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INTERVIEW SERIES

Marci Shimoff Interview

**Why Some People Are Always
Happy, And How You Can Be
One Of Them!**



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HardToFind Seminars.com

Expert Interviews On Mind Body & Spirit

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I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of HardToFindSeminars.com.

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

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Michael Senoff

Michael Senoff

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Marci Shimoff Interview

Why Some People Are Always Happy, And How You Can Be One Of Them!

Marci Shimoff was not born happy. In fact, the author of the book "Happy For No Reason" says she was a fussy baby and an unhappy child. Her father, however, was exactly the opposite. He was always happy. Marci asked her father why he was always happy, and he could not explain why. Fortunately, Marci Shimoff was persistent in her search for an answer. She now knows why some people are happy and many are not. In this interview, Marci Shimoff reveals the science behind why you and many other people are so unhappy and the surprisingly easy things you can do about it.

Here's what you're going to learn in this interview:

- Why happiness is available to everyone, including you
- What happy people do that you don't
- How you can become happy now and stay happy forever
- Surprising things which affect your level of happiness
- Powerful tools you can use to change your mood for good
- Miraculous stories of formerly unhappy people
- What affects your happiness more than money or love

You don't have to live a life of unhappiness. Marci Shimoff wrote her book, "Happy For No Reason" to give you the tools you need to get happy and stay that way. Don't spend another day in misery. Spend the next 27 minutes listening to this interview, and become happier today.

Hi, this is Chris Costello, and I've teamed up with Michael Senoff to bring you the worlds best health related interviews. So, if you know anyone struggling with their weight, with cancer, diabetes, ADHD, autism, heart disease, or other health issues, send them over to Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).

Marci: I did not win the happiness jackpot at birth but I came out of the womb with existential angst. I just had unhappy written all over my forehead and I was unhappy as a kid for no particular reason. But I was very lucky, and I was lucky because I had a father who was the happiest person that I've ever met in my life. He lived until he was 91 and every morning of his life he woke up with a smile on his face. And I remember one day, I was about 19, and he and I were driving down the road and I looked at him and I said, "So dad tell me, what's your best advice for life?" He looked at me and he said four words. He said, "Honey, just be happy!" So I through my arms up in the air in frustration, I said, "Ah dad, that's easy for you to say, you were just born that way, but I wasn't. What do I do?" He looked at me and he said four more words. He said, "Honey, I don't know". And it was at that point that I decided to find out the answer to that question. He couldn't answer it. He just was naturally happy. But I wanted to know what could I do to be happy; what could you do; what could anyone do to be happy. And that's really what I devoted the last 30 years of my life to finding out the answer to.

And there's great news Chris. And that is that science actually is finding out what it takes for all of us to be happy. There are answers to that question and I've put all those answers in *Happy For No Reason*. Here's what I found, Chris; happiness is the one thing that people want more than anything. It's really our purpose in life is to find happiness, and yet it's evading everybody. Unhappiness is an epidemic in our culture. One out of five women in America is on antidepressants which is daggering. So we have this huge problem out there. Hotline suicide rates have gone up 70 percent since the economic meltdown. We've got people who are going into a panic. They're feeling stressed. They're really feeling unhappy. And what I write about and talk about is how to create an inner state of piece and wellbeing that doesn't depend on your circumstances. And we know scientifically how to do that, so that to me is just great news.

Chris: Now one thing that you did is you interviewed a special group of people that you call "the happy 100," and these people, they lead their lives differently then unhappy people. What do these people do?

Marci: Well, I found that the only difference between these people who have unconditional happiness, and as you say I interviewed 100 of them so I call them my happy hundred, the only difference between them and everybody else is that they have different habits. And I distilled them down to 21 main habits that anyone could practice in life to raise what I've called your happiness set point, and it's as simple as that. The habits, you don't have to do all 21 of them, I found that people just start doing a few, and they soon find that their lives are significantly different because they're happiness level is raised. So, it's truly a matter of habits.

Let me just explain for a moment because I think it's a really important point, this idea of the happiness set point, we each have a happiness set point that no matter what happens to us, whether good or bad, we will tend to hover around unless we do something to change our habits. And here are a couple examples of that: People win the lottery. Now I know a lot of people think, "Oh if I just won the lottery that's it, that's my ticket to happiness. I would be happy". Well, what researchers found is that within a year people who have won the lottery have returned to their original happiness level. Shockingly, the same is true of people who are paraplegic. Within a year of becoming paraplegic, they've also return to their original happiness level. So, it's not what is happening to us that determines our happiness; it's the set point, and the set point is 50 percent genetic. You're just born with that part. But the other 50 percent are these habits.

I was born with that 50 percent genetic predisposition to unhappiness. When you're around people who are happy, it will increase your happiness level. So I would have been worse off if I hadn't been around him; so that definitely helped. Happiness, people think, "Oh we are just lucky, happiness is a matter of luck." It's not! It's a skill that could be developed just like learning how to play the piano is a skill. If you want to be a good piano player you study the habits of good piano players and you practice those. Same with happiness; you practice the habits of happy people.

Chris: And did all of these people have these 21 habits?

Marci: They had most of them. I can't say that all of them had all of the habits but they had most of them, and so, you don't have to have them all. What I tell people to do and I have a questionnaire in *Happy For No Reason*, we cover seven main areas, and I ask people to find out where their weaker area is and start there with your weaker area.

Let me just go over the seven main areas that are involved in raising your happiness set point. The first one has to do with taking responsibility of your happiness. Taking responsibility for your life and not being a victim in life. Unless you take responsibility for your happiness, nothing is going to change.

The next four steps have to do with mind, the heart, the body, and the soul; the four main areas of our life. So the mind has to do with not believing everything you think. We can talk further about that but I just want to give a quick overview. The heart has to do with letting love lead. Do you have a lot of love or gratitude or care; a loving kindness in your life? The third area has to do with your body, making the cells in your body happy. The fourth area has to do with your soul. Do you feel plugged into spirit? Do you feel plugged into the greater energy of the universe? Then there's your purpose in life. Are you living a life of passion, a life of purpose? Are you really living your dreams and contributing your gift to the planet? And then the last area has to do with your relationships and who you're surrounding yourself with.

We look at each of your habits in these seven areas and I ask you to start with practicing the habits in the areas that are weakest for you. In each of these seven areas there are three specific habits, and that's how we get to the 21 habits. Each area has three habits. For example: the area of the mind; we have an over arching principle in that area that's called don't believe everything you think. But the habits very specifically, are to question your thoughts, and I give you a technique that's a very effective technique, for helping you question your thoughts.

Another of the habits is to go beyond your thoughts and let go, and I give you another technique there to help you with that. It's called the Sedona Method. And then the third area has to do with inclining your mind towards joy and registering the positive things that happen in life. And again, I give you a technique to help you with that.

So that's just an example of the habits as they relate to the area of the mind. And the mind is really key part to raising your happiness levels. It's not the only part! Some books talk about it as being the only thing, it's not the only thing but it is a key thing because we have so many thoughts a day. We have about 60 thousand thoughts a day, and for the average person 80 percent of those thoughts are negative. I call it the Velcro Teflon Syndrome. We tend to velcro the negative things to us. They stick more to us where as the positives slide off of us like teflon. And I'll give you an example here, Chris. If you get ten

compliments in a day and one criticism, what do you tend to remember at the end of the day?

Chris: The criticism of course.

Marci: Of course! So what I found is that my happy people do the opposite. They tend to remember the compliments more. They register them more, and they let the criticisms slide off of them like teflon. See, I teach ways in there to do that more easily; to create new patterns of responding in your thoughts.

I know that people want the knowledge and that's why I have a lot of the research mentioned in there. But they also want the inspiration which is why I have a lot of very inspiring stories about people who have really raised their happiness level. And most important of all, they want the tools or the techniques. What do I do differently tomorrow so I can be happier?

Chris: When you went to the hundred happy people that you interviewed, many of them had these qualities of being happy for no reason and you kept getting the same answers.

Marci: Well, some of the qualities were a sense of gratitude, a feeling of vitality, they had energy, they were alive. They had a sparkle in their eyes. They generally had healthy, happy relationships. They forgave people easily. They were in the flow, they felt just like, they had a flow and they got a lot of what they considered to be great synchronicities happening in their lives. And they were very present, in the moment. They weren't living in the past or in the future.

One of the things I found amongst them is that they all tended to believe that the universe, this is one of their guiding principles, that the universe is out to support them. My mentor, Jack Canfield, he likes to use the expression, "an inverse paranoid," and I love that expression. It means that instead of thinking that the universe is out to get you, you think that the universe is out to support you.

I love the phrase by Einstein. He said the most important question you can ask yourself is, "is this a friendly universe? Is it out to support you?" And my happy hundred all answered with a resounding yes to that question. And what that means practically is that, if something's happening in your life that isn't going the way you thought it should be going, or the way you want it to be going, if quote, "something bad is happening," instead of thinking that the world is out to get you, take the

approach that the world is out to support you and ask yourself this question: If this was happening for a higher purpose, what would that purpose be? You're just looking for what's the lesson or the gift in the situation for you. If this were happening for a higher purpose, what would that purpose be?

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Chris: Sounds like it's a very high level of acceptance rather than a judgment as to your circumstances.

Marci: It's a level of acceptance that's not trying to fight what's actually happening, and you're not just letting life run over you, you're being proactive in responding, in choosing a positive response to whatever is happening to you. And I found so interestingly, I've traveled all over teaching seminars and whenever I ask an audience, "How many of you've had a crisis or a challenge in your life?" everyone of course raises their hand. And then I ask them, "For how many of you, was that the most important thing that transformed your life?" and they all raised their hand.

So we know that often it's our challenges that are our greatest blessings. Rather than waiting for a year after the challenge happens find out what the blessing is in it. Look for the blessing now. Have an understanding that happiness is not actually dependent upon our outside circumstances like money. We think that if we get enough money then we'll feel safe and happy. The research shows that once you're over the poverty line, no amount of money will make you happier. In fact, 40 percent of the Forbes wealthiest people are more depressed than the average American.

We all have heard the saying that money doesn't buy happiness but most of us live as though it does.

Chris: So it's kind of a myth that we buy into.

Marci: It is, it's what I call the myth of more which says the more I have the happier I'll be and it's just not true. And there's a sort of cousin myth to that first one and it's called the myth of I'll be happy when. I'll be happy when I get a better job, or I'll be happy when I get a better husband, or I'll be happy when I lose 20 pounds. It's not true! We've got to learn to raise our inner happiness set point first and then it turns out that those other outside things come more easily. So just knowing

that, I have found it really helps people move beyond hanging on to thinking that they need to have a certain outcome in order to be okay or happy in life.

But there's a second way that I approach dealing with fear and anxiety and that is, I use all of these tools that I talked about in *Happy For No Reason*, and they really work. One of them specifically for fear and anxiety is called the Emotional Freedom Technique. It's also referred to as E.F.T., and it's a simple technique of tapping on various acupuncture meridians while you're thinking certain thoughts. And in a very short period of time, it helps release the old energetic pattern of fear and worry, and helps establish new neural pathways. And I can't teach that during this interview but I've got that in *Happy For No Reason*. And there are a number of tools and techniques like that, that I think are incredibly helpful that come from the field of energy psychology, or some come from the field of positive psychology, and that have really been shown to have great results.

Here's the thing. Some of these things sound so simplistic but I can tell you story after story after story about people for whom they worked. And there's a story of a woman I interviewed named C.J., and C.J. had been very depressed. She had had Lupus for 15 years, which is an auto-immune disorder, has a lot of symptoms. She was in fairly considerable discomfort and had to get around often in a wheel chair. She was pretty miserable. She heard about a simple practice or exercise of wishing other people happiness, and at first she thought, "This isn't going to work for me. I can't possibly wish happiness and health to other people because I'm pretty miserable myself." But she figured she'd give it a try because she had nothing to lose. And so this is what she did. Every day, she would silently send a wish of health and happiness to everybody she'd see. She would say to herself over and over again when she came across people, from her heart she would send them the wish that went, "May you be safe, may you be happy, may you be healthy, may you live with ease. May you be safe, may you be happy, may you be healthy, may you live with ease." She would be into that silent wish from her heart to her friends, to her coworkers, to even strangers she'd pass along the street. She did this every day for a year.

Now I can't tell you what happened to the people that she sent the wish to but here's what happened to her. Her happiness level sky rocketed. She's out of the wheelchair, she's exercising three times a week, and she's completely symptom free. Her doctors tell her that it's a medical miracle but the only thing that she did differently during that

year was to do this simple practice of wishing other people health and happiness.

It was something she learned. It's actually based on something called a meta-meditation practice, which is a Buddhist practice. But her story actually, and that practice that she did is in *Happy For No Reason*, and it's one of these 21 habits. Because what happens is, what she was doing is she was putting herself in the energetic vibration of the happiness and health that she wished for herself by wishing it to other people.

Chris: You also have an amazing story about kindness in *Happy For No Reason*. You mentioned a gal named Happy Oasis.

Marci: She has a great story. She was 19 years old, and this was in the 80s, she was traveling the world doing some anthropological studies and she found herself in Bangladesh during the time of the great famine of Bangladesh and there were also horrible monsoons. And she tells the story of how she was on a bus driving out to the countryside in the middle of one of these monsoons. The road was starting to get washed off and the bus had to drive up to some higher dry ground where it parked. And she saw all around her hundreds of people lying on the ground. And at first she thought they were just sleeping but she realized that actually it was people who were dying. And she was the only Westerner there.

Everybody who was on the bus got off the bus to go help people and she was so horrified by this scene that she just didn't budge. First she thought well she had money on her and she would go buy some food but then she realized there was no food to be found. Then she thought well the Red Cross is going to show up soon. And after about 45 minutes she realized there was no Red Cross showing up. And at about that point a very, very thin man knocked on her window and had a big smile on his face and she got really angry. She said, "How could you possibly smile and a time like this?" He looked at her and he did perfect British accent, he said, "Madame, sometimes a smile is all that I have to give". And he motioned for her to get off the bus and to join with them. And the entire rest of the day he and she went around to people there as they were dying and would put their hand on their shoulder, or sing them a song, or just smile at them, and she learned that in any circumstance you have something to give, you at least have a smile to give, and it could really make a difference in someone's life.

The beauty of that story is just how the humanity of knowing that where ever we are we can serve, we can give. And giving service is one of the trial and habit of being happy. Albert Twight's another great quote. He says, "I don't know who amongst you will be happy but I do know that the only ones who will be happy are those who have fought and found how to serve," and that's what Happy Oasis has spent the rest of her life doing is serving in any way she can, whether it be by just a smile or in various other ways.

And you know, the research shows that just smiling will change your mood. It helps create more endorphins and more of the biochemistry in happiness. So our posture, you know there's so many ways in which we can assess our happiness on a moment to moment basis through our kindness to others but also through what we're doing to our own bodies. I have a whole chapter in *Happy for No Reason* on making the cells of your body happy because that is really key. If you don't have enough endorphins, serotonin, oxytocin, these neurotransmitters of happiness, you're going to be affected. And so I suggest that people take an assessment to see whether they have these chemicals in enough proportion, and if not then I advise you to really supplement things in as much a natural way as you can.

I am very into amino acids, and vitamins, and proper foods, proper amount of sleep, the right exercise. So every angle that you can go at for happiness is how you want to do it. We live in a society where people brag about not getting enough sleep. Somebody will come into the office and say "hey, I only got five hours last night," and the next person tries to up them and say, "well I only got four" as though it's a good thing. Well, it's not.

Shocking studies showed that the quality and amount of sleep that you got last night has a greater impact on your happiness level than your income level or your marital status. Most people need seven to eight hours of sleep. But not only that, it's the quality of sleep that you get. And there are two things I'm going to say about the quality that you get. Number one, make sure that you are doing something, or reading something, or watching something positive before you go to sleep rather than the news. You watch the news before you go to sleep, it's mostly negative and it's going to color the quality of your dreaming and sleeping. So, if you have to watch the news watch the six o' clock news or the noon news, but not the ten or eleven o' clock news.

Secondly, our bodies have circuitry in cycles and you want to sleep earlier in the night. Every hour of sleep you get before midnight is

worth twice as much as what you get after midnight. So the wisdom is to go to bed before ten at night, and you'll get a very deep quality of sleep.

In Western and Eastern ayurvedic medicine, they say that at ten o'clock at night you move into a new cycle called your pitta-cycle which is governed by a lot of activity. And a lot of people probably listening have had the experience of getting tired around nine or nine thirty, but if you power through and you pass that ten o'clock mark you get your second wind.

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We don't want to get your second win. You want to go to sleep before ten or right around ten so that you get a deeper quality of sleep and you wake up the next morning refreshed. As a matter of fact, if people come to me feeling a little depressed, the first thing I tell them to do is go to sleep three nights in a row at nine thirty, and tell me on the fourth morning that you don't feel better. It doesn't matter as much, what time you get up. Ideally you want to get up before six o'clock, because once you hit the six o'clock hour in ayurvedic medicine you hit the kapha-cycle which is a little bit more dullness and the less energy to it. So if you get up right before then, you'll have more energy vitality that will last with you through the day.

I heard recently a wonderful story of people when they are depressed in ambiguous cultures. If somebody becomes a little unhappy, the people in the community will send them to the local medicine man or medicine woman, also referred to as the Shaman. And the Shaman will ask them four questions to determine what's causing their unhappiness. And I think these four questions are very telling.

The first question is, when did you stop singing? The second question is, when did you stop moving your body or dancing? The third question, when did you stop telling stories or sharing with other people? And the fourth question is, when did you stop taking time for silence? And the reason the Shaman ask those four questions is that he or she knew that if somebody was unhappy it was because they were missing one or more of those four things in their lives.

So, I suggest that you put each of these four into your everyday life. And that is singing, and I really mean singing in the shower, singing in the car, sometime in your day when you're signing. There are great physiological advantages to singing including the way you breathe;

getting more breath into your system. The second one, moving; there's so much research out there about the value of exercise and moving your body, whether it's turning on the music and dancing, or taking a walk in nature, or playing basketball, it doesn't matter, but getting the energy in your body moving. The third thing is telling your story or sharing with others, connecting with others. We know that connecting with others, bonding helps create more oxytocin, which is one of the happiness biochemicals. And then the fourth thing is taking time every day for silence. Whether it be meditation, or prayer, or walks in nature, we need silence in our lives.

Our attention hasn't been there. I think our attention has been on chasing after what we thought was going to make us happy. And what's happening is a lot of people are coming up empty handed with that chase. We all know people who have everything in life that they ever wanted and still there's some emptiness. What's so great about what's happening in the world right now is I think we have an alarm. It's an alarm; it's a wakeup call for us to look more deeply at what will bring us a lasting state of meaning, of fulfillment, of happiness.

What you appreciate, appreciates. And what I mean by that is what you put your attention on is what you'll get more of in life. It's basically the law of attraction. Many people are familiar with the film and the book, *The Secret*; that I was a part of that. And based on this idea of the law of attraction and what you put your attention on is what we will attract more of. So if you want more of anything, feel gratitude for the amount of it that you have now. Research shows how gratitude affects our happiness. That if you just keep a little gratitude journal and write down four or five things a day that you're grateful for, within a month your happiness level is raised. So that's another guiding principle of happy people.

And a third guiding principle is that what expands you makes you happier. There are two main energies in life. They are the energy of expansion and the energy of contraction. And we all know what expansion and contraction feel like. If you curl up into a little ball and you try to say I feel happy, it's hard to feel happy because you're contracted, you're curled up into a little ball. If you expand your arms way out to the sides and you take in a deep breath and you try to say I feel depressed, you won't feel depressed because your energy's expanded.

And what this shows us, what this means is that when we expand, whenever we move toward this energy of expansion, we will be moving

towards the energy of greater happiness. I suggest that people make two lists. One list has all the things on it that make you feel contracted in your life, and include people's names that make you just feel shut down, or contracted, or unhappy. And then make a list of the people and the things in life that make you feel more expanded and just move five percent this week. Do more of the things from the expansion list. Take baby steps and you will find yourself feeling happier in your life.

So Dr. Maturo Natuzzi, a scientist from Japan who took water and he would divide water from the same source into two separate bottles and he would have a group of people sending one bottle of water positive messages. They would send to the water messages like we love you, you're fabulous, you're wonderful. He would send the other bottle of water negative messages; we hate you, you're bad, we think you're terrible. And then he would take that water, freeze it, and analyze the water crystals from each of the batches under a microscope. And the water that was sent the negative messages looked ugly, it looked deformed, it just didn't look good. The water that was sent the positive messages formed these absolutely beautiful symmetrical crystals. And it's just shocking to see it.

You know what. I think there is a happiness revolution going on in the world and this, all that's happening, what I'm finding is *I'm Happy for No Reason* is now out in 33 languages, so I'm getting letters from people all over the world who are saying, "You know, I'm doing the things that were talking about here, and my life is turning around." And when people ask me if this is selfish, I tell them it's the least selfish thing that you could possibly do because when you change your own happiness level, you're changing the happiness level, you're affecting the people all around you. So I just invite everyone to join the happiness revolution so they could go to my website, which is HappyForNoReason.com, and there are a number of free tools on there that you could use and there's a questionnaire to see where you are on the happy for no reason scale. So please join the happiness revolution.

That's the end of our interview, and I hope you've enjoyed it. For more great, health related interviews, go to Michael Senoff's [HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com).