



Your Guide To Achieving Happiness | Arthur Brooks

[00:00:00] Guest Intro – Arthur Brooks

Darin: Hey everybody, welcome to show, this is Darin Olien. This is the Darin Olien show. I appreciate you, I celebrate you and I want nothing but the best for you and your heart and your soul. And I want you to want it so bad for yourself, for your whole life changes. If it needs to change and redirects itself towards the amazing infinite, powerful potentiality that exists in every moment, life is happening right now. Not from the past, not from the future. It's now, man, it's now and I too fall victim of, oh, this happened and oh, what's the future going to be? and, oh, all the time. I am outside under a 300 year old oak tree staring at the mountains with wildlife running around breath. In my lungs words, coming out of my mouth, staring at my two dogs next to me, life is amazing, but we don't focus on the amazing we are focused on our monkey minds, making up all the stories about who we are, what we are, where we are going, what's going to happen, what's not going to happen. How the hell are we supposed to be happy in all of that crap, this wasn't necessarily planned for this intro, but it was inspired because of this guy, but he is the happy columnist of the Atlantic. He's a professor at Harvard Kennedy school and Harvard business school. And he teaches courses on leadership and happiness. Oh thank God, we are actually starting to teach what real leadership is leading your life. And what happiness is because in some weird twisted reality that we created and kept going, we said, Hey, do all this. Make a bunch of money, follow what my parents say, you are supposed to do this and this. And you are going to be happy and be a doctor and be a lawyer and be a whatever. And we come to find out, we are running down the path of someone else's we are not happy. Arthur and I had an amazing conversation.

Darin: I just had a blast talking to this guy, he is so knowledgeable. Some of the books he wrote, some of them gross, national happiness; we didn't even talk about that. Gross national happiness was something I explored in Bhutan in 2007, he wrote another book called The Road to Freedom. The Conservative Heart, Love your Enemies. Yes, and the newest one, which we talked a lot about, From Strength to Strength, finding success, happiness and deep purpose in the second half of our life. Now you don't have to be in the second half of your life, but if you are, you have slung your life around. you have got aches and pains, you are brushing off some. Life is gnarly right now in every direction. We have no solidification that we thought was there and probably was never really there. Economically, politically all of this stuff. It's not solid, man. You know, what's solid learning about who we are, what we are and our specific, powerful gifts that we have and no one else has. We cannot compare ourselves. So please enjoy my new brother from another mother, Arthur Brooks.

[00:04:02] Podcast Intro

Darin: You are listening to The Darin Olien Show. I am Darin, and it is my life's mission to find and share healthy and sustainable ways of living. In this podcast, I talk to inspiring people and professionals from around the world to uncover ways that we, as humans can improve our lifestyles, strengthen our mindsets and take better care of this beautiful planet



we call home. If you are looking for motivation to take the next steps towards a happier, healthier life then you are in the right place. And I am stoked that you are here. So, let's do this. This is my show, The Darin Olien Show.

[00:04:47] Fear as an indicator and an ally

Darin: How did you get involved as a military analyst?

Arthur: Well, I wanted to learn a lot of math because I needed to for my PhD. So I took a job doing applied mathematics in a sort of a secret facility doing theater level, combat modeling as an operations research guy for the air force. That's what I was doing and I kind of learned by doing as O J T. I learned a lot during that period, it was hard at first it was hard and scary, but where there is a will, there is a way; I needed to learn.

Darin: There's a certain level I've been aware of this in certain things and projects too, that I am like, what is that? I am like, oh, it's a level of fear. I certainly, but I still end up doing things, but there's a level of fear that is, I don't know if it's fear or just like you just don't know. There's a lot of jewels within that.

Arthur: Fear is a great indicator, there's something of foot that that's important. There's not to be avoided, but something to lean into ordinarily not to be foolish about these things, not to take foolish risks, but fear is a great indicator that there's something going on under the surface.

Darin: Obviously, unstable surfaces and foundations certainly have been apropos of the last few years and paralysis of fear and where our judgements can get a skew. From your perspective like what's a good way to have this good ally as fear and like being able to see it, but also not being a frozen to it so that you don't actually move forward.

Arthur: I talk about that a lot with my students at HBS actually, because we all have fears. The difference between people who are very successful and people who aren't is not that the successful people are fearless. What they are is they are very good at managing their fear. And that means with any feelings, fear is one of the basic negative emotions that's produced in the limbic system of the brain, the other three being discussed, anger and sadness or the other three negative emotions. And you can be managed by them where you can manage them. And the way to manage your emotions is to move the experience of those emotions from the limbic system, into the prefrontal cortex of the brain. And the way that you do that is a lot of techniques for doing and journaling does that meditation does that therapy does that or just basically saying, huh, I am feeling fear right now. I wonder why I am feeling fear. And so doing, you are making it metacognitive and you are committing yourself to the management of that fear and learning how to do that automatically doesn't mean you are not going to feel feared. It means you are not going to be paralyzed by that fear and you are going to look for the opportunity within that fear. That's what I train my students to become very good at, that's a process called metacognition. If you are married and you have got a good partnership, then you can actually master all kinds of things together. And that's very potent, that's called joint metacognition where you are working on something together where you are sort of wire your batteries together to understand something that would just be sort of subliminal. Subliminal and liminal sort of in limbic and you make it and you bring it up to the surface and consider it together. And so what you are effectively doing is you are metacognitive individually, but in discussing it together, you come up with all kinds of ways to



manage these things consciously that you wouldn't otherwise. You can wipe out fear. You can utterly dominate fear that way especially if you have a partner.

Darin: I have a men's group very five years, we got a professional. Who's also our friend now, but certainly no bullshit like everyone knows everyone's patterns. We meet on a regular basis or things like that. I would imagine fit somewhat into that category.

Arthur: They can, although the key thing is it's important that both partners be feeling the same thing. So it's not that one is counseling. The other that's a good way I mean, getting counseling, getting therapy even from a friend is a way to become more metacognitive. But joint metacognition is particularly potent when you are both feeling the same thing and trying to dominate it together and sharing ideas on how you might do so getting feedback from each other and how to do that. So that's why marriages are an ideal way to do it, but a super close friend, you are worried about the same thing. You know, I am worried about whatever. The problem is with a lot of friends, they are worried about things that are really not worth you being afraid of like what if Trump wins the next election? That's just not, that's beneath the metacognition challenge.

Darin: So that metacognition or the issue, give me some good examples that it's got to be pretty acute, got to be hitting your kind of square in your life in your day to day, life kind of thing. And you are chewing on could be inflation, could be rent. It could be potentially something like that.

Arthur: It could be, although it's better that it be very, quite personal and touching you acutely. As you mentioned, such as, it's not a question of inflation or rent is a question of economic insecurity, I don't feel secure. Okay, let's get to the root of that. Why are we feeling economically insecure? Well, because we don't have enough money. No, because we are worried about what will happen if we run out of money, what will happen? Let's walk all the way through that. Let's make contingency plans, let's think about ways that we can mitigate that fear with different kinds of actions. And in, so doing this, you are making it, you are bringing into the prefrontal cortex of your brain. See, the problem is this one is a fantasm when it's like, it's really, really bad. It's so bad I am not going to think about it. Then it's going to just freak you out forever basically. And when you bring it out, like get the ghost out of your head, put the ghost between you and your partner. And if you don't have a partner just in front of you and then analyze it, it's like, let's talk about you ghost. Let's talk about why you just so scary? that doesn't mean you shouldn't be scared. Fear is a normal thing and you are running out of money and becoming homeless, no joke, man. But at the same time, we catastrophize all day long every day and metacognition will let you get around the catastrophizing. That can be an enormous barrier to your progress, to your ability to act.

Darin: And that's kind of like, there's a level of addiction to the stories and the fantasm as you call it like, and what I love about what you are saying is that even if from a strong partnership, obviously epic, but also just from a journaling perspective, bringing that out of the closet and into a place where you now can chew on it and look at it and demystify some of this, the fear itself is the fear, right?

Arthur: Yeah, no, it's true and one of the things that people will notice who are highly limbic they are not metacognitive at all. they will notice that something's really, really, really bugging them. And they can't quite say what it is because they haven't done the work. And so when something's bugging you, that's when you actually have to sit down, get out your pen and



paper. I journal a lot and then I burn it because all that matters is that you get it on the paper because in getting into the paper, you are moving it to your prefrontal cortex and that's where you want it. And then when you do that, you say, yeah, that thing happened to me and that thing happened to me. It's usually pretty funny as opposed to really bothering me, but ordinarily what it is fantasy, you know, there's a lot of ego threats. For example, you thought you were Mr. Big. And it turns out that somebody treated you with disrespect or you got rejected for something or something fell through. And when you think everything's falling into line and then things aren't that threat to you is in co eight. It feels like a threat to your security, to your success, to your ability, to support yourself and other people. And then when you write it down, you recognize ordinarily that this is just the course of ordinary life. It looks like somebody else's life. When you write it down, because you assess everybody else's life with your prefrontal cortex. I don't assess your life with my limbic system. I assess your life like, and if you told me about something that's going around in your life, I would go, oh, oh yeah that happens to people all the time. And here's how somebody else dealt with it. Here's how somebody else did and actually, it's kind of funny, right? That's using your executive function, that's using your CEO brain. So you need to do that. You need to simulate that by actually writing this down and it's very helpful.

Darin: And that in and of itself is a practice, just the act of doing it. And then I can imagine that the radical honesty of yourself just becomes more and more as a tool that nothing is happening to you. That it is a tool of opportunity that maybe you don't quite see, but through the practice of it builds this Alliance, that fear is not here to crush your kingdom, but in order to maybe build a better one with different bricks that you are trying to curate along the way, but this practice is an essential.

Arthur: If you wanna manage yourself, if you wanna build a good life, it's super essential to do this now. And that's just one of the four negative emotions. The others are discussed, fear and sadness, which are the same kind of signals within lies opportunities. And then if you are a ninja, if you are like the master of this stuff, then you start managing your positive emotions as well. Because your basic positive emotions are love and joy and interest. Interest is a positive emotion. So people are listening to us and they are like, gosh, that's such an interesting conversation. That's because your placed to seeing brain is rewarding you for some information that actually might make you more likely to get food or find a mate, that's basically what's going on. That's the reason that we are attracted to things that are interesting, that we get dopamine, you know, dopamine makes you acutely interested in stuff and maintains your interest in things that's, you know, people will use Ritalin or Vivace or Medinol to keep their dopamine levels very high in the pre-fold DEC cortex to keep you super interested. Because interest is so pleasurable and interest is pleasurable because the ancient brain says go make sure that you are interested in things, the things that will actually make you better, more likely to survive, more likely to eat more likely to have 75 offspring. Now, we don't use it for that now, because we don't want 75 kids and we have all to eat that we need. Most of us do, thank God. So we can use them for other things like lifting other people up, like helping to make the world a better place. But if you are going to harness that appropriately, you need to make your basic positive emotions of love, joy and interest as metacognitive as you do your negative emotions. And then, then you are really becoming the 33rd secret level of master them of this stuff or whatever. I just made that up, I don't want anybody to write that down and Google it because that means nothing.



Darin: Yeah, it's not a Masonic symbol.

Arthur: Yeah, no I am not a Mason. I am a Catholic anyway, but yeah.

Darin: Yeah, so don't get caught on the 33rd that's funny, but I think I've never heard anyone say it or at least it didn't click and equally as important to acknowledge those good emotions. Equally important to acknowledge, Hey man, I am interested in this thing or I am interested in this book or I am interested in this art or I am interested in my life or I am interested even in pursuing this goal or Hey man, I am having joy right now in two and a half years. I haven't had enough of it. So it's good to acknowledge. That's a really, I think subtle but powerful nuance to understanding the, the spectrum.

[00:15:53] Why you don't want to be managed by your emotions

Arthur: Yeah, yeah you don't wanna be managed by your positive emotions. You really don't want them to be managed by your negative emotions because then you will be a reactive person, a highly reactive person. That's why we say to our kids, if you had kids in there, they are little, you are always like use your words. And the reason is what you are telling them to do is to articulate their feelings, to make themselves metacognitive. Despite the fact that their prefrontal cortex is underdeveloped, your prefrontal cortex is not really fully developed until you are in your early to mid-twenties, but little kids can get better at it. Now that's really essential for negative emotions because you don't want to be a negative reactive person. But if you actually want to have the most effective and enjoyable life, you need to manage your positive emotions as well. If you are being managed by your positive emotions, you are going to be bobbing along like a cork in the ocean all the time, which is like, I felt good don't know why. And then you will be all about pleasure and not about enjoyment. Enjoyment is a conscious pleasure because pleasure happens to you. Enjoyment is something that you can manage. So you know, eating a great dinner, it tastes good, which is pleasurable and it fills up your belly, which is pleasurable. But if you are enjoying the dinner with your friends and so it's a memory that you can actually take some joy in again and again and again and again that's because you made it metacognitive and you are managing it in this particular way. So this is a way that if we could basically say for example, I get these positive feelings and I want to understand why I am getting these positive feelings. You can get them more often, but you also can channel them to really productive ends. If you are getting positive emotions or pleasure which is related to positive emotions from pornography or something is very important to be conscious of that. So that you are going to say what's going on here and try to re-channel that into something that's societally productive and not bad for you. A lot of addictions come because we are being managed by our positive emotions and nobody ever says, you know that when I really, really love my addiction, nobody's ever said that before, but that's unmanaged positive emotions generally that are leading us to these addiction problems.

Darin: Is that why from an AA perspective when you share and other people understand and can relate, is that why that's so effective? Because I know my father suffered from addiction and he lost his life as a result of it. And what happens is, and he also worked the program for 30 years, but then at a certain point it becomes this silo and you realize he's squeezing himself into a silo. And then right alongside that, the cousin of that was I am suffering and no one knows what that's like. And therefore I am creating this deepening story that's making it



feel worse and worse and worse and divorcing all of those systems that was once working for 30 years.

Arthur: You know, that's a lot packed into what you are talking about, but the whole point is that that what AA or what any 12-step program is trying to do is to make you among other things much, much more metacognitive of the limbic phenomenon of your addiction. Where your dopamine is. Neurochemically, you are completely out of control, but at the same time, you are not able to manage it, it's managing you. This is one of the reasons that in the beginning of the 12 step program, you say my life has become unmanageable. That's the same thing as saying that my limbic system is in charge. My limbic system is driving my bus and I am tired of having that stupid limbic system in the, and because that's just really not. This is all instinct at this point and I can't live this way anymore. It's really a very beautiful and very spiritual metacognition. Now one of the problems is that some people will substitute that for actually dealing with a lot of the underlying problems and we see this a great deal. There's like phenomenon in the addiction literature called the dry drunk. I don't know if you have ever heard of the dry drunk.

Darin: That's what my dad was for the 30 years.

Arthur: Yeah. So your dad was basically a pissed off sober guy, right? And then that's classic. I mean, the reason that he was drinking in the first place is he was dealing with anger and trauma and all these negative basic emotions, which he was treating self-medicating with the alcohol. And once he got the alcohol under control with the 12 step program, he still had the underlying problems. That's the dry drunk phenomenon, the dry drunk syndrome. And so, you have to deal with everything you don't deal just with the, you know, the illness that you provoked on the basis of your self-medication deal with the illness that underlies that self-medication in the first place. Man, human life is a tricky business.

Darin: As you are talking. It's like, I love this conversation by the way. I love these kind of nuances. I love the phenomenon of life in the sense that for me, I feel like I am just, seeking's not the right word, but kind of uncovering the truth or uncovering who I really am. Aside from all of these weather patterns of emotions and experiences and all of that stuff. Even though that can point to many things, it can lead us along the way, but certainly that nuance of the enlightenment of the discovery, I am just so curious. The thing that pops in my mind, as I am saying that is like, you have such an interesting fricking background. You have the classic musician, the economics BA then the policy PhD, the military stuff, and then you are writing a columnist to how to build a life. And then we are just jumped into this limbic conversation like, dude, I feel like I could talk to you for about a week. Like how did you end up at this place? And then I want to dive into this book, Strength to Strength, but like how to build a life. How did you end up here? How was that thing for you?

Arthur: Well, yeah, everybody listening to us has got this weird path. This is one of the great thing of being at human is that, you know, you take these weird long and winding paths and some of them are just cosmetically stranger like mine, but some of them under you scratch the surface in anybody's life. you are like what, you did what, you made what decision? Weird, man, it's a real adventure. I have to say, well, for me, I started off in the classical music business because that's what I did as a kid. My parents were very ambitious for me as a French horn player, believe it or not, everybody's got issues, man. And so, and I was good as a French horn player and I went to Cal Arts, which is, you know, up the road from where



you live. I finished a solid nine months before they, they encouraged me to earn my success outside the institution. And so I went pro and when I was 19, all the way through my twenties, my parents called it my gap decade. It was sort of funny. My dad was a college professor. My grandfather was a college professor. So skipping higher ed was not their first choice. But when I was on the road as a classical musician, I started to have these questions just about why I thought the things I did, why the world worked the way it did, how humans actually worked. And so I went back and got my bachelor's degree by correspondence in economics, which is a very powerful toolkit for behavior. People think of it as like inflation rates and the interest rate and the fed. No, no, no. The interesting parts of economics are why humans do the way they do and giving you the statistical tools to look at patterns in human behavior.

Arthur: So, I got good quantitatively. And then I thought if I could develop ways to help people through public policy, even better go get my PhD on that. But fundamentally I am just a behavioral, social scientist and I taught that stuff for 10 years. And then I went and I ran a think tank for 10 years. And at the end of that, I thought, well, what am I going to do as in my mid-fifties for the rest of my life. And I decided I was going to spend the rest of my life, using my ideas to lift people up and bring them together in bonds of happiness and love. So I left and now I teach at Harvard, I teach Science of Happiness classes at Harvard and write about it for popular audience. And you know, I am telling you, man, whew, life's good.

Darin: Wow. Yeah, the Science of Happiness at Harvard like just that alone. Like what?

Arthur: Yeah, beats working.

Darin: Yeah, you know, the thing that bounces up in my head is this idea and it's still around, I think, what are you going to do with your life? I have my own twists and turns. There's no fricking way I could have said, oh yeah, that's what I wanna do because there's no way to unpack everything that the road showed along the way. And until you are actually there, but in that process, we have to make choices and those things open up other doors that you have to be there to open the door in order for new information to come in. So like, what's your thought on goals, intentions and things like that when you are kind of looking at someone who wants to build their life.

[00:24:37] How to make conscious choices towards happiness?

Arthur: Yeah. So tell me as I answer that question, what are the two most different things that you major things that you have done in your life, either for a living or just as your sort of vocationally and then tell me what those two things actually have in common?

Darin: Well, I ended up being a superfood hunter. So I ran around the planet in about 35 countries, finding herbs and nuts and fruits and developed products and.

Arthur: Yeah, as an entrepreneur, a really successful entrepreneur doing superfood. What was the most different thing that you did than that ?

Darin: You like later in life? I did a TV show. I wrote a book

Arthur: And you have a big popular podcast. So, you know, you became a communicator about life's big ideas. So what is superfoods? and life's big ideas. What's the through line in your life between those two things? What do they have in common? What's your mission? That's the same between those two things.



Darin: Became quite clear to me because I realized even in superfood hunting, it wasn't even about finding the best Elixir in the world. It was about the environment, the indigenous people getting exposed to many things in the world that I was like, why don't these people have clean water? So the through line was the mission was about connecting dots on solving some issues. So it became about the indigenous people. It became about the environment. It became about health. It became about water, power, food shelter. It became about sovereignty. It became all of these things, which is also why I love even this type of conversation because the sovereignty within one's self and the liberation of freedom. So I guess now even talking, I mean, it's really about less suffering.

Arthur: Yeah, I look at these things and that you are telling me, and it sounds to me like serving people who need you serving others, using ideas, using information to serve other people, you know, and you are doing that with respect to the health that they can have, but also the sustainability of their culture and their environment. And now you are doing it in various forms of media to surface some of the biggest ideas for the people who are listening to you, your superfood hunting thing, and your podcasting career are really not that different with respect to your personal values based mission. And that's the answer to the question for young people. They shouldn't have to figure out, am I going to be a podcast or a superfood hunter? The answer is maybe yes, maybe no, maybe neither. You got to figure out what your moral mission in life is. That's the most important thing because that's going to manifest itself in a whole bunch of different ways if you let it. But if you don't actually know what you care about, if you don't actually discern, what makes you tick in terms of your values, then you are going to kind of bop around and feel kind of aimless and not kind of know why you are doing what you are doing. And sometimes you are going to be like, I guess I am just doing it for the money. I am not quite sure. And that's what a lot of young people today, that's the problem that they have is they they've been encouraged to be ambitious on the worldly aspects of what they do, but to not be morally ambitious, not to actually be clear on the values that they have behind it. That's the thing for people to be figuring out.

Darin: Morally ambitious, I love that.

Arthur: The one mistake that a lot of people, gen Z and millennial people who are listening to this are going to mistake they might make is thinking, I am saying that you got to be really clear in your politics. That's not what I mean, morally ambitious is what do you think that is important for you to earn your success and serve others? What does it mean? Don't tell me about I am going to work for the Republican national committee or the Democrats, or I am going to try to defeat Donald Trump or blah, blah. No, no, no, no, no, no, no fine do those things, but it's much deeper than politics. And a lot of people are substituting politics for sort of the deep morality that actually should undergird our lives. Frankly, a lot of people are substituting politics for their spiritual lives and politics makes a very very bad religion.

Darin: Well, it is religiousness.

Arthur: Yeah, like cancel culture is like a moral crusade or something based on the religion of politics. It's, you know, I sit on campus, I see it all the time. Right, It's such a waste.

Darin: And the thing that's, I mean, without completely pulling that box apart, it's that whole thing of, if you change the way you be, do, speak, then I am going to be okay. And I have a Masters in Psychology. I punched around with psychology. I I've tried to dig into myself for



the last 35 years. And it's like, I don't know about you, but you are trying to change the world. So, you feel better, I don't know if that's the path, man. I think that's kind of the opposite.

Arthur: Yeah, yeah, I know. I know it's the whole idea of like, to make sure that your tires never pop, you get cement tires, but then you got to put down a rubber road. It's better to take the risk of your tires. It seems like it's a little bit more cost effective and efficient to do it that way. And for sure, it's, you know, the case that everybody wants to change the whole world for both them themselves. But when we are talking about metacognition and self-management, we are talking about fixing ourselves so that we can be resilient to all the stuff that life throws at us to see many of the suffering. A lot of the suffering that we get in life is actually a source of sacredness, which you need to actually find your life's meaning. And those lessons are non-trivial. You know, and unfortunately those are not the lessons that the culture naturally teaches us. It says, think the right things fall in line, make a bunch of money, hate the people who disagree with you. I mean, all that dumb stuff that I guess they probably always learned that, but higher consciousness can transcend it.

[00:30:17] Beekeepers Naturals Ad

Darin: You know, I always say this - When you really want to feel your best, you have to follow nature. One perfect example of this is bees. That's right, bees produce honey, which is both delicious and great for your health. Of course, the right kind of honey. But their hives also hold a whole range of other materials, products and compounds that have been proven to support and boost the everyday health of humans. Beekeepers Naturals are an incredible company that creates natural remedies for common health challenges using the power of bees. My favorite product is the daily B.Immune Throat Spray. I love this thing. The main ingredient in this spray is an incredible compound called propolis, which is made by bees and backed by science, containing essential vitamins that, of course, the body needs to thrive, as well as over 300 beneficial compounds. I use this throughout my day, especially when traveling and especially when I am stressed. It keeps my throat from drying out and it's especially good to support the immune system. And the cool thing is Beekeepers Naturals are dedicated to sustainable harvesting, testing all of their batches for pesticides and herbicides and keeping their ingredients clean. The health of the bees is also equally important. If you are wanting to shift your medicine cabinet to support your health with natural ingredients, you can try Beekeepers Naturals today with 25% off your order by going to beekeepersnaturals.com/DARIN or enter the code DARIN at the checkout, their products can also be found at Target, Whole Foods, Sprouts and GNC. Start feeling the power of bees every day and feel better every day.

[00:32:32] Interview continued

Darin: What are your thoughts around the shadow, the darkness, the challenges, the things that we get hit with that is not planned. I almost, I perceive it as the propeller. It certainly propels this part of reality forward. If I wasn't strained and stressed about how getting out of college and have to pay for this, I wouldn't be aggressively looking for what I am going to do. So, there's a certain, part of embracing this challenge that is here for us. It's not against us, right?

[00:33:07] What is happiness?

Arthur: For sure now, this is an important point. I mean, a very, very deep point that you are making back in the sixties, which you and I don't remember, but we have heard an awful lot



about there was this thing called the Woodstock festival that we have all heard of. And the motto of the Woodstock festival is that "If it feels good, do it". And the only memory I have of that in 1969 was this grainy black and white Zenni TV that we had in our living room. I grew up in Seattle, the lower middle-class neighborhood. And I remember my dad seeing Walter Cronkite, interviewing a hippie who says, if it feels good, do it. My dad's like that's the end of America. And that was actually advice for useful idiots because you know, the truth is mother nature wants you to be highly reactive. Mother nature wants you just to chase money and power and pleasure and fame, that's what mother nature wants. Don't blame capitalism that's the limbic system of your brain, that's compelling that. Capitalism is just a massive extension of the limbic system of your brain. And don't blame Fox news and MSNBC for firing you up to hate other people because of your politics. they are taking signals from your demand, man. And so, the key thing of all of this is that we need to reject these things. Now the modern version of it, it feels good do it is; if it feels bad, make it stop. If it feels bad, treat it. If it feels bad, make it go away. And on college campuses, if you are feeling anxiety and sadness, which is very normal and especially, you know, you come to Harvard university, it's not a spa. It's more like a mental waling for four years. But the problem is that it's very easy for adults to give young people this advice that, that all suffering is bad suffering and it has to be treated.

Arthur: And that's actually, you know, I understand that too much is too much. I mean, they can be clinical problems like major depressive disorder and clinical anxiety. I got it. I mean, you got to treat these things because they are real medical issues, but every life has a lot of suffering. Every life has stress, every life has sadness, every life has lost and the sooner that we understand that those are the moments where we find our resiliency, our growth. When we find out what we are made of, that's really when we are going to start to prosper and people who run away from those things and who try to make their suffering go away. Paradoxically, what they are actually avoiding is a sense of meaning and meaning is one of the great macronutrients of happiness. Happiness is a combination of enjoyment, satisfaction and meaning. And if you run away from your suffering, you are not going to get meaning. And so, in avoiding your unhappiness, paradoxically, you are avoiding your happiness, which is a very important lesson. You know, I've tried to impart this to my own. I have had three adult kids and we wind up talking about this a lot.

Darin: Dude, that's just like, mindblower right there in the sense that at our core, we require meaning in this life we have to, and again, the accelerator or the initiator or the uncovered, is that stress and strain and being pushed and mother nature coming at you. Life coming at you like, hell, I am sitting here right now, this whole property. I lost everything, a fire went through here in 2018 and I will tell you from my soul to your soul, I wouldn't change a thing. Because it gave me so much of deepening within myself and other things. So, I think what you are saying is so fricking powerful and so misunderstood and underutilized.

Arthur: It's normal that I do not wanna suffer again, our animal nature is to avoid suffering. Your dog doesn't wanna suffer a MEbA will, you know, go away from freezing cold or burning heat because they don't wanna suffer. They don't wanna do anything that indicates they might be under threat. They might be under risk, but people who do, because look it's inevitable and who survive, which you did. And everybody who's listening to us who has suffered and still is with us, has survived as well, if they allow it to happen. There's a thing in our field in behavioral, social science called fading affect bias, which is when something is in



the rear-view mirror. you will always remember it better than it was because you remember what you learned from it. And you are talking about the 2018 fires, Malibu canyon fires right now, which meant that was like literally hell on earth. And now you are saying, I learned a lot and I survived it, which with fitting affect bias, you are now a beneficiary of these things that you learned. This is incredibly important because that's a special case of what we call posttraumatic growth. You always talk about post-traumatic stress and post-traumatic stress disorder, et cetera that's real. But post traumatic growth is actually more common. And what it is post-traumatic these superpowers that you get from trauma itself; there's a whole bunch of them. People tend to become spiritually more adept. They tend to get deeper relationships as a result of it and here's the big superpower. They care less, what other people think that's the most amazing thing you get cancer and survive. It's very unlikely that you are going to be like, yeah, I wonder if she thinks I am dumb looking because I am bald like you don't care, that's it.

Arthur: And it's funny because you talk to people, who've had these bad experiences, these near-death experiences, literally for the rest of their life, they feel like they've got this protective capacity, social comparison to these things have greatly attenuated as a result of this. Okay. So, what does this mean? Does this mean that you should go out and hope you get cancer? No, but suffering's going to find you, the question is how do you lean into it so that you can get this incredible post-traumatic growth as a result of it and the less you resist the better off you are going to be.

Darin: And it goes back to how we originally started. Something's going on, turn into it, journal, find someone to talk, to start processing this stuff. Because I think the danger, i.e. I have a cancer or whatever disease that suppressed and pushed down. I had a friend, the reason I am saying this and not saying that all cancer is this, but I had a friend who passed away in Colorado. She was like, my second mother, when I came out of college, she was this kind of teacher that became a very close friend of mine. And she was on her deathbed and I was in the hospital, just her and I, she turns to me and she says, I know why I have cancer. And I was like, really like what? And she says the anger and resentment I've been holding on towards my husband. I know it, I feel it and this is what caused this thing. So, it's the antithesis of turning into something and liberating. The very thing that if we swallow it, if we pretend it isn't there, I call it dangerous. Maybe not to that degree or maybe a worse degree who the hell knows. And there's no possible way, I can understand that, the great mystery of that. However, that moment for me was so powerful because two days later she was gone. You know, I talked to this other doctor, friend of mine who deals with high level challenges and cancers and things like that. I said, how many diseases or challenges you find with people are emotional? Does every one of them have an emotional component to some sort of disease?

Arthur: I believe it, absolutely, this is not to say that people are bringing these cancers upon themselves, but to separate out the cognitive, the emotional, the physical, and to separate all these processes. I mean, look, there's a reason that people say that the psychological is biological. We are an organism and it's an integrated set of systems that we have. And we need to take on all of them is the key thing. People who are actually not trying to use the tools at their disposal to solve their emotional and psychological problems. And at the same time are just hoping for medical intervention that will give them relief are full of themselves. You have to treat yourself in a holistic way and the good news is that you can.



Darin; you have been writing about this stuff and dedicating your life. Dude, I can't even possibly understand how you wrote throughout this career wrote 12 books. I am on my second one and I am,

Arthur: In the pit of despair. You remember Elizabeth Kerberos' her famous book on death and dying. Yeah, that's like writing a book. So, there's like these stages that you got to go through. It's like bargaining denial, rage, and finally acceptance. So, you will get to acceptance there, I promise,

Darin: Like I was just telling my girlfriend, it's like, it's so rewarding to be reading and learning and to be able to, even though you have got pressure and you got publishers and all of this stuff. But the essence of it, of learning and the diving in and peeling open things that; shit I didn't even know.

Arthur: You just made a very important point, a very profound point for all the young people who are listening to us today because we were talking about how to get started in the right way. And we talked about mission versus specific jobs, but there's something else which is that you have this intention to write a book, but what you are really getting the juice for is the process of doing so. you are enjoying the journey along the way. This is critically important you know, it's funny because you know, a lot of people will write a book. For example, it's a perfect example of a particular principle of I am not going to get satisfaction until I have a book that's done. And then only if it sells a lot of copies, well guess what? you are not going to be satisfied and even if it does really well, you are going to get like a minute of satisfaction and then you are going to be jumping right back on that treadmill. Oh, now with a two-book deal now, you know, whatever it happens to be and probably nobody's going to buy your book. I mean probably, I mean, even celebrated authors probably nobody's going to buy your book if you don't enjoy it, don't do it is the bottom line. And so, for you, the reward is the learning. The reward is this incredible stuff. This library of information that you are actually be able to bring to bear in your show, in your relationships, in the interactions that you have with other people. And that's the thing with everybody. If you don't like what you have to do at work all day, but you are doing it for something at the end of the day, that's a big problem and I get it. We all got to make a living. We all got to pay our rent. I get it but the truth of the matter is that there's enough opportunity for almost everybody that we don't have to subjugate ourselves, that we don't have to objectify ourselves in a way that chains us to a long and largely a losery goal.

Darin: but talked a little bit about this because clearly not all aspects of doing this is enjoyable. If, I can just sit there and go, thank God. I am in a position where, you know, you get in advance and you have got a little freedom to learn. If I could just learn and not complete the book, that would be probably even better.

Arthur: But you wouldn't do it

Darin: Right, you wouldn't do it.

Arthur: You wouldn't do it because you got to have a goal. And the whole point is actually what, you know, Deepak Chopra talks about this idea of intention without attachment. He talks about it in a very spiritual way, but it has a good neuroscientific basis where to do something, you have to know you are going towards something. You have to have an intention, but to enjoy yourself and to get the maximum amount of benefit from it, you must



become detached from that goal. Why? Because there's three things that the human brain can do or three states. There's three times that the human brain can be in at any one time. There's the past, there's the future and there's right now, if you are always thinking about the future, which, you know, a lot of young people who are ambitious and curious, they are listening to your podcast, because you get a lot of good ideas from it that they are very prospective, the future, the future, the future, the future, the future that's called homo prospectus. The future man or woman. retrospective people have stuck in the past, mindful people are actually thinking about the present. And that's the hardest thing for humans to do because we are built for time travel kind of the problem is when you are only in the future of these goals and you are not in the moment of actually pursuing these goals, you are going to have trouble. And the way to attain that is to have an intention about the future, but then to live in day tight containers and the way to do that, there's a very simple way to do this, that I assign to my students. My master's students say, okay, imagine yourself in 10 years, imagine where you wanna be with your relationships and your career, the whole thing. Okay. Now think where do I need to be in five years to get to the 10 years? Where do I need to be in one year to get to the five years? Where do I need to be in one month to get to the one year? And what do I need to do today to get to the month and only think about that day, that's living in a day tight container and you will enjoy your life if you do that.

Darin: Dude, that's good, that's good because I slip, I do, I can dream. I can intend and all of that stuff and sometimes at the end of the day, I am like, God damn it I didn't get enough done. Right and I slip into that and then I get over, like I didn't take a day off for a year because with this book during the week with everything else I got going on. I could never really get those stretches that, you know, you need to get a book done. Like I got to shut these things off because you got to go into a different gear. And I could only get into that gear on Saturdays and Sundays. And my girlfriend was like, hey, you have to take a day off. I know, I know you have got great excuses. And this is more of a personal question. I got ambitions, dude. I've got a lot of things that I am excited about, but I will also take on tons of stuff. The next thing I know, I crushed myself in how much to do in order to attain the 75 things that I want to see in 10 years.

Arthur: Well, that's called the tyranny of the more, and that requires the discipline of less. There's a really interesting book called "Subtract" by an engineering professor at University of Virginia, a guy named Lyody Clots. I was just interviewing him for my show and he's a very interesting guy because he talks about how much happier you get when you take, when you subtract things from your life. Now the discipline of that is that you got to go against mother nature. because mother nature wants you to be like, yeah, I will do that. Yeah, I will do that. I will eat that. Yeah. I will put that in my mouth. I mean I, yeah gimme more of that. And pretty soon your whole life is loaded up and your schedule has become a manageable. But the key thing to remember is that after a certain point, this is one of the things I talked about with my staff. I say like, no more additions, only substitutions. That's all we can do as substitutions. we have got a certain amount of time and furthermore, I got to block certain times off. I don't take any meetings in the morning ever, unless I am like on the plane or something like that. And then actually it's great because no, we can bug me on plate and the reason is because I got to do creative work every day. This is non-negotiable, I've taken out all that stuff for my schedule because otherwise I am miserable. I don't actually get to the thing that is my intention. And that's a big problem that's your basic tendencies for more



have made it impossible for you to do what you are supposed to be doing, which is your metaphysical Younes, which is manifest in something like this next book, which is supposed to help by the way. What's your book about? What's your next book about? I can't wait.

Darin: It's called Fatal Conveniences.

Arthur: Oh boy. I love it.

Darin: So, it actually was gifted by my father. So, this sets up the thing, I will just tell you the whole story since we are on a long form podcast. So, my father was a keeper of the dragon in the Cuban missile crisis. So, he worked on atomic bombs. He lost his thyroid cause of course the radiation. And so, he was susceptible; in the nineties he became super sensitive to chemicals of any kind, even shirts, dyes, shampoos, deodorants, carpets, couches, paints, you name it, couldn't be around it. And he was a professor at the university of Minnesota and so he thrived around teaching and be around people and all of that stuff. Well, he went back to school, I am just going to be a counselor. I am going to kind of mitigate that. And eventually he had to retire because he couldn't educate the world and going, hey, you can't put that on if you are going to be around me. So, in order to be around him, I had to find products that didn't have chemicals or didn't have artificial thalates or anything else in them. So now later I've been practicing and learning these things that in our modern-day life we may have gotten used to, but are really harming us on a chronic big scale. So, I have chapters on personal care. I have chapters on cosmetics. I have chapters on scary research on EMFs from even almost as if there are chemicals from endocrine disruption to a free radical activation to immune system overworking like all of this stuff, plus the fast fashion and all of these things. So, each one of those and many more are these things that classic is convenience to put a phone up to your head, but it's really a really bad idea. So that kind of thing and of course the food systems produce pesticides, herbicides, all of this stuff that is embedded within our modern world. And yet we are allowing this stuff to happen. Regulatory bodies are not from my perspective, doing a very good job at all. So, my part in this is let's educate people so that they, and of course always leaving people with a solution, right? Here's the solution here. We just uncovered it. Here's now a solution for said problem.

Arthur: That's great, I can't wait to buy it no, seriously I am going to learn a lot is my guess like I've been doing that for years. Uhoh you know.

Darin: Yeah, it's scary because it's like it's alarming when you realize like, oh shit, like, you know, one of the first ones was Teflon. Teflon has got a grandson called PFAS and this is that slippery material. It's on receipts, it's on that slippery glide dental floss. Yeah. This is proven carcinogenic and yet it's permeated throughout our society. So yeah, and I am working on some TV shows that dive into some more of that stuff and we have got a lot of backing from environmental to personal stuff and kind of a problem solution kind of thing like pop the top. So, I love this stuff and again, I am honored in the way and the what you are doing so yeah.

Arthur: Thank you Darren, how lovely. I wish I were with you in Malibu right now.

[00:51:30] Podcast Outro

Darin: Thanks for tuning in to this episode of the Darin Olien Show. I hope you took something valuable away from this conversation that will help improve your life in some way.



If you would like to learn more about my incredible guest, you can find all of their information in the show notes on my website. If you enjoyed this episode or even you didn't like it, please rate this podcast, the team and I value your feedback so we can continue to give you the most value possible. We want you to get the most out of every podcast. So please rate, subscribe, share - anything you feel called to do. I truly appreciate it and I love and value your support. So, thank you and I will meet you in the next episode.