



# Livelihood Show

*Creating what's next on  
your personal career path*

**Title:** Dr. Barry Nierenberg

**# of Pages:** 33

## Announcer Intro

Welcome to the Livelihood Show.

Discover creative ways to apply your current expertise in new projects... and in different environments. Discover the keys to releasing your untapped resources... re-awaken a sense of purpose, passion and mastery in your working life.

Host Marcy Rosenbaum interviews guests who share their personal struggles, surprising choices and unexpected opportunities --as they adapt to changes in the economic and social environment... and navigate themselves through new career alternatives.

Learn more about today's guest on our Facebook page: Livelihood-creating what's next... and share your thoughts and experiences on Twitter at #livelihoodshow

And now, welcome to the Livelihood Show.

## Key

- Announcer
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- Guest

<p><b>Host (Marcy Rosenbaum) Introduction</b></p> <p>How is work going for you these days? Psychologist <a href="#">Barry Nierenberg</a> says that if you understand the science of well being, this question can be a launching pad to make good things better and bad things less frustrating.</p> <p><a href="#">Dr. Barry Nierenberg</a> is a professor who runs the Study Center for Positive Psychology at Nova Southeastern University. This science of well being gives us a map for actions, which increase our confidence, orient us to our sense of purpose and deepen our relationships. You don't have to wait to be empowered, whether you work for someone else, or you own your own business.</p> <p>A sense of well being is always a reasonable, personal performance objective. Even when the work is hard and frustrating, these career tools from the science of well being allow us to look at our professional lives and assess what exactly am I doing well? What specifically brings me satisfaction? What can I do make an unfulfilling work environment more satisfying? What can I do to make an unhappy work environment less toxic?</p> <p>The how of happiness Dr. Nierenberg believes helps us become more successful navigators on our personal. Career journeys.</p>	01:29
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>So, I would like to open this episode by saying hello Barry.</p>	02:40
<p><b>Guest (Dr. Barry Nierenberg)</b></p> <p>Hello, Marcy.</p>	02:45
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>One of the things that you're working on these days, which I think is particularly interesting is your work in the area of positive psychology. It's an interesting concept. It's more than just happiness, and it's more than just hopefulness. So, what can you tell us about how psychology is changing the way we think about what makes us happy?</p>	02:47
<p><b>Guest</b></p> <p>About 20 years ago a group of psychologists came to the realization that as a field, at least during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, psychology learned a lot about what makes us unhappy, and what makes us anxious. But essentially they said we haven't really given a focus to what makes us happy. What makes us happy in our relationships? What makes us happy at work? And what does happy mean?</p>	03:10
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>What does happy mean? I was just thinking that as you were talking. What does happy mean?</p>	03:44

<b>Guest</b>	03:47
Well, you know that was the first problem they hit, because I'm very happy that we're doing this interview. I'm very happy it's Saturday. I'm also very happy that I do the work that I do, and I'm very happy I'm married to you. Those are all very, very different happies (sic).	
<b>Host</b>	04:05
Right.	
<b>Guest</b>	04:05
So when they first started looking at happy and happiness, they found it was too mushy a concept, and in English it means the one word means too many things. A little bit like love. You know I love my car, I love you, I love our apartment; all different kinds of love.	
<b>Host</b>	04:21
I love chocolate.	
<b>Guest</b>	04:22
I love chocolate. There are a number of people who have tried to get their hands around the concept and make it a bit more down to earth and a little less mushy and a little more concrete.	
My favorite and one who has been doing it the longest is Dr. Carol Riff, who is director of the Center on Aging at University of Madison, Wisconsin. A long time psychologist. Does excellent work.	
And when she started thinking about this in the late '80s through both theory and by research, she found that it's much, much better to think about well being than happiness. And the way she described well being is she says there are six components to a person's well being. The first one is she called environmental mastery.	
<b>Host</b>	05:20
OK.	
<b>Guest</b>	05:21
How well do you believe you can master the important things in your environment?	
<b>Host</b>	05:28
OK.	

<b>Guest</b>	05:29
How well do you...you know in our lives, how are you keeping up with paying your bills? Right? Both in terms of paying them online, and in terms of where you're going to get your money from.	
<b>Host</b>	05:41
OK.	
<b>Guest</b>	05:42
Environmental mastery, do you think you can handle it when you're thrown a curve ball? Do you have faith in your ability to do that.	
<b>Host</b>	05:49
OK.	
<b>Guest</b>	05:50
So, that's number one. Number two, is self acceptance. Do you accept yourself for who you are? Do you know who you are? Do you know who you're not and you're never going to be? And do you accept that as well?	
<b>Host</b>	06:05
I can see where not knowing that can make you unhappy.	
<b>Guest</b>	06:08
Exactly. Exactly. Because if you don't know what you're not so good at, you just continue to hit your head against the wall.	
<b>Host</b>	06:15
Right.	

<b>Guest</b>	06:16
<p>Next thing is autonomy, which is do you know what it is you want, and are you able to separate what you want from what's imposed upon you? For example, in work life, I deal with a lot of students. And some of the students who come to me in the graduate program have left other programs. So there is one student I have right now who is in second year of medical school and she woke up one day and said the only reason I'm here is because my parents want me to be a physician. I don't think I want to be a physician. I think I want to be a psychologist. That's a sense of autonomy, is knowing what it is you want...</p>	
<b>Host</b>	06:57
<p>I see.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	06:57
<p>...and resisting social pressure.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	06:59
<p>OK.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	07:00
<p>Then there is do you have a purpose in life and do you have goals and a sense of direction? Do you feel there is a meaning to your present and your past life? And you know for those who are so inclined, you could break it down to goals, aims and objectives.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	07:17
<p>OK.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	07:18
<p>And then there is personal growth and continuing with those objectives, you have a strategy. And is it rolling out the way you think it should? Are you making progress and continually being better than you were and getting closer to what your goals are? Then, finally, there is positive relationships with others. Very important to be socially connected on a lot of levels. So environmental mastery, self acceptance, autonomy, purpose in life, personal goals and positive relationships with others.</p>	

**Host** 08:00

How do you answer the question how is work? A true answer is complex and multi layered and has something to do with your ability to make progress on your assignments, something to do with how your efforts are viewed by others.

Then there's the sense of whether your work has a purpose, whether you're bored or over your head, in a rut or burned out. And it has a lot to do with your community of colleagues, those people alongside with whom we spend most of our working hours.

If some of this is going great, and other aspects are tanking, how is work for you these days?

**Host** 08:38

Alright, so basically, that gives us a vocabulary to begin to think about the things that make a difference to our feeling successful and productive in our work lives or our personal lives. And it also gives us a way of beginning to evaluate which choices are best for me. This way or that way?

Let's talk a little bit about how these factors of psychological well being can be understood and measured. Do I have to take a pencil and paper test like an intelligence test? Do I have to go to a psychologist and look at ink blots? How do I get a sense of how satisfied I am with my sense of my purpose in life, or how successfully I am experiencing a mastery of my environment?

**Guest** 09:32

Carol Riff has come out with a questionnaire, but it's really more for research than the purposes you're talking about. I think personally, and this is my opinion, it's not based on data, is that most people that are thoughtful, if you think about it in this kind of way and use this as a template, you have a sense how well do you think you're mastering your environment? OK. Or do you throw up your hands every time your computer doesn't do what you want it to do and cry?

**Host** 10:05

Machines hate me.

**Guest** 10:06

You know I can't stand computers. What the hell do we have to use them for anyway? You know and it's not only are you bothered by your computer, how important is it? OK. I don't know really how to fix my car. I know enough to know when it needs a tune up. I know enough to know when it might need some help, but I'm kind of lost, and it doesn't bother me because I have a mechanic. For someone who uses a computer for social kind of things, doesn't really use it for work much, or it's just not an important part of their lives, not important whether you throw up your hands or not. If you're having to use your computer for work and it's constantly getting in your way, and you're constantly angry and frustrated, I would argue then you know that important part of your life is not going well.

**Host** 11:00

You know it occurs to me as you're talking, most of us who have worked in organizations have gone through the dreaded performance appraisal. And most performance appraisals are related to how well did you execute the objectives that you were given, but many more of them are really loyalty tests. You know how well are you adapting to our organizational culture? And it...

**Guest** 11:27

Or how much do I like you?

**Host** 11:27

Or how much do I like you, right. But in very few senses does it give the individual themselves a sense of how satisfied am I with my work as a part of my overall life path? So imagine for a moment that we had every person created their own little performance appraisal for any work that they found themselves in, and the elements of this appraisal, which they do once a year at whatever time might make sense for them, before the start of the busy season and the busy season when things fall apart, whenever it makes sense, and each of these six factors was a way that an individual would say what's my level of well being in the workplace? What is my level of well being in this workplace based on this environmental factor?

So, let's go through them and see if by talking about it, this could be a way for people to understand what they could do to increase their level of well being in the work space that they're currently in, and as a way of stepping back, how in new choices they could make different choices or take different paths specifically, not just because it was more money, not just because it was closer to home, but because on one of these six values, it made a significant impact in their experience of well being?

So, the one you started with before was environmental mastery. Talk about, a little about how you, or how I, or how a listener might think about environmental mastery in the workplace and how things that an individual could do to make it stronger, or more satisfying.

**Guest** 13:19

You know good question. And in fact, the Gallup organization is looking at this kind of stuff. In applying this kind of a template to work, I think environmental mastery is do you believe you have the tools you need to do your job? And do you think you can use those tools well? And I think that's two different questions.

If you don't think you could use the tools well, then what are you, in psychology called degrees of freedom? What are your choice points? OK. So, if you don't think you can do it well, in your organization, can you delegate it to somebody so that somebody else could do it? Like I delegate fixing my car to my mechanic.

<b>Host</b>	13:58
Right.	
<b>Guest</b>	13:59
<p>I don't want to know how to do it. I'm happy he's doing it. OK. Do the same thing with your work. That's one option. Another option is what would be necessary, if you can't delegate, or you don't want to, or it doesn't make sense, what would you need to be able to feel like you are mastering it? Perhaps, if you got some training, some professional development time, where you could master these tools? Or are there tools that they haven't thought of? You know new kinds of apps for smart phones are coming out all the time. The ability to utilize technology has given us a lot more things we can do.</p> <p>So, in the past it was necessary to get on an airplane and go somewhere. And now with Skype, and Google video chat, you don't have to. So, let's say there's not enough money for you to get on an airplane and go to the places you used to go to. Now you can say is that really necessary? What alternatives are there?</p>	
<b>Host</b>	15:00
<p>So, one of the ways of looking an environmental mastery is what is it that I'm required to do, how well am I doing it, and are there ways I can increase my ability to do that using others, by increasing my own skills, or by using adaptive technologies and innovative technologies that allow me to be able to do more to accomplish those objectives?</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	15:22
<p>Yeah. You know and as you are talking, it occurs to me that it's possible...what the Gallup organization has found is only 25% of American workers are happy at work. So, if you're one of the 75% that's not happy at work, it might prove helpful to run through this kind of checklist. OK, I'm not happy at work. We tend to think about that in a global kind of way, and we have all kinds of adjectives that probably shouldn't be said even on internet radio, to describe in all of the many ways that work is less than perfect.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	15:55
Thank you.	
<b>Guest</b>	15:56
You're welcome.	
<b>Host</b>	15:58
You're from the Bronx. That was a very hard word.	

<b>Guest</b>	16:00
I thought that was very hard. Yeah. I'm proud of myself that I mastered that environment.	
<b>Host</b>	16:05
That's right.	
<b>Guest</b>	16:06
But it's possible for you to run through this and figure OK, it's not the whole job that's terrible. Does this template help me to be more sensitive to and aware of the problematic aspects of the job, and of those problematic aspects, how much choices, how much freedom do I have to change it?	
<b>Host</b>	16:26
And that's very interesting, because as I look at the map of these six factors, what it would take to change environmental mastery is very different than what it would take if my problem was more around positive relations with others, or the sense of autonomy. So, all of a sudden, instead of saying I hate it here, you have a vocabulary you can say, well, great people, I really feel like I'm doing meaningful work, but I just don't have the resources I need to be able to do what needs to be done. Now I have a space within which I can operate to try to make a difference. It shifts from unhappiness to action or opportunities for action.	
<b>Guest</b>	17:20
<p>The first one that I think of is purpose in life, which in this aspect is what goals do you have at work? So, you know I'm proud of the fact I've been a psychologist for 30 years, licensed. And there have been times during my professional life where I found OK, I'm doing my work, and I've been doing it for awhile, I've been doing this particular aspect, and it's very nice only I kind of accomplished all my goals. And now I'm getting like kind of bored. I'm the only one who knows I'm bored. And my work is still good, but it's just not satisfying anymore.</p> <p>So, because I became aware that I don't really have any goals anymore, what I was able to do is think about my role and new goals I could have. So it was possible during that time in my life where I was able to get much more involved in national and state organizations, which were very connected to the work I was doing.</p> <p>So, I was able to not only have very specific and concrete clinical goals, but I was able to add a whole new aspect of my job which was more organizational. Outside of my little work organization, what are the state and national organizations that can impact how everyone does their job, and I care about that, and I have the ability to operate in that arena, so I did, and that terrifically increased my satisfaction with my work.</p>	

<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>It reminds me of the concept of burnout. When people talk about being burned out, it's usually the people who are most passionate about the work that they do. And burnout happens when you've done so much of that work, and all of a sudden, there is no place else to go. And what you're saying is by using the measurement of purpose in life, you can redefine your purpose in life even if your passion is still to help people therapeutically. If your purpose is to bring products to the marketplace, or if your purpose is to become more knowledgeable about health practices, even if the passion is the same, the purpose can evolve.</p>	<p>18:46</p>
<p><b>Guest</b></p> <p>Absolutely. And I think hitting on something that's important and that's just now being appreciated, which is the whole idea of what we would in positive psychology generally. It's going to sound like you know what else is new, but...but it's important to make a distinction between what you believe and what you know. So, we now have data. When we have data around our beliefs in psychology, we can say we know it.</p> <p>So, what we know now is that there is a beautiful inverse relationship between well being, and what we call negative affective states. So, when I think about burnout, that's definitely something negative. And one of the things we're starting to appreciate is that those people who are high on well being at work, by definition you're low on burnout and...</p>	<p>19:32</p>
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>If you're one, you're not the other.</p>	<p>20:21</p>
<p><b>Guest</b></p> <p>Exactly. And that's...that's called an inverse relationship. So, the opposite is true, too. If you are very high on burnout, your well being is probably somewhere around zero. But again, as we're talking about it, it's not a unitary concept. What parts of your work well being are not going well for you? Is it that you have fulfilled your goals, you don't have any new ones? Well, that's easy. Make new ones. Is it that you don't feel as though you have the tools to do what you're doing? OK, what other tools are out there?</p>	<p>20:23</p>
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>Environmental mastery and purpose in life, what's the third element of well being at work that we can look at as a way of measuring what am I doing and what could I be doing?</p>	<p>20:58</p>

**Guest** 21:10

Well, autonomy lends itself to that. You know a lot of times in work, especially now, you know somebody, I don't remember who it was, said the problem now is not the 9% or so unemployment rate. The problem is the other 91% who are afraid they are next.

**Host** 21:26

Right.

**Guest** 21:28

With that type of very real anxiety, there are a lot of people who do their job in a way that they believe is the right quote unquote way, according to someone else's standards. And it may be that one of the reasons why you're less than satisfied with your own work is because you're not putting yourself in that equation. Yes, you know the organizational ideas about what is right quote unquote are very important. You have to dance with the one who brung you, and they have to be happy, especially around work. But I would argue that maybe what you think is important should be in there.

So, if stressed out managers at one or two levels or more above you are handing down edicts, I think that it's important for you to ask what do you think of the edicts. And if you have a problem with it, I would argue that it, on some level, it could only support and make your burnout worse if you just roll your eyes and say geez, where do they come up with these dumb things? This makes no sense whatsoever. But you know it's like a lot of people just roll their eyes and go OK, this is what you want me to do, and you just do it. That's not going to make you feel very happy or satisfied about what you're doing.

So, if you ask yourself within this organization, is there a way that I could get back to them and say I understand these rubrics. I understand these measurements. I understand your position. But as you've often taught me from the heart of negotiation project, that's a position. Maybe you can get back to their intent, and you can add alternative positions.

**Host** 23:17

But for example, one of the things I often see in organizations that are striving to improve customer relationships in an organization, which is terribly disoriented, is they make a rule that you have to answer every phone by the third ring. So that's their new customer service role. And every phone must be answered by the third ring. The position is you must answer the phone on the third ring. The interest is anyone who calls our organization, should receive prompt, courteous...

**Guest** 23:51

Exactly.

<b>Host</b>	23:52
...recognition.	
<b>Guest</b>	23:53
Exactly.	
<b>Host</b>	23:54
<p>And there is a certain amount of personal autonomy that says instead of ugh I can't believe I have to run around answering things on the third ring, but personal autonomy is what's the purpose here? The purpose is to make more certain than ever that our community and our clients understand how available we are to them, how do we make sure that that happens?</p> <p>And it could be yes, you really want to make sure that you answer everything by the third ring, but if you don't, to redesign your answering messages so that it's not the same bored you've reached so and so, please press three. But to rewrite the message that says we're so glad you called, we want to be there for you just as soon as possible. We have a way of checking the messages. You'll hear from somebody within a minute. Please hold on. Is that what you mean by finding...</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	24:46
Oh, yeah...	
<b>Host</b>	24:47
...an alternative to rolling your eyes through personal autonomy?	
<b>Guest</b>	24:49
<p>Exactly. And it reminds me my friend and mentor of many years, Bernie Brucker, taught me something that took me a long time to truly understand and to be able to apply. He told me at work you always have choices. Always. Sometimes that choice is to walk away, but you always have a choice at work. And that's not always evident to us when we're you know madly trying to meet deadlines, and things and rolling our eyes. And there are always choices.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	25:23
And for some of us there is no choice to walk away.	
<b>Guest</b>	25:26
That's...oh, absolutely.	

<b>Host</b>	25:27
<p>I've...I've seen this in organizations where someone says look, I cannot be cavalier about this. I need this job. I can't lose this job. But you're saying even within that framework, there are ways they can still maintain a sense of personal autonomy, even recognizing that they need to operate you know within certain restrictions.</p> <p>Jeff Kitzes, the Zen master that we interviewed a few weeks ago, talked about that as well. You know that sometimes the box you get to operate in is very small. But within that really small box, you can still ask what's my purpose here?</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	26:06
<p>That's right.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	26:07
<p>You know what can I do in this very small box that makes a difference?</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	26:11
<p>That's right. So, for example, let's say that you're in a position to evaluate someone who reports up to you. And let's say the organization for whatever reason has an evaluation template that you must use and that you think is the dumbest thing ever invented by anybody, and they make you fill it out on paper. Alright. And you always deeply hurt that a tree had to die for...you know to be able to write these stupid things down.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	26:42
<p>There may be a million people out there nodding their heads.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	26:45
<p>And you don't have any degrees of freedom around that. You have no choice. This is what they want. You've talked to them. They said chew harder. You know it's...this is what we're using, and we're not going to use anything else. It's possible when you're behind closed doors with your subordinate to say let's do the form that we have to for the organization and then let's you and I talk, and I'll tell you what I really think.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	27:09
<p>Ah, and that goes back to something that Rex and Sherry talked about Improv. That's a yes and.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	27:14
<p>Exactly.</p>	

<b>Host</b>	26:15
Yes, I can do this thing that is required, and instead of simply being resentful, I can say yes, I've done that, and I can add a personal or meaningful element to this that makes the death of this tree less of a waste.	
<b>Guest</b>	27:38
Exactly. And again, you know that's not always evident when you're in the middle of it.	
<b>Host</b>	27:42
Right.	
<b>Guest</b>	27:43
It's that old thing about that great cartoon, when you're up to your waist in alligators, it's hard to remember our objective is to drain the swamp.	
<b>Host</b>	27:52
That's right. That's right. And this is an important one, especially for me, because I often think it's all or nothing. Either I can do everything that they're asking me to do or I can't do this.	
<b>Guest</b>	28:04
Exactly.	
<b>Host</b>	28:05
But it's personal autonomy which says I can do things that are not mine but still make it my own.	
<b>Guest</b>	28:14
Yeah, exactly. And you know what you're pointing out again I think is what we're just starting to appreciate. When you talk about happiness, it's too big, and mushy and you get lost. When you talk about well being, it's easier because it's much more concrete as six factors. I think it's the same with your satisfaction at work. We tend to think about it globally. It like my job, I don't like my job. But in applying this kind of template, you might find that if you change on thing, if you change two things, it's a different world.	
<b>Host</b>	28:47
Or different enough that your overall balance of well being...	

<b>Guest</b>	28:52
Shifts.	
<b>Host</b>	28:53
In the morning and...and going to work are very different experience.	
<b>Guest</b>	28:56
Exactly. And one of the things they're finding with well being in general is that as you age, different factors have different degrees of importance. So, all six are not equally important all the time.	
<b>Host</b>	29:09
I see.	
<b>Guest</b>	29:10
It might be true, we don't know yet. We believe it's true, that that might be true for your work life, because you certainly develop in your work life. You know when you're there the first two years, I would hope that it's a very different work life for you than if you're there five to seven years, or twelve years.	
<b>Host</b>	29:33
We've talked about three factors so far; environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal autonomy. What would be a fourth factor?	
<b>Guest</b>	29:44
Self acceptance. When I think about what I was like as a young psychologist just starting out, I thought I had to be all things to all people and I had to do everything, and I had to be good at everything...	
<b>Host</b>	30:02
That's a thunderstorm behind us. So, enjoy the storm.	
<b>Guest</b>	30:05
It's not god agreeing with m.	

<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>Yeah, right.</p>	<p>30:06</p>
<p><b>Guest</b></p> <p>And I would marvel at my mentors, and teachers and people who I had deep respect for who had been doing it a lot longer than I at that time, and in looking back, what I now understand is that, especially now that I'm one of the senior people, is with continued development in your area of discipline, I think what happens is you realize you know what, in my area of discipline doing B is important. And I don't like doing B.</p> <p>And I'm really grateful there are people who specialize in B so that I don't have to. You know you begin to realize what you're good at, what you're not so good at. And when I think about even now people I respect, they are much better at saying you know what, I'm really good at this, I'm not so good at this. So, when I have to do the thing I'm not so good at, I know it takes extra effort, and I want to get help, and consultation, and...</p>	<p>30:09</p>
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>Yeah, I've noticed that psychologists are very regulated about working inside and outside their area of expertise. Business people...well, can you work in the pharmaceutical industry, or can you work in the retail industry? Sure, no problem.</p>	<p>31:11</p>
<p><b>Guest</b></p> <p>Widgets are widgets.</p>	<p>31:27</p>
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>Widgets are widgets. Can you work in marketing, or can you work in sales? Sure. No problem. And in fact, one of the things that they look for in people in the private sector is the ability to... well, the task to learn, take on new assignments and that sort of thing. And that is important, but it sounds like there is also a value in recognizing what's not in your tool kit.</p>	<p>31:28</p>
<p><b>Guest</b></p> <p>Well, I think even in those industries where flexibility and multi tasking is valued and extremely important, I think the same thing applies. Except there you need more general things. So, for example, in the private sector, I think it would be important for someone to know you know I'm really good with people. I can talk to anybody about anything. So, if I'm doing marketing, I'm doing sales, I'm doing administration, it's talking to people. That's for me. So you look at the meta skills that you have...</p>	<p>31:55</p>

<b>Host</b>	32:28
OK.	
<b>Guest</b>	32:28
...across different areas that are specific. So you might know, for example, that doing detailed step by step work is or is not your forte.	
<b>Host</b>	32:41
Right.	
<b>Guest</b>	32:42
If it is your forte, and if this particular new assignment calls for that, you just knock project management out of the park, go for it, because you know I'm really good at detailed, charts, and assigning things, and following up, and this detail and this...no details get away from me. That's the way I roll.	
<b>Host</b>	33:00
We've talked about self acceptance, and self acceptance you said is having a positive attitude towards yourself, accepting your qualities both good and bad, and feeling positive about what you've done in the past. Why is feeling positive about what you've done in the past important in self acceptance?	
<b>Guest</b>	33:18
Because if you're not positive about what you've done in the past, you're a curmudgeon. And curmudgeons are not known for being happy or satisfied. Would have, should have, could have...man, I could have been a contender. All of us have stories about the one that got away.	
<b>Host</b>	33:35
Right.	
<b>Guest</b>	33:35
All of us have stories about when we zigged when we should have zagged. All of us have stories like that. You and I have stories like that about you know god, you know it's like remember... remember when they told us to buy Bic and we laughed?	

**Host** 33:47  
Yes.

**Guest** 33:48  
And then Bic stock went through the roof. It's like you know...it's like we all have stories like that. And if you constantly look at the things you missed, that's got to make you unhappy and miserable. So, I'm not arguing that part of self acceptance is saying it's OK that I did that, and I'm going to try not to do it again.  
  
So, the...the learning that I got from that is to don't be so quick to judge, don't be so quick to throw out opportunities, and to maybe do a little bit of due diligence before I say no on a you know shooting off the hip kind of response. So, it...you know all of us have made mistakes we regret, because we've been alive. So, that's self acceptance.

**Host** 34:33  
So, let's talk about personal growth and positive relations with others. Sometimes my purpose and my professional personal career path seems like it's the same thing.

**Guest** 34:44  
Right.

**Host** 34:45  
And my purpose in life is why I'm doing something, and my personal growth in a sense is how I'm doing it. Does that make sense?

**Guest**

34:58

Personal growth is how you're doing it. I would also argue do you feel you are different than you were? And in the ways in which you're different, do you think it's better? Are you on the path to getting better and developing even further? You know in every field it's about lifelong learning. For a long time I taught medical school. And one of the things they tell the entering class is 50% of what we're going to teach you is going to turn out to be wrong. The problem is we can't tell you which half. So, what that means is you better learn how to learn.

So you know for me personal growth is how you're doing in your lifelong learning. And given where you are in your path, given how you've developed, given the demands of the current realities, how good is the fit between the current realities and your current level of development? Good fit, then you have a high well being in that area. A bad fit, then what's the problem? Do you need new goals to better fit the new realities, or do you need to reboot and get into something entirely new?

**Host**

36:11

It's very interesting that technology has exploded in the past 20 or 25 years. And I notice that the people who become overwhelmed by the technology tend to be unhappy and dissatisfied. I can't do this. It's too much.

The people who have figured out how to type with two fingers, the people who have figured out how to surf the internet, who set themselves a goal to learn the new technology as it's coming up, do seem to have a higher degree of well being and it also seems to affect environmental mastery. You know when they're not afraid of a computer, when they're not afraid of the different kind of car, they're not afraid of the home control system. So, it sounds like these aren't discreet factors, but they can all inform one another as well.

**Guest**

37:01

Absolutely. Yeah, so the question is not only how it's affecting your work life, but how are you doing in your life with all these things? In your life how are you doing in terms of personal growth?

**Host**

37:12

We went to a concert years ago at Jones Beach with the Turtles. And it was the lead singer who came up with that great line. What was...what was the story exactly?

<b>Guest</b>	37:21
He said he's listening to new music. And the reason he's listening to new music is not because he likes it, but because he says he lives...he's always lived his life by the golden rule; never let your kids become hipper than you.	
<b>Host</b>	37:35
Right. And then he had everybody in a chant. Don't let the kids get hipper than you. And that sounds to me almost like a personal growth strategy.	
<b>Guest</b>	37:40
Oh, yeah.	
<b>Host</b>	37:41
We've also seen it in some of the people that we meet along the way. Some people seem to be reliving their past. And when you meet them, all of their stories are about the things that they've done in the past. There are others at all ages who are talking about what's new, and what's next, and...and or is interested in what they don't know as what they already know.	
<b>Guest</b>	38:06
Yeah, that's Bruce Springstein's Glory Days. Boring stories of glory days.	
<b>Host</b>	38:12
Right.	
<b>Guest</b>	38:13
And yeah, if you are constantly talking only about the past. And it's hard not to, especially now that I'm almost 60 and my students are 20 somethings. So, it's like personal growth and purpose in life together.	
<b>Host</b>	38:26
I see.	
<b>Guest</b>	38:27
What's your goal and how well are you doing getting there? What's your goal and objective and what strategies are you using, and do they all still make sense? So I found that for both I had to redo a new goal in life, which meant I needed new strategies.	

<b>Host</b>	38:44
Right.	
<b>Guest</b>	38:44
And then there is this constant question of how am I doing on that pathway? How am I doing in terms of making it getting closer and closer.	
<b>Host</b>	38:53
Mikael , if I'm pronouncing that...	
<b>Guest</b>	38:56
Mikael.	
<b>Host</b>	38:59
Thank you.	
<b>Guest</b>	39:00
I just went to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> World Congress of Positive Psychology where he and Marty Seldman were keynote speakers.	
<b>Host</b>	39:07
Oh, did you tell him I love his stuff? He wrote a book easily 15 years ago called Flow, the Psychology of Optimal Experience.	
<b>Guest</b>	39:17
Right.	

<b>Host</b>	39:17
<p>And one of the things that he talks about is our experience and our satisfaction are linked. And if we have experiences or we have challenges that are greater than our skills, we feel anxious. Then we get pretty good at what we're doing, and we feel really competent, and then as our skills become higher than our experience, we get bored. And that there is a constant recalibration between challenge and skill which is the secret of keeping in the state of flow or flow engagement.</p> <p>And that sounds to me like it has to do with purpose in life and personal growth as well. What are your challenges? How are you doing it? And sometimes you get so good at meeting those challenges, that unless you find a new way, you find yourself in a rut.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	40:13
<p>Oh, absolutely. And you know some people have referred to that process of flow as laid out, as a doom loop.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	40:23
<p>A doom loop?</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	40:24
<p>Oh, yeah, doom loop. Because you start out and the challenge is very high and your skills are really low. So you are really juiced. You're ready to go you know. And it's like...and as you said, as you get better and better, your skill level goes up and up.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	40:38
<p>Right.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	40:38
<p>And the challenge becomes less because now you're really good at it. And you know as in that book Outliers, they say that takes about 10,000 hours.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	40:46
<p>Right.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	40:48
<p>So, if it's a 40 hour work week, that's about five years.</p>	

<b>Host</b>	40:51
OK.	
<b>Guest</b>	40:52
So, after about five years, your skill level is way up, and you're really good at it, so the challenge is not that good, you're right in the flow, you're doing great. But if you let that go and you don't do anything...	
<b>Host</b>	41:02
That's the doom loop.	
<b>Guest</b>	41:04
What happens is your skills become rusty, because why do I have to go to a conf...I should be giving the damned conference.	
<b>Host</b>	41:18
I see.	
<b>Guest</b>	41:12
I'm going to learn something about this? I've been doing this you know since the Reagan Administration. And it's like you know and like and this little pipsqueak can tell me how to do it better? So I should waste my time doing that? Forget about it, as we say in the Bronx. You know so what happens is you don't go to conferences anymore, you don't read anymore, because you know everything and your skills get rusty.	
<b>Host</b>	41:32
Right.	
<b>Guest</b>	41:33
And then what happens is you're at a point where the challenge is way about your skills and you're way behind.	
<b>Host</b>	41:41
Right.	

<p><b>Guest</b></p> <p>So one way that you're suggesting that I don't think has talked about is to use the six factors as a way to see where you are in the doom loop, you know especially between purpose of life and personal growth. What are your personal and professional goals? And how are you doing in terms of reaching them?</p>	<p>41:42</p>
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>The sixth factor is positive relations with others. Talk to me a little bit about how positive relations with others is a measure of well being in the workplace and is a way in which we can make conscious choices to increase well being in a work place even when purpose, or goals or autonomy choices might be constrained.</p>	<p>42:12</p>
<p><b>Guest</b></p> <p>Well, I would say especially when those are constrained, it's your friends that you can turn to talk it out with. And in order to be able to do that, you have to have a trusting relationship. And if you haven't spent time with others, if you don't have a friend, you have no one you can trust. Who are you going to go to say you know you have lunch, and it's outside. Say you know I'm really bored at work, or I'm so frustrated, I hate the way administration is deciding things (makes noise). You know and you're going off on your little rampage. It's a friend who's going to be able to help you through it. And without that warm, trusting relationship, you're toast. You've got nobody to talk to.</p>	<p>42:36</p>
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>Ah, so in a sense, it's not that you have a friend, it's the role that a friend plays as a reflection and as a sounding board for you to understand more about yourself and what you can do.</p>	<p>43:19</p>
<p><b>Guest</b></p> <p>And as they told us years ago at National Training Labs, there is no friend, there is no one relationship that's going to meet all your needs. So, sometimes since you're talking about the workplace, sometimes at work you need a friend who thinks you're the best thing since peanut butter. If you are feeling particularly unappreciated, you can go to your friend who thinks you're great and you get a little...a little boost.</p> <p>There are other friends who tell you the truth whether you want to hear it or not. Who will sit down with you and say, look, I know you think you're the smartest person in the room. You're not.</p>	<p>43:34</p>

<b>Host</b>	44:08
<p>I remember someone once had a sign in their cubicle, which I loved, which said those of you who think you are the smartest person in the room, are extremely annoying to those of us who are.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	44:18
<p>Exactly. But you need a friend to be able to tell you. You know so some friends support you. Some give you a swift kick when you need it. Some are just you know it's like when you're really working intensely on a problem, you need a break. So you need like somebody you can just laugh with, or just have a good time with, or talk about current events, or something totally away from the office, or you need somebody who you just love talking to them about office stuff, work stuff, because you always walk away with a fresh perspective.</p>	
<p>So you need those kind of friends at work so that you can keep juiced and high on all the other factors.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	44:52
<p>I see. That makes a lot of sense to me.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	44:54
<p>Because if you're all alone, you feel compare and contrast. Think about a workplace where you feel connected, and think about one where you have nobody to talk to. You don't want to go to work.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	45:04
<p>And having it at work is useful as well because there's so much of an organizational culture that's below the surface, and someone else who works in that environment understands those shared messages much more than somebody who's hearing about the stories from the outside.</p>	
<b>Guest</b>	45:21
<p>Yeah, so you know it's a little bit easier if you have more people to connect with. So, if you're going to an office where there are lots of people coming to the same office, it's a little bit more natural to develop some work social relationships. The challenge is when you're working alone. If you're telecommuting, you're a one person business, you're a solo practitioner, where are you going to get that positive relation with others?</p>	
<p>So that's when you join organizations. That's when you go online, chat groups.</p>	

<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>At every stage in our working lives, our goals, skills, opportunities and capabilities change. Each organization, each boss, each client, each assignment creates an overlay through which our individual well being interests reflect differently. Others may set the standards for our performance. What it is we're expected to do or provide, but the standards by which we measure our success and satisfaction, for these we should insist in objective criteria. And the research on well being gives us a place to stand from which we might move our world.</p> <p>But what if all the times when all of our measures of well being appear to be underwater and sinking fast? Barry spent much of his earlier career working with children dealing with brain and spinal cord injuries and other serious and life threatening illnesses. So he still has one more resource card to play when you're dealt a bad hand. It's called hope theory.</p>	<p>46:01</p>
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>As we sort of sum up some of the concepts that psychology is starting to develop that has a very practical applications to our ability to navigate our lives, our sense of well being and our work, you mentioned just before we got started something called hoe theory. And there's something really charming about that to me.</p> <p>Hope is this magical kind of thing and theory is this scientific idea. Because I trust you, there must be something really powerful in this concept hope theory. Let's use that as a way to wrap up what we're talking about.</p>	<p>46:59</p>
<p><b>Guest</b></p> <p>There is. It's another template to talk about the same thing or something similar, something like a first cousin to well being. I remember I was working with an organization once and I was helping them do a strategic plan. And they were off doing wonderful things for people. And they would think up a new vision and mission statement, and their group asked the people who received the service you know what do you think we did for you? And in a very emotional kind of way they said, you gave us hope.</p> <p>So these people came back to the strategic planning process and said that's what we're about. We give people hope. When the rest of the group heard that, their immediate response was that sounds lovely but hope is not a plan.</p> <p>The reason I say it's a first cousin to well being is hope, if you just talk about hope, it's as mushy as happy. So, Schneider talked about hope and he was able to give it forum in the same way Riff gave forum to happiness. Now, Schneider was able to continue to call it hope, but now he calls it hope theory. He says, first, if you want to understand hope, you need two things to have hope.</p>	<p>47:35</p>
<p><b>Host</b></p> <p>OK.</p>	<p>48:59</p>

<b>Guest</b>	49:00
First thing, you got to have a plan that gets you to where you want to go. No plan, no hope. You're lost. He calls that a pathway.	
<b>Host</b>	49:09
OK.	
<b>Guest</b>	49:10
Makes sense. Plan, pathway, right? You have a pathway to where you want to go. And you can see it and its all laid out. Yellow brick road. Then thats necessary, not sufficient.	
<b>Host</b>	49:22
OK.	
<b>Guest</b>	49:23
<p>Because what you need then is the, he called it agency. And what he meant by agency is you have to have faith that you can follow that plan and make it happen. That you have what it takes to make that happen. If you have a pathway, and you have the faith in your ability to follow that pathway, then you can have hope.</p> <p>And he found some unbelievable stuff around hope. The first place he looked was in schools. So, he looked at kids who were doing well and kids who were not. So, as you would guess, he found those kids who were doing well, have lots of hope. Those kids who aren't doing well, very little or no hope. OK, that's interesting but like big deal. Doesn't pass...so what test?</p> <p>So then, because he's a really, really excellent thinker, took it to the next step. Can you teach hope? So he took the kids who aren't doing well and he taught them, had a whole program. In fact, it's...it turned into what's called the Pen Resiliency Project. You have the kids and you teach them a pathway, and you give them agency.</p>	
<b>Host</b>	50:37
And by agency, that has something to do with environmental mastery...	
<b>Guest</b>	50:43
Self acceptance...	
<b>Host</b>	50:44
Self acceptance, personal growth. Very interesting.	

<b>Guest</b>	50:46
That's why I think it's a first cousin to well being...	
<b>Host</b>	50:48
Very interesting.	
<b>Guest</b>	50:48
...right? But he didn't talk about well being.	
<b>Host</b>	50:50
OK.	
<b>Guest</b>	50:50
He did this totally parallel.	
<b>Host</b>	50:51
Agency, it's almost capacity.	
<b>Guest</b>	50:53
Capacity.	
<b>Host</b>	50:53
Capacity and capability.	
<b>Guest</b>	50:55
And the recognition that you have the capacity.	
<b>Host</b>	51:00
That's called the three Cs; capacity, capability and confidence.	
<b>Guest</b>	51:04
That's good. Well, he took that, the three C's, called it agency. So, he took the kids who are not doing well in school. He taught them hope. Then he found that they did much better in school, regardless of academic ability.	

<b>Host</b>	51:21
Regardless of academic ability?	
<b>Guest</b>	51:23
Regardless of academic ability, they started to do well in school.	
<b>Host</b>	51:28
And it...what does he say accounts for this?	
<b>Guest</b>	51:30
Hope.	
<b>Host</b>	51:32
How does hope account for their ability to do better than their academic ability would suggest?	
<b>Guest</b>	51:39
I'll use an example from me. I am one of the people who tends to think big picture and globally. When you ask me to nail down details, chart, I'm kind of hopeless. My office is usually a big mess. I've got tons of piles. I have 18 projects going at once. And if you ask me, I can tell you where they are, but it's like you know you leave me to dance in my natural way and things kind of get lost.	
<b>Host</b>	52:08
OK.	
<b>Guest</b>	52:09
If I did not have the three C's, and faith in my ability to do something, you taught me about a chart, and I know that my default is not going to work. So because I have a pathway, the chart, and I have the three C's, I have agency, I have no problem doing something I really, really stink at.	
<b>Host</b>	52:36
I see.	

<b>Guest</b>	52:38
So, if I got assessed at my ability to do that, I get a C minus. Wayne Gretsky fam...best hockey player ever lived, famously said you miss 100% of the shots you don't take.	
<b>Host</b>	52:49
So, what agency does is they take more shots.	
<b>Guest</b>	52:54
I stink at this. Why should I even try?	
<b>Host</b>	52:55
Wow. Barry, you've given us some wonderful applications to well being and hope, as two of the most unexpected corporate tools in our tool kits we could have imagined.	
<b>Guest</b>	53:12
It's not what happens to you, it's what you make of it.	
<b>Host</b>	53:15
Ah, it's not what happens to you, it's what you make of it.	
<b>Guest</b>	53:18
And if people want to really be on the cutting edge of this, within the Gallup organization, there is a guy by the name of Dr. Shane Lopez. And Shane has been doing incredible stuff around this.	
<b>Host</b>	53:31
OK.	
<b>Guest</b>	53:31
And go to Dr. Google and go scholar, Google Scholar, and...	
<b>Host</b>	53:36
OK.	

<b>Guest</b>	53:36
...and go read his stuff the stuff that he's published.	
<b>Host</b>	53:38
OK . Maybe he will come on the show and talk to us as well.	
<b>Guest</b>	53:41
That would be great.	
<b>Host</b>	53:42
Dr. Barry Nierenberg, thank you very much for being on the Livelihood Show.	
<b>Guest</b>	53:45
My pleasure.	

Dr. Barry Nierenberg, Ph.D. is currently an associate professor of psychology at the Nova Southeastern University Center for Psychological Studies, where he leads the study center for well being psychology. He holds a diplomate in rehabilitation psychology, and is a member of the executive board of the American Board of Rehabilitation Psychology. For the past 30 years Dr. Nierenberg held numerous leadership positions as a psychologist and director of training, working with other healthcare professionals and hospitals across the country. He currently serves on the executive board on the Florida Department of Health's Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Advisory Council, where he previously held the position of chairman. He's a past president of the American Psychological Association's division of rehabilitation psychology. His research interests are focused on the interplay of bio social factors in chronic illness, wellness and disease.

And when he turned 40, he reclaimed a dream and took up the saxophone. He now plays a tenor rock and roll sax with fellow musicians at gigs including university events, professional conferences and local dive bars. Barry and I celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary last month and we consider each other to be our secret weapon for well being and happiness.

Thanks to all of you who are tuning into our broadcast and visiting our website [LivelihoodShow.com](http://LivelihoodShow.com). Join our forum and talk about ideas that inspire you on your personal career path. Are you on Facebook? You can spread the word about our show by liking our Facebook page. And if you'd like to subscribe to our show, have past episodes and upcoming episodes downloaded automatically to your computer, here's how. Go to [LivelihoodShow.com/iTunes](http://LivelihoodShow.com/iTunes). Wah lah, there you go.

Special thanks to AIR, the Association for Independence in Radio, for their mentoring program and for linking me up with Dan Grech of WLRN National Public Radio as a mentor.

And here is a shout out to some of you who have been listening and commenting on our shows. Leslie in Stanford, Connecticut, Casey Collins in West Palm Beach, Laurie Blumenfeld Russo in Brooklyn, and Mikael Berman in Jerusalem, Israel.

You can find links to the books we highlighted, bios of our guests, past shows and a link to our Facebook page right on our website [LivelihoodShow.com](http://LivelihoodShow.com). Explore how you can expand your field of vision for your personal career path and apply your professional skills to meet different challenges and unexpected opportunities.

We're going to end our program this week with another song from our featured band Little Atlas. This week the song is called Take the Chance from their Never World album. Oh, and would it surprise you to know that their lead singer Dr. Steve Katsikis is also the university dean of the department of psychology at the University of Kentucky?

Until next time, keep up the good work. I'm Marcy Rosenbaum.

## Announcer Outro

59:20

Thanks for listening to Livelihood- creating what's next on your personal career path. Your host, Marcy Rosenbaum, is a speaker and workshop leader who can help your group or organization imagine what's next. For more information, contact [Marcy@livelihoodshow.com](mailto:Marcy@livelihoodshow.com)

Our Producer, Anais Alexandre, is an audio producer and creator of [TheJamGarden.com](http://TheJamGarden.com), a website highlighting local indie artists and unique places in South Florida.

Steve Katsikis is Musical Director. He's based in Lexington Kentucky; and the show features music by his band: Little Atlas.

The Livelihood Show is produced in South Florida, and broadcast locally through Ft. Lauderdale Community Radio; nationally and globally through Radio Ear Network.

You can learn more about our guests and their stories on our weekly blog at [LivelihoodShow.com](http://LivelihoodShow.com); and you can order a transcript of the show right from our online store.

Livelihood listeners are innovative pathfinders developing satisfying work and professional alternatives in the New Economy. If you have a story, project or product you want us to know about, send us an email at [producer@livelihoodshow.com](mailto:producer@livelihoodshow.com)

For the Livelihood Show, I'm Kevin Lockhart . Until next time: Keep up the good work!

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Marcy Rosenbaum uses her senior consultant experience to provide inspirational and practical advice to help listeners connect the dots among their passions, skill sets and market opportunities.

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