Isn't that a great movie, and it really speaks about what real happiness is around the world. What you're talking about is what I was conditioned to as well. It's what I call happy for good reason. It's "I'll be happier when". That is the biggest myth in our society. I'll be happier when I have a better job. I'll be happier when I make more money. I'll be happier when I get married, or I'll be happier when I get divorced, or I'll be happier when I lose 20 pounds. These are all temporary states of happiness. It's what I called happy for good reason. Nothing wrong with having wonderful things in our life, it's just a very,

very unstable place to put our happiness, and so what I mean by Happy For No Reason is an inner state of peace and wellbeing that doesn't depend on our circumstances.

Marci Shimoff:

Life happens. Things go up, things go down. There's a pandemic. There's stuff that happens, but within all the stuff that happens, do you have an inner state of peace and wellbeing that you carry with you? That's what I call happy for no reason. It's not based on conditions, and Jason, if I could just tell you a little bit of my own story.

Jason Prall:

I would love that. I would love that, because I think one doesn't stumble across this realization or even expand upon it like you have unless there are some pretty key experiences, and actual wisdom from those experiences. I'd love to hear your story.

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah, people always ask me, "Well, Marci, you can say this because you were always happy, weren't you?" And my answer is absolutely not. I was born depressed. I came out of the womb with existential angst. I had great circumstances, great parents. Everything was nice. I grew up in California. It was all sunny and everything was good, and I was unhappy from the get-go. It was as though I had this heavy weight in my heart, on my shoulders. I remember being five years old and thinking, how can I go out and play when everybody in the world is suffering? I think I was a big empath. I believe that we have ancestral trauma that we carry with us. I believe that I came in with some ancestral trauma.

Marci Shimoff:

I was on this vast search for happiness from the get-go, because I didn't have it, and in high school, or junior high, high school, I did find what I thought was the solution, and it was called sugar. I became a sugar addict, because it would give me a temporary happiness, and then of course it didn't last and I became addicted to sugar. I was probably 35 pounds overweight in high school. That was not a good solution.

Marci Shimoff:

When I was in my 20s, I decided I was going to set goals for myself, and I set five goals for myself, and I figured, once I reach those goals, that's it. I've got it. I'll be happy, and I'll share them with everybody, because I think that people can relate. I wanted to have a wonderful husband or life partner, a fabulous career helping people, great friends, a comfortable home, and the equivalent of Halle Berry's body. Now, I got four out of the five. I do not have Halle Berry's body, but I have a healthy body for which I'm very grateful at age 63. I just went camping and hiking and-

Jason Prall:

You do look great, by the way, for 60. That's amazing. You really do.

Marci Shimoff:

Thank you. Anyway, I worked really hard to get that whole act together, and I had a turning point moment. It was in 1998, and I had three books at the same time on the top five of the New York Times bestseller list. I had just given a speech to 8,000 people, and I had autographed 5,432 books. In one sense, I felt like an author rockstar, and all those other things on my list were good, and I remember

going up to my hotel room after signing that last book, and looking out the window. It was in Chicago. I saw this beautiful view of Lake Michigan, and I turned around, and I fell onto the bed, and I burst into tears, you know that just heart-wrenching kind of like ... and the reality was, I knew this was the end of the road, the end of the line.

Marci Shimoff:

I could not continue to fool myself into thinking that just the next thing was going to make me happier, and that's when I just did this huge, all-in prayer commitment. What do I do to be happy? I started researching happiness. I interviewed all of the happiness researchers. I interviewed a hundred unconditionally happy because I wanted that lasting kind of happiness, and I started doing what they did, and it worked.

Marci Shimoff:

I would say I went from a D plus in happiness to an A, and I'm still a work in progress, but it is solid, and I know ... I've now taught this to hundreds and thousands of people. I know it's possible for anybody, and to me, that's thrilling, because anybody, no matter where you are in the happiness continuum, you can be happier, and when you're happier, everything in life works. Your relationships work better, you're healthier. I know that you talk about healing a lot.

Marci Shimoff:

A couple of statistics about happiness and health. Happier people are one-third less likely to get sick. They live on average nine years longer. They have much stronger immune systems. In fact, there's new research on COVID, and immunity and happiness. All around, happiness is good. Happier people make more money. It has phenomenal benefits in so many ways.

Jason Prall:

Well, there's so much there that I love. One of the things that I think you're pointing to, which is very sneaky, and it's this idea or this reality that many of us are walking through life with pretty good circumstantial evidence around us, and yet inside we can feel miserable, depressed, anxious, fearful, on any number of things, disconnected, and it's really challenging, right, because especially now, when we look at Instagram and all this social media stuff, and it appears like the world around us is happy and in good shape, and all these things, following their dreams and their passions, making money, and then we look at our external environment and say, "Well, I should be happy."

Jason Prall:

There's a real aspect here of guilt and shame about how I feel, because I know that there's people that have it way worse than I do, and yet I feel so horrible. What's wrong with me? How do I fix this, right? This is what I want to point to, because I think we're kind of all ... We have been all on that spectrum, to some degree, which is that the thing that I'm feeling inside doesn't really match up with my external circumstances. What's going on here? This is where it gets really, really challenging.

Jason Prall:

I think the key to happiness, right ... I mean, before we get to how do I get to that point of stabilizing this wellbeing in my system, right, because this is the trick that I think you're talking about, which is ... It's not this sort of hedonistic aspect, where you're using sugar or sex or porn or money or handbags, right, any of this stuff to fill that need, that hole, that thing that you're searching for, but it's a real stable aspect,

and I love that you're pointing to this idea that we can continue to stabilize, continue to deepen, continue to expand into this state, and it's not like you get there and you're there.

Marci Shimoff:

Right.

Jason Prall:

No, no. You get there and you stay there, and then you go deeper, and then you get bigger, right, and so that's what's interesting to me. There's something in Ayurveda, in the shamanic cultures, they point to this as well. When we're chasing something like sweetness, we're actually looking for more sweetness in life, and so that sugar is actually satisfying a real thing, and this is why, when we eat that cookie or that chocolate cake, there's a real aspect of feeling better momentarily, but of course it doesn't last, and of course, if we follow these bad habits or getting out of balance, then it's going to lead us down a deeper path of misalignment.

Marci Shimoff:

Yes.

Jason Prall:

I just want to point to that, that even things like fat, when we carry more fat on our body ... Ayurveda points to this idea of feeling more love, more satiated, more ... There's a real thing here, right, that we're chasing, and so I love that you really, really make this distinction about a lasting happiness for no reason versus these happiness points for good reason, and it is a good reason, right? There's a real reason. What are some of those reasons that people are chasing happiness and that we're not feeling so happy all the time?

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah. Oh, boy, do I love everything you've said. I could have jumped in and made comments about a million things. Well, first let me just say this about the general state of society and all. We have an epidemic of unhappiness. We actually have more than we've ever had, and we are unhappier than ever. One out of four women in North America's on antidepressants, and I don't say that for any kind of guilt or anything. There's a great place for that. Yet there are many, many people that just don't know where else to turn, and there are so many other solutions that are healthy solutions.

Marci Shimoff:

I want everybody to get ... This is not just you. Don't worry if you're feeling like, oh, but I'm not happy. I should be. What's wrong with me? I've got everything I need. Look, if success, money, fame, looks, were the key to happiness, we'd have a lot more happy people in Hollywood.

Jason Prall:

Right.

Marci Shimoff:

And we don't. We see suicides. All that. Here's the thing that helped me the most to understand this, and that is ... Science has actually cracked the happiness code. We know what it takes for people to be

happier, and here's what science has found. We all have what's called a happiness set point, and it's a thermostat setting. It's like a thermostat setting. No matter what happens to us, whether it's good or bad, we're going to tend to return to our thermostat setting. This is why, when people win the lottery, you think, oh well, all I have to do is win the lottery and then I'd be happy. They're happier for a little while, but within a year they return to their happiness set point.

Jason Prall:

Right.

Marci Shimoff:

Same is true of people who have had tragedies. Their happiness is affected, but then they return to their original happiness set point. The set point is the key for all of us, and we know it can be raised. Here's how the set point is determined. It's 50% genetic, you're born with it. I was not born with a good happiness chance, even though I had a dad that was super happy, my mother was depressed, and I got more of that. 10%, and only 10%, such a tiny piece of the pie, is our circumstances. Here we all are, putting all of our life force and energy into changing those circumstances so we can be happy. It's only 10% of the pie.

Marci Shimoff:

The other 40% is our habits of thoughts and behavior, and that's where we have the most ability to raise our happiness set point, and I'm going to take it a step further and say that researchers in the field of epigenetics, like Dr Bruce Lipton, who wrote *The Biology of Belief*, they say that even our genes can be changed when we change these habits of thoughts and behaviors.

Marci Shimoff:

90% of our happiness set point is about what our habits are, how we live our life, not about who we're married to, or what house we're in, or whatever, how we look, whatever. Yay. That's freedom, and as far as I'm concerned, this should be taught in every school, in every child. The thing we want most in life is to be happy. It's what everybody has wanted since time immemorial, and here we know how to do it. I want to share with you what I've learned about it and what you can share with your children about this as well.

Jason Prall:

Just so I have this clear, we're all kind of at this current state of our happiness set point, which may have been lower in the past or what have you, right, but we can actually then reset this new normal, right? If we're doing some of this work that I think that you're going to chat about, we can actually reset this happiness set point, and get to this new normal, so where when we get rocked and we get taken down, sure, we get a little bit of happy, but we return to this new normal, or when we get have an amazing experience and we're so elated, but we come back to this new set point. Is that kind of what you're alluding to?

Marci Shimoff:

That is so what I'm talking about. It's about actually raising that happiness thermostat setting, so that no matter what's going on around you, you are living in a higher n higher state of happiness. The purpose of our life.

Jason Prall:

One thing I've found, and I'd love for you to speak on this, which is that, as I've done more and more work on myself, what I've recognized is that, as I've changed this happiness set point, more stability and wellbeing, there's fewer things that knock me off of that point, and when I do get knocked off, I tend not to swing so far, and even if I do swing far, I come back quickly, right?

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah.

Jason Prall:

It's like I seem to have this more rubber band effect back to that set point, quicker, faster, and more often.

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah. The happier you are, the higher your happiness set point, the more resilient you become, and that's what you're talking about, is this ability to bounce back and to be resilient, and we need that. I believe that we're living in these times for us to really master this. We're here to be masters, and especially everybody that's listening to this.

Jason Prall:

Totally.

Marci Shimoff:

If you're listening to this, it's because your consciousness gets this and knows you are here to be a master of life, and this is one of the ways that ... This is the way I've found to really master our inner state. I mean, we're really talking about consciousness here. I talk about it in terms of happiness, but it's really raising our state of consciousness.

Marci Shimoff:

I know you love to be practical, as do I, so I am happy, Jason, to talk about the seven areas that I've found that we need to look at for this. Does that work?

Jason Prall:

Beautiful. I would love that. Please.

Marci Shimoff:

Okay. I love being here with you. I so get how ... You're ...

Jason Prall:

I can feel you. Yeah. Yes.

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah. It's really fun, and I've never said this. This is a little aside. I've done thousands, literally thousands of interviews, and sometimes they're just ... go along, and sometimes there's just this energy, and you've got that energy.

Jason Prall:

Thank you.

Marci Shimoff:

I hope everybody who's listening feels this and is with us on this. Here's the deal. When I researched all these hundreds of unconditional happy people, I started with a hundred people. I call them my happy hundred. I found that there were 21 main happiness habits that they had, and they fell into seven main categories. Now, I know it's hard for people to remember seven of anything, so I created an analogy or a metaphor. I call it building your inner home for happiness, and this is how these seven areas work.

Marci Shimoff:

Every home has a foundation, four corner pillars, a roof, and a garden, and here's how this relates to the seven areas of happiness, and what I want you to do as I go through these, I want everybody to listen to where am I the weakest, because wherever you're the weakest, that's where you want to start. That's your Achilles' heel, and so, Jason, I'm going to ask you that question when we go through these.

Jason Prall:

I'm going to identify it as soon as I hear it, because I know it'll resonate as soon as you say it.

Marci Shimoff:

Okay. The foundation of your happiness is taking responsibility for your life and your happiness. It's showing up, not as a victim in life, but as a victor of life, meaning you're a co-creator in life, and the ways you know that you're in victimhood, three, is are you in blame, shame, or complaining mode? If you're blaming, shaming, or complaining, you are abdicating the responsibility for your life and for your happiness, and thinking, yeah, I can't be happy because I've got this crummy boss, or I can't be happy because it's cold outside, you know? That's not taking responsibility for your life.

Marci Shimoff:

Then there's the four corner pillars, and they'll be very familiar to everybody. There's the pillar of the mind, your thoughts. Do your thoughts sabotage your happiness? The pillar of the heart. Do you live with an open heart? Do you have forgiveness, loving kindness, gratitude, generosity? I've never met a happy person who had a closed heart.

Marci Shimoff:

The third pillar is the pillar of the body. Do you have the biochemistry of happiness? Happiness is a biochemical event. Do you have enough endorphins, serotonin, GABA, dopamine? Where are you thriving biochemically, and that, by the way, was my weakest area. Then the fourth is spirit. Do you feel connected to a greater energy in the universe? Are you feeling ... Whether you call it God, the divine, intelligence, nature. It doesn't matter, but are you connected to the spirit.

Jason Prall:

Before you get into it, there's two that really entrap me. One is the mind.

Marci Shimoff:

Yes.

Jason Prall:

I get pulled up into the mind so often, whenever the feelings come in, and there's a sense of, oh, I don't want to feel that. The mind just instantly kicked in, so that's a big one, and then the biochemistry, just from an Ayurvedic perspective. My pitta is very angry, frustrated. It's an energy that is constitutionally there, and so that's something that I've continuously been learning and working on how to cool, how to balance, how to pacify.

Marci Shimoff:

Well, I can relate. I'm a vata-pitta, so my mind can go into the spinning out worry. That's the vata, and my pitta can go into the fire, so I need a lot of water. I need a lot of ground and earth. I need more of the kapha. I'm completely with you in that approach, and the biochemistry, as I said. Those have been my two weaknesses as well.

Jason Prall:

And I just want to point out, too, sorry to interrupt there, that there's something here, too, right, where we can say the constitution or the biochemistry or the genes may not be optimized for this sort of blissful happiness, relaxed state, and the solution to that or the remedy to that is the first pillar that you talked about, which is responsibility.

Marci Shimoff:

Yes.

Jason Prall:

It's like, this is me. I have no-one to blame here. This is me, and so how do I take responsibility for what is innately mine, right? I just want to sort of point that out, because that was the solution that I stumbled upon. It's okay. Well, who else am I going to turn to? I can blame my mom, I can blame my dad, I can blame my grandparents, the whole lineage, or I can take responsibility and learn how to work with that.

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I love that. I've never seen it put together that way, and I think you're absolutely spot on with that. The mind, by the way, is one that is very ... a challenge, and I'll give people some ideas of what to do about that, because I know, especially in our culture, that's a big trap. Now we've got the roof and the garden. The roof has to do with our purpose or passion in life. Are you living an inspired life? Are you doing what you are here on this planet to be doing, and I absolutely believe that every one of us is here for a reason. It's not an accident that we're here, so are you living an inspired life?

Marci Shimoff:

Then finally the garden, and the garden is who do you surround yourself with? Are you surrounded by weeds, toxic people, or people who are dragging your happiness down, or are you surrounded by roses,

and gardenias of people, people who are really supporting your happiness. I want everybody right now to just identify for yourself, before we go any further, where are you the weakest, and then make a commitment to yourself to take one step in the direction of strengthening that particular area of your life. It's not that we don't need them all, but we all are weaker in some and stronger in others. Shall we spend a little bit of time giving something practical for the mind, and ...

Jason Prall:

Yeah. Before you go to that, I actually want to go back backwards a little bit, because you said something early that I didn't touch on, but I would love to, which is this idea that happy people are healthier in general, right, and there's science to actually show this, right? What I think is interesting is that, for anybody that is struggling with mental, emotional and physical disease or imbalance or conditions, it's very easy, and I've been there. When you're dealing with that, and you're suffering with that, the condition is when I get better, then life will be better. I will be happier.

Jason Prall:

I can't be happy because, look at this skin rash. Look at the pain that I'm in, right? How can I be happy when I'm dealing with this chronic pain, when I'm dealing with this extra weight, when I'm dealing with this thyroid disorder? I can't be happy. In fact, the thyroid disorder is the thing that's causing my depression, my low energy, and so I just want to sort of highlight that, and what you're saying is that that's a reasonable condition, right? It's understandable, and we can actually flip that on its head and work on some of these happiness things, and that, interestingly enough, will actually help to boost my health condition.

Jason Prall:

It'll boost my status. It'll bring me back into balance, in ways that I'm convinced we still have not mapped out. I mean, this stuff is so insanely complex once you get into the mind, body, emotional complex. We're starting to. We have some things that are there to look at, but this is so deep in our being, and so maybe just talk to me about that, and some of the things that you like to tell people that are dealing with chronic issues.

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah. Oh. Everything you said, yes, and it is so ... We think that, just like you said, we think that when I feel better, then I'll be happier, and it really goes the other way. When I get happy, I'll feel better. No matter where you are, there are things that you can do to focus on what is working in your life. There's this saying, what we put our attention on grows stronger in our life.

Marci Shimoff:

If you are in pain, notice the part of you that's not in pain. Notice the places in which you are feeling ... that are working, and really bless those and savor those, because when we start to work with the energy, because all of this is energy, and what we're doing is we're saying let's shift the energy, and the shifting of the energy is going to help in the healing process dramatically.

Jason Prall:

I love that, and what you're pointing to here is a very, very key thing, I think, which is to focus on the good. Focus on what you're aware of that is healthy, that is positive, that you enjoy, right? I mean, this is one of the traps I think we get into when we're going through something physical, mental, emotional, is

that we get sucked into that thing, and we lose perspective of what else there is, right, because it's taking up so much of my life force energy to focus on this thing, right, and so we get sort of sucked in and entrapped, and our view becomes condensed, and we feel like that's all there is, and so expanding that view and looking for these things that we really, really adore, because that's the truth, right? There's so much in my life that, if it went away, I'd be really disappointed. It would be really sad, right? So what can I focus on that is positive, and I think that instantly is going to shift our biochemistry.

Marci Shimoff:

It does, and as a matter of fact, I want to just share, if I can, a very simple process to change the neural pathways in the brain that in turn then help shift the body.

Jason Prall:

Beautiful. Yeah.

Marci Shimoff:

Because it's very much what you're talking about. People think, oh, this is too hard. I can't do this, and I want to show you how crazy easy it is, and I'm going to ask you not to take my word for it, but to practice this yourself. Use your own life as an experiment, and see what shifts for you. The research shows that there is a very effective little three-step process to create new neural pathways in the brain, and the neural pathways in the brain then affect our energy, and our body, and all of that, and I can tell you, for years and years and years, my only prayer when I was a teenager was just give me energy. I want energy.

Marci Shimoff:

I had no energy. I was depressed and I had no physical energy, and it's as I've made these changes in my happiness set point, both from the level of physiology, by ... I've done a lot for my health. I've done a lot of Ayurveda. I've done a lot of great, great things, but I've also taken it from the level of the mind and all these other areas, and it's just shifted. I mean, I feel like the Energizer bunny these days.

Marci Shimoff:

Here are these three simple steps to shift your neural pathways in the brain. Number one. Look for the good. Be on the lookout for the good. Now, that may sound stupid, but it's actually really important. We are trained to see the stuff that isn't working. If I asked you to tell me 10 things in your life that aren't working right now, you'd come up with a list like that.

Jason Prall:

Yeah. We can find dangers, right?

Marci Shimoff:

Huh? Yeah.

Jason Prall:

We can find the dangers.

Marci Shimoff:

We can find the dangers.

Jason Prall:

That's a real key survival tactic.

Marci Shimoff:

That's right.

Jason Prall:

Yeah.

Marci Shimoff:

It's an old survival tactic. The average person has 60,000 thoughts a day, and for the average person, 80% of those are negative. It's called the negativity bias. We inherited it from our cavemen ancestors, and we no longer need it. It's that tendency to hold on to what's bad, you know? If you get 10 compliments in a day and one criticism, what do you remember? The criticism. We want to reverse that. My friend Rick Hansen says we want to Velcro the positives and Teflon the negatives, rather than vice versa. Here's what you do.

Marci Shimoff:

You be on the lookout for the positive. One of the women that I interviewed for Happy For No Reason said that she pretends that she's the Academy Awards committee, and her job every day is to give out five Academy Awards. She'll be walking outside, she'll see this cute little fluffy white dog, and she'll go, "Oh, that dog gets the cutest dog of the day award," or she'll see a beautiful tree and say, "That tree gets the coolest tree of the day award." Whatever it is, or an act of kindness award. She's consciously finding five things a day. That's step number one.

Marci Shimoff:

Step number two. Savor it for at least 20 seconds, and this is a really important point. We tend to notice things that are good and it just goes away. We slough it off.

Jason Prall:

Fleeting. Yeah.

Marci Shimoff:

Fleeting. The research shows that it literally takes 20 seconds for that good to be registered deeply enough to create a new neural pathway in the brain. If you notice that cute little white dog walking by, instead of just noticing it, you go over to the person that's walking it and say, "That dog gets the cutest dog of the day award," and you spend some time actually digesting it, as though you were having a bite of your favorite chocolate pie, and you were savoring it. If you're watching a beautiful sunset you don't go, "Oh, that's a pretty sunset," but you let it into your being. 20 seconds.

Marci Shimoff:

Then the third thing is you go for a three to one ratio, meaning three positives for every one negative. If a negative happens ... They do. It's our habit. It's going to happen. But you quickly come in and replace it with three positives, and this whole simple process starts to re-pattern things. Now, if you have kids, play

this game with them of the we're looking for the good, we're giving out the Academy Awards. They love that stuff.

Jason Prall:

This is really powerful, right, and again, it goes back to your foundation, which is taking responsibility, because what I'm really feeling and hearing from you is we're changing the conditions that we've been patterned, right? We tend to find these patterns, and they're subconscious. They're unconscious. We go through our lives with all these patterns of behavior, of thought, of belief, of action, until we actually bring awareness to that, and consciously shift those conditioned patterns, they're just going to keep operating, right?

Jason Prall:

This is really brilliant, and it's something I've used in my life, and in many ways, and there's also a lot more ways that I can use this, but it's taking conscious awareness and actually ... It's going to take a little bit of effort at first, right? You're going to have to remember this. You might need to set an alarms on your phone. Whatever you can do to help bring this into your awareness, because it's not going to be conscious right away, perhaps. As we're doing this, then it becomes and more conscious, more and more awareness around it. Then it becomes more habitual. Then it stabilizes, right, and it's like we are just conditioned to look at the positive, to look at the beauty, right?

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah.

Jason Prall:

I've been around enough indigenous people, a lot of people in countries that live closer to nature, let's say, live closer to nature's rhythms, and if there's a synonym for nature, it's beauty, right? I mean, nature does nothing but beautiful things, and so it's like they're more conditioned to the beauty, to seeing this amazing thing. It's one of the things I'm a little disappointed we don't get to see the stars a little bit easier in the cities that we're in, right, because you can't not look up and go, oh my God.

Marci Shimoff:

And be in awe.

Jason Prall:

Awe.

Marci Shimoff:

I just got back from camping at Mount Shasta, and it was just ... You go to sleep with the stars everywhere. It's just awe.

Jason Prall:

You're in constant reminder of that, right?

Marci Shimoff:

That's right.

Jason Prall:

But even simple things, right, like full moons or harvest moons, right? When we see these just cool things in nature, a beautiful waterfall or creek or the ocean or a sunset, right, these are very simple things that we can do, just using nature, but I love this idea of bringing conscious awareness to infusing this throughout our day, and eventually that will stick. It's like going to the gym. It might take a little bit of effort at first, but eventually it doesn't have to be so effortful, right, and this is the process of changing these conditioned patterns.

Marci Shimoff:

It really is, and I want to go out on a limb and speak for a minute, if we can, about even the step beyond happy, which is ... What I've found is I started waking up every morning. This was maybe 10, 12 years ago. I started waking up every morning feeling like I'm living in this miraculous life. Everything's in the flow. Amazing things are happening. People are coming my way. Opportunities. It was like this state of not just happy, but miraculous, and I actually believe that that is what we're ultimately all here for.

Marci Shimoff:

Yes, the happier we become ... and I don't mean you're walking around 24/7 with a silly grin on your face and you're ignoring what's going on in the world. That's not what I mean. I mean that you're living in alignment with your being, and there's this sense of all is well, and life is in the flow, and I've started now looking into ... If there's habits for being happy, there's also habits for living in what I call the miracle zone. Living in this place where life just feels like a miracle all the time. Can we talk a little bit about that?

Jason Prall:

Yeah, no. I love it. You actually beat me to it, because I was going to go write into that, because it's such a perfect place to go next. I've seen these videos on YouTube, right, where you have these quote, unquote "inspirational speakers". Might be a quadriplegic, might be somebody that has a disfigured face, and you look at their energy, their charisma, their mentality, and personally I'm like, I don't understand. If I looked like that, if I had that limitation, I don't know if I would be that happy. I don't know if I'd be that positive. I don't know if I'd be that impactful, right? And that's a true statement. I'm actually being honest about that. I really don't know if I could, and yet there's something there for me, that if I can actually ...

Jason Prall:

In fact, there's aspects of myself that can feel it, that can actually learn, pick up that transmission that they're putting out, and I can actually resonate with that, right, and template that, right? There's a real thing there, too, but I want to point to what you're talking about here, which is that life is miracles, and so it's so outside of these conditions that no matter what state I'm in with my physical, mental, emotional health, miracles are all around me all the time, and I was not always aware of this.

Jason Prall:

In fact, as I was sharing with you before we hit record, it was actually my first experience with ayahuasca that showed me, and it wasn't an easy experience, I will say. It wasn't this harmonious, beautiful thing, but it did show me. It brought back the magic of life, and in that moment, I go, oh my God. I've been living my whole life, and I've forgotten the magic. I've forgotten that there's nothing but miracles.

Jason Prall:

For a while, it did. It stuck with me of the miracles that were always available. This idea that I can tap into this, that I can work with this, that I can get into this flow, and that not only can I work with it, but that it's actually here for me, right? It's not mine, I don't own it, but it is here for me, and so that became a guiding light for me to really figure out how I can work with this, so talk to me about this, because I know you have this new program, right, being in the miracle zone, so maybe talking about what is this miracle zone that you're referring to, and I guess maybe the first place, what's preventing us from recognizing that?

Marci Shimoff:

Yes. I so appreciate your experience of tapping into the great magic or mystery or miracles of life, is what you're talking about, and that's kind of where I was finding myself, waking up, going, oh my God, my life is miraculous, and I started looking at how do people get there in any area of their life, and that's probably eight or nine years ago I started teaching Your Year of Miracles program, and here's what I've found about miracles. First of all, let me define what a miracle means. According to Webster's Dictionary, a miracle is a surprise and welcome event that can't be explained by science, and that's often attributed to divine grace.

Jason Prall:

Is that really the Webster definition? Because I don't always agree with Webster's definitions, but that's pretty good. That's actually pretty spot on.

Marci Shimoff:

That was a really good definition. That was really good.

Jason Prall:

I was a little bit hesitant when you were going to quote Webster. That was great. I love that.

Marci Shimoff:

It may not have been Webster. It was one of the dictionaries.

Jason Prall:

But I love that.

Marci Shimoff:

I'm not sure that it was Webster.

Jason Prall:

That's so good.

Marci Shimoff:

But it was a dictionary definition, and I thought, that's it. We can't create miracles. Miracles are a gift of life, of the divine, but what we can do is we can create the conditions for miracles to flow more in our lives, and we can open to them. We can step into that river of miracles, and that's what you said you experienced, is stepping into that river of miracles. People who have experienced that, who have had

near-death experiences. I've always said I want to live as though I've had a near-death experience without having to have the near-death experience.

Marci Shimoff:

It's that recognition of the great miracle of life and stepping into that flow, and what I've found is probably the biggest thing that prevents people from stepping into that flow is a feeling of lack of worthiness, is a feeling of I don't deserve that, I shouldn't be able to have that, life should be harder, or I don't love myself enough, I'm not good enough. We make it conditional. I don't deserve that. I don't have enough self-love, so our own lack of self-love creates that block to miracles happening, and this is-

Jason Prall:

Yeah. It's like we push it away, right?

Marci Shimoff:

We push it away. We push our good away.

Jason Prall:

I can relate to that. Yeah.

Marci Shimoff:

In fact, I want to do just a little quiz right now to see ... to have people notice, how do you push your good away? Just throughout your common day. Five questions. Number one. If you get a compliment, do you tend to push it away or denounce it or deny it? Number two. If somebody offers you any help, do you decline it? Do you say, "No, no, I can do it myself." Number three. Do you have a hard time asking for help? Do you think you shouldn't even ask for support? Number four. Do you have a hard time receiving gifts? Do you feel like you better give back? And that's a physical gift or a gift of service. You better give back twice as much as what you got. Number five. Do you tend to downplay the good that you have so that you don't make other people around you feel bad? In any of those cases, you are unconsciously pushing away your good. Here's what I want you to do. I want you to, over the next few days-

Jason Prall:

Can I just say that ...

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah, go for it. Tell us.

Jason Prall:

I had all five of those were my conditioned growing up, and it's only been recently, if I'm totally honest, that I've been able to start working with those, right? It's like the compliments is a funny one. I wouldn't deny them. I would almost ... like Neo in The Matrix. I'd duck them, right?

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jason Prall:

They're not going to hit me, and there was this aspect of like truly being unable to receive these things, and I can feel what you're getting at, which is that God, the universe, life, is trying to give you everything you've ever wanted, and for a lot of good reasons, we're unable to accept those, right?

Marci Shimoff:

Yes.

Jason Prall:

We're unable to actually recognize that, and I think a lot of it, from my experience, goes back to childhood, and the conditions there, and some of the things that we experienced, whether it's direct trauma ... Some of these conditioned, patterned beliefs and habits and things. Not trusting the love that was there when we were kids, right, because it was fleeting. It wasn't so consistent, right? There's a lot of things there, and then I think ... You mentioned ancestral stuff. That's certainly here. I just want to sort of name those, but please, continue on. I resonate with this so, so strongly.

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah. Well, you just hit the nail on the head. Our ability to receive. That's the thing. People can only give to you to the degree that you can receive. The universe is the same way. Life only gives to you to the degree that you can open up to receive. I'm going to give you a couple of things to do for this. Number one is just notice. Over the next days, notice how are you pushing away your good, in simple, subtle ways. Somebody offers to carry a bag for you, or somebody offers to come help you do something. Do you push it away, and notice when you start to push it away.

Marci Shimoff:

Take a deep breath, and say, "How could I receive right now?" Because receiving is a beautiful gift that you give other people or that you give the universe. To let it in, we've got to let in the good. I believe that all of life is for us. It may not look that way, but Einstein said the most important question you can ask is, is this a loving universe? I believe life is on our side, so open up to receive. Practice building up your receiving muscle. That's number one.

Jason Prall:

I want to comment before you do number two, because my friend Puma, who we also interviewed for this summit, is a sort of Andean, indigenous shaman, healer, and he says, "It's not yours," and this is with reference to anything, right? Whether it's your pain, your suffering, your gifts. It's not yours. It is for you, right? And I love that because it speaks to this idea of receiving, and I think there's a very, very important distinction between taking, right? If somebody's giving you something, you're actually not taking it. You're receiving it, right? That's a different energy. It's a feminine energy. It's a soft energy. It's a welcoming energy, as opposed to this demanding, taking, right?

Marci Shimoff:

Grabbing.

Jason Prall:

It's a very, very different, right, and so ... Yeah. I just want to point that out.

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah. That's great. I've never looked at it that way. I love that, but it is an opening energy, to receiving. Then the second thing is just a simple little practice, and I want everybody to write this question on a post-it, and you're going to ask yourself this question twice a day, and the question is what's the most loving thing I can do for myself right now? Simple question. What's the most loving thing I can do for myself right now? Sometimes it may be I can have a sip of water. Sometimes it can be I can go out in the fresh air. Sometimes it could be I'm going to call a friend and get a little support, or I'm going to take a few minutes and sit and meditate, and just shift my mood, or I'm going to move my body, or ...

Marci Shimoff:

It doesn't matter what it is. What matters is that you are actually retraining yourself to pay attention. Pay attention to what your own needs are. We're so busy going out and trying to fulfill everybody else's needs that we need to look at what is it that my heart, soul, body needs right now? And if you do that twice a day for the next week, you'll start to really re-pattern yourself to feel more worthy of receiving.

Jason Prall:

I love that. It's interesting. As you were talking, some emotion was moving through me. I don't know if you saw that. My eyes were watering, and I could feel emotion moving through, whereas ... and what I actually kind of like about that is that's something that I've learned to love. It's like, oh, I can actually let these things move through, right, whereas before I would kind of block them off and really shut them off, but there's something about what you were saying I think that was so powerful, that was so true, that it just happened to sort of move something in me, and actually have clearance. It was beautiful just to recognize that.

Marci Shimoff:

Well, you know Jason, I want to, and here's a compliment for you that you can receive. I want to really acknowledge you for your journey that you've been on, because I can really feel that it's been a sincere and genuine journey that you've devoted yourself to finding how you can live a happier life, and be healthier, and live in the miracle zone, and that you're really using this to share this with other people. I honor that very much.

Jason Prall:

Well, again, thank you so much, and I did receive it, because I am feeling emotional about it, and what I'm feeling is how good that feels to be seen, right? To truly be seen, so I thank you for that.

Marci Shimoff:

And right now, I would love everybody ... There's a little love fest. I'd love everybody to feel your own appreciation for yourself right now. What is something that you can appreciate about yourself in this moment? You brought yourself to this conversation. Maybe you've made a commitment to doing some little thing over the next week or two that will shift your life. Everybody, if you just take a moment to honor, acknowledge, and celebrate yourself. We need to do that much more often.

Jason Prall:

I love that. Thank you for pointing that out. We have notice. Just noticing these things. If you're able to receive, and if not, what's going on there? Number two is ... Remind me.

Marci Shimoff:

What's the most loving thing I could do for myself right now.

Jason Prall:

What's the most loving thing I can do. Right. Was there another one or are those the two?

Marci Shimoff:

Oh, there's 5,000, but for now let's start with those.

Jason Prall:

No, that's great. I love that, and-

Marci Shimoff:

Celebrating yourself. Noticing something about yourself, acknowledging yourself, celebrating yourself, appreciating yourself. That would be the third.

Jason Prall:

Yeah, that's great. I love that. One of the things I think that's interesting about being able to receive is that I notice that it can be overt, right? It can literally be the denial of somebody offering help or what have you, and then there's these subtle aspects of ... It's more energetic, I would say, where ... and I've been caught in this pattern, and I'm still in this pattern, to some degree, because I've run this pattern very, very hard in my life, and so I'm still working this pattern very, very strongly.

Jason Prall:

There's an aspect of being in this place, of going, I want help. I'm ready to receive. I want help, and you're sort of like ... you're trying to force it. You know what I mean? But the underlying energy is still this like, I don't want it. I don't deserve it. I can do it myself. Whatever the energy is, and it can be so challenging because it's actually sometimes not in the mind. It's deeper in the body, so to speak, and so I just want to sort of point to that and acknowledge that, that we can actually run this pattern of wanting help from maybe a wounded place, and yet energetically we're out of alignment with that true ability to receive, and I've noticed that when I can shift into that, however that might be, and I might need support from somebody else, I might need to work some things that are caught in my system, but as I can step into that more and more, I actually don't even really have to ask.

Jason Prall:

I'm literally vibrating, so to speak. I'm holding this energy of I'm ready to receive, and things just come out of the woodworks. Stuff that I could never have imagined, and this is, to me, what you're speaking to is this miracles. It can be so simple, where somebody comes and offers me help, or it can be this random thing that wasn't even in my awareness, that all of a sudden is landing on my doorstep, right?

Marci Shimoff:

Yes.

Jason Prall:

They can come out of nowhere, and they can be so strange, and so I just wanted to sort of recognize that, that it's very, very elusive sometimes, that it's not as simple as operating from the mind, which is why I love your practices, because your practices help get into that sort of energy a little bit more, and brings us back, so that we're not caught in the mind of asking n wanting to receive.

Marci Shimoff:

Can I share a quick little story?

Jason Prall:

Yeah, please.

Marci Shimoff:

One of the women that I've worked with in the Year of Miracles program, Kirsten, and I'm sure she's okay with me sharing this story. She's given me permission to do this. Kirsten was a fitness buff. She teaches fitness classes, and she was super healthy in many ways, but she knew something wasn't quite right, and she just sort of opened to receiving, and in some very kind of weird and miraculous way, a doctor ended up diagnosing that she had a hole in her heart, and it was like this huge, fabulous thing.

Jason Prall:

Like an actual thing.

Marci Shimoff:

An actual, physical hole in her heart.

Jason Prall:

Wow.

Marci Shimoff:

It was some random, weird way that they came to discovering it, and you think, well, that's not miraculous. Yes, it is, because because they discovered it they were able to do something about it. She had a surgery. We all sent her all of our intentions, our love. She had a miraculous surgery. The doctors couldn't believe it. She was better in miracle time, and she has since felt an enormous shift in her life. The miracles can come in ways that you think, well, that's not a miracle, but yes it is. It's a miracle because it's in the path of our healing. I think what we want to do is be open, but be open to everything.

Jason Prall:

Totally.

Marci Shimoff:

Be open to, okay, if there's something that needs to be adjusted somewhere, let me know what that is, so that I can make the right adjustments, so that I can draw in the right medical support or health support, or whatever it is.

Jason Prall:

I love that story, and you're pointing to so ... The miracles can come in very interesting ways, right, and that's one of them. Another one that comes to mind is that the thing that you're wanting, the miracle, or you're wanting to shift, it may not be the thing that shifts. What shifts is your perspective or your awareness around it, right, your acceptance of it, right, and to me it might be the biggest miracle that you can ask for, is true acceptance of whatever is in front of you, and again, I want to bring this back to the healing journey, because until ... For me, if I wasn't aware of miracles, if I didn't believe in miracles, if I was kind of, again, pushing them away, then how can they possibly come into my reality, right?

Jason Prall:

First, for me, was when I opened up to the possibility that something miraculous can happen, was the first step that that is more likely to happen, and then something that I want to point to that you mentioned earlier, and this is such a common thread, by the way. I really want to point this out, that if you listen to many of these interviews, the amazing people that we have speaking, they almost all, if not all, share a common story, which is reaching some point of seeming disaster and going, "You know what?" Essentially, "I give up doing the old way. I surrender. Please, God, help me figure out what to do next," right?

Jason Prall:

Your stories align with so many others, and I think I just want to highlight this idea of just surrendering the old pattern, and giving things over, and exactly what you're saying here, is you're asking for help, right, in a very overt, prayer, meditative state.

Marci Shimoff:

Yes.

Jason Prall:

There's something really, really powerful about that, because you're not even asking for show me exactly how, step by step, to get to this point. It's just like, I'm done. I can't do this anymore, and I think that that energy is I can't do the things that I've been doing. I'm done trying so hard. I'm done with that old ways. I surrender. What do I do, right? That's inviting in the miracle.

Marci Shimoff:

That is so true, that when we let go, when we just say, "Okay, I give up," or the ego I give up, and we let it be done. Everybody thinks, I've got to know how. How am I going to heal? How am I going to get the money I think I need? How am I going to do this? How am I ... It's not the how. Our job is to know the what.

Jason Prall:

Right.

Marci Shimoff:

In my heart, I want physical healing, or in my heart I want relationships that are harmonious, and I let go. The way I've been doing it hasn't worked, and let me be shown how. Let me be shown the way. It's a beautiful way to live.

Jason Prall:

I love that, and I think this is where some of the more religious sects, right, they're actually more inclined to align with that mentality, and I was not raised in any religious path, and so it took me a little while to recognize that I can open up to the greater mystery that is, and ask for help from an invisible mystery, right, and that's a very, very strange thing. I came from the science background. I was very practical, very in the mind, very in the physical reality, right? It can be a leap, but I think, boy, that's the greatest leap that I ever took, right, and then there's a part of me that's sad that it took so long, but that's just the path. That's just the journey, and it is what it is, right?

Marci Shimoff:

It's all perfect.

Jason Prall:

I found it in the end.

Marci Shimoff:

It's all in divine timing.

Jason Prall:

It's exactly right. Yeah.

Marci Shimoff:

Yeah, yeah.

Jason Prall:

Marci, this has been great. I feel like we could go on for hours. I love your energy, and to me you really do hold this essence of wellbeing in your system, and I can feel it and recognize it, and so thank you for showing up today, and please tell us more where we can find your stuff.

Marci Shimoff:

Thank you so much, Jason. Well, I've just loved this. You can go to youryearofmiracles.com, youryearofmiracles.com, and in there we offer a gift of the four biggest mistakes that keep you from the miracle zone, and then how you can get there, get past those, and then also, if you're interested in the happiness work, you can go to happyfornoreason.com, happyfornoreason.com, and we have all 21 of the happiness habits there with practices to do for each of those happiness habits. I welcome everybody to explore more of living a miraculous life and a deeply happy life. You know, Jason, I want to just share one last idea, if I might.

Jason Prall:

Please.

Marci Shimoff:

Because people are often saying to me, "Isn't it selfish to want to be happier? Isn't it selfish to want to be living a miraculous life? What about the rest of the world?" And my answer is that it's the least selfish

thing you can do, because when you shift, it's been scientifically that you impact the people all around you, and I believe that the best thing we can do to help create a better world is through each of us creating a better life within ourselves, and there's a beautiful Chinese proverb that says just that. It really sums up my philosophy. It goes like this.

Marci Shimoff:

It says when there is light in the soul, there will be beauty in the person. When there is 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 the world, and my prayer and my wish for every single one of us is that we know that light in our own souls, and we live that, and through that, we help create more peace on this planet of ours.

Jason Prall:

Beautiful. Well, I've got nothing else to add to that. This is a good place to end. Marci, thank you so much, and thank you all for tuning in. We'll see you on the next one.