

Welcome to The Power Lounge, your go-to place for engaging conversations in the digital world. In today's episode, join us as we deep dive into life satisfaction with our host Amy Vaughn and our special guest, renowned clinical psychologist Jennifer Guttman. Jennifer explores the theme "Beyond Happiness: A Satisfaction Revolution," revealing the keys to enduring contentment and strategies to navigate digital challenges.

Gain actionable advice on resilience, stress management, and fulfilling both personal and professional aspects of life. Don't miss out on this transformative conversation!

Featured in the Episode

Jennifer Guttman

Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Author & Motivator

Jennifer's LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jenniferguttman/>

Amy Vaughan,

Owner & Chief Empowerment Officer

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/amyvvaughan/>

Takeaways

- The Motivation Behind Life Satisfaction
- Fundamentals of Happiness vs. Satisfaction
- Techniques for Boosting Confidence
- Addressing Misconceptions Surrounding Happiness
- Practical Steps Toward Life Satisfaction
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Stress Management

Quotes

"In high-pressure environments, steer clear of mental traps and focus on moving forward swiftly, leaving past conversations behind." - Jennifer Guttman

"Embrace challenges, seek growth, and find validation within yourself, not from external sources." - Jennifer Guttman

Chapters

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Transcript:

Amy Vaughn:

Alright. Hello, everyone, and welcome to our weekly power lounge. This is your place for authentic conversations from those who have power to share. My name is Amy Vaughn, and I am the owner and chief empowerment officer of Together Digital, a diverse and collaborative community of women in digital who choose to share their knowledge, power, and connections. You can join the movement at togetherindigital.com It is my absolute pleasure today to introduce all of you to Jennifer Gutman. Doctor Gutman brings a wealth of expertise to our podcast today with a doctorate in clinical psychology from Long Island University. She specializes in training and cognitive behavioral therapy, trauma treatment, and family systems.

Amy Vaughn:

For the past 8 years, she has been at the forefront of a motivational branding with her sustainable life satisfaction platform, which includes a YouTube series, courses, and a workbook. We love getting in there and doing the work. I love that you have this workbook. That's fantastic. Her latest release, Beyond Happiness, the 6 Secrets to Life Satisfaction, published by Post Hill Press, has been making waves in the field. Doctor Gutman not only is a respected contributor to publications like Psychology Today, Thrive Global, and Mind Body Green, She's also a sought after guest on major network television programs and in numerous podcasts. Glad to add her to this one as well. With over 30 years of experience as a cognitive behavioral therapist, she has touched the lives of thousands of clients, fostering meaningful transformative interactions.

Amy Vaughn:

We are honored to have you with us here today, Jennifer Gutman, as she shares her insights and wisdom with us. Welcome, doctor Gutman. Thanks for being here today.

Jennifer Guttman:

Thank you so much for having me. I'm really excited to be here and talk to your audience.

Amy Vaughn:

Absolutely. As many of you know who have been a part of or familiar with our content and conversations that we have here at Together Digital, while we are all hardworking, ambitious women who work in digital marketing and advertising. We love to pause and have conversations like these about mental health and just really, focusing on the whole person because we are whole people. Right? And this is mental health awareness month. Right? It's May. This is an important conversation to have, and I really, really was fascinated by your perspective. And something else, I think, as women who work in a space that is very heavily focused on methodologies, processes, and data. We love structure.

Amy Vaughn:

We love steps and processes like these. So I was super, super excited to see that. And as someone who is deeply fascinated in a practice, a practitioner of mindfulness, Really, really likes this kind of idea that you've got really kind of looking at satisfaction versus happiness. So super excited to kind of dig into this more. Hopefully, some of our listeners will take something away from this and, you know, dig into this more, get a copy of your book, take a look at your YouTube channels, and see what they've got. But to start, as always, I'd love to get again a little bit more, for the sake of our listeners to hear more about you, your background, and how you came to discover the power of going beyond happiness and finding what's more long lasting satisfaction.

Jennifer Guttman:

It initially started with some seminal moments. Lots of people have watershed moments in their lives, and I too had some seminal moments in my life. My son was diagnosed with a life threatening illness that required surgery. I too was diagnosed with a life threatening illness, and then my father passed away all in a relatively short period of time. And shortly after that, I said my children were going back to sleepaway camp. I settled them back into sleepaway camp. And then I purchased a one way ticket to Europe. It was my first and only eat, pray, love moment.

Jennifer Guttman:

And when I purchased that one way ticket, I packed a carry-on bag with the only idea that I had in my mind was to regain a sense of purpose, hope, and optimism. When I got to Europe, I was walking around trying to get a sense of what I was trying to get a handle on, I realized that I wasn't trying to find happiness again. That seemed incongruous with all that I had been through. I was trying to find a sense of satisfaction again, a sense of peace, a sense of contentment. And if I was going to find satisfaction again, which is what I believed had helped me, some tools of satisfaction had helped me through all of these challenges that I had just been through, that I needed to understand satisfaction better. I needed to embrace it, dissect it, understand it. And it was during that trip that the colonels of what would eventually become the sustainable life satisfaction brand were born.

Amy Vaughn:

I love that so much. And then thank you for sharing that personal story. I think another word that comes to mind is unburdened. We love doing, like, personal development type stuff here, and we talk a lot about our word of the year. And that was very close to being one of my words of the year. And I was like, that's not the right energy that I need this year. It's definitely a future word for me. But I love that idea of, that sense of, comfort or not complacency, but, you know, contentment.

Amy Vaughn:

You said contentment as well. That's a good one. It's a good one, especially when you have been through so much, and I can only imagine having 2 of those types of diagnoses plus this in your father in 1 year. Yeah. It's a lot . It's a lot to come out of. And sometimes that's all you can wish for. Right? Is sort of that just a level set. Mhmm.

Amy Vaughn:

So what is your take on distinguishing that kind of between the fleeting happiness, you know, like you said, the chasing that sort of that ideal happiness, joy, and that more lasting satisfaction. I want our listeners to understand this, especially because like I said, we've got a lot of overachievers in the crowd, and they're very, you know,

ambitious in their goals when it comes to their lives and careers. So I would love to kind of put a finer point on this to kind of help them level set those expectations.

Jennifer Guttman:

Yes. I have found that most people feel like we're supposed to be happy all of the time. In fact, I recently opened a popcorn bag, and it said this popcorn is going to make you happy. And I looked at that and I was like, really? Happy? Satisfied baby, but happy? And I think that we see these things all the time. So it's no surprise then that I've had thousands of clients come into my office over the past 30 years telling me that they feel like they're failing at being happy, but you can't fail at an emotion. Happiness, like all emotions, comes and goes. It's not meant to be long lasting. Happiness is a dopamine hit.

Jennifer Guttman:

It's based on something that's happening in the external world. It's how you feel when you see the first snowfall or how you feel when you see a shooting star. Yes. It feels great at the moment, but then it'll pass. It comes and goes. But satisfaction is different. Satisfaction is how you feel at the end of a really productive day. Satisfaction is how you feel when you finish a really good book.

Jennifer Guttman:

Satisfaction is a feeling of contentment. It's a feeling of peace. Satisfaction is something that you can feel right within yourself, something that you can learn with the right tools, something that you are in control of. And in that way, it is sustainable and attainable. It's not that you're giving it up to somebody else. The thing with happiness is if you're expecting a job or relationship to provide you with happiness, you're destined to be disappointed. But with satisfaction, because you're in control of it, then you can make it happen for yourself, which is why when you move beyond happiness, you can achieve satisfaction.

Amy Vaughn:

I love that. You can't fail. Excuse me. You can't fail at an emotion. I wrote that down. I hope some of you who are listening right now did too. Live listening audience. I'm addressing you, 1, because you're listening live now, and 2, because you're gonna get the chance here at the end of the conversation today to ask doctor Gottman questions.

Amy Vaughn:

So use that chat. Our amazing, my copilot, Kaylee, is dropping links in the chat as well. So I wanna direct your attention there so you can check out all of the great links that she's dropping in there. She's got doctor Gottman's website, her Instagram handle, as well as her YouTube channel. Also, all kinds of great stuff. We'll include those in the show notes as well. But, yeah, ladies, for those of us who love to chase those metrics, you cannot fail at an emotion. I will love that so much, Jennifer.

Jennifer Guttman:

It's funny because people I say to people, like, nobody's gonna say that they would fail at sadness. But they feel like they could fail at happiness. It's not happiness. It's like that doesn't that doesn't work. You know? Like, all of these are emotions and you can't fail at any of them. So when people are saying that they think that they're unsuccessful at being happy enough, you'd never say that you'd feel like you're being unsuccessful at being sad enough.

Amy Vaughn:

Right.

Jennifer Guttman:

And that's why, you know, an emotion is an emotion is an emotion. They're, they're the same. And we feel all of them, but we feel all of them for some piece of time. That's expected. But satisfaction is the thing that can, you know, cross all of those boundaries and that's the thing that we can sustain.

Amy Vaughn:

So how would you say it's sustainable life satisfaction? This approach might resonate with our listeners who are juggling, you know, demanding careers, personal lives. You know, they've got jobs in industries that are fast paced. You know, we were just talking before we got on the call here about kids and high pressure jobs that are traveling a lot, things like that.

Jennifer Guttman:

What I talk about in my book is 6 different techniques that can be applied to people in fast paced jobs, people that are, I mean people in all walks of life really, but definitely people in high in fast paced jobs. And when I think about some of your listeners and what they may be dealing with, I think about one of the techniques in my book, which is avoiding assumptions. And when what I think about is that it's important when you're in a fast paced job and you're dealing juggling a lot of demanding, expectations both at home and at work that you not get caught up in thought spirals, replaying situations in your head, replaying conversations in your head because you need to be able to move forward quickly. And that's why it's important to avoid assumptions so that you're not wasting precious mental energy on things that have already happened. We are as human beings and descendants of mammals very biased towards a negativity bias because we literally in our DNA, we are, you know, natural worriers because we are born from predator, you know, worried about predators, but we're we're not right now, we don't have to worry about catastrophic occurrences in the same way that when we were mammals, we needed to worry about these predators. So that means that we need to constantly be mindful of the fact that we do skew towards a negativity bias. And you can think about that in terms of how many of us are like, yes, I'm definitely going to get that promotion. We don't think about life like that.

Jennifer Guttman:

But instead, we worry that we're not going to get the promotion. So we tend to skew negatively as opposed to skew neutral or positive. But, honestly, it's a 3rd, a 3rd, and a 3rd. Like, there's a 3rd possibility that things are gonna go positive, a 3rd neutral, a 3rd negative, but we don't tend to think like that. We tend to skew negative, which means

we have a responsibility to be mindful and intentional about watching out for that negativity bias and, like, you know, pivoting back to neutral and positive to make sure that we don't give into that. And one of the ways that I suggest in my book that you can manage this with an action step is, let's say that you're in a thought spiral worrying about an interaction that you just had with somebody, and you think you might be making an assumption about it. Imagine the jury of your peers in your mind and ask yourself, do I have enough evidence to convince a jury of my peers that what I fear is about to happen is actually true. And if you don't have enough evidence to convince them that your fear about what happened is true or your worry is true, then you need to pause and wait until you've collected more evidence before acting on that assumption.

Jennifer Guttman:

And I I think that that's incredibly important because it's hard to convince people that what you just are thinking in your mind is true.

Amy Vaughn:

I love that. I say that to my daughter often. Like, just because you think it doesn't make it true. Exactly. And is it helpful? Is it true? You know, those two things. But I love the jury idea. I might be leveraging that one next. She's 10.

Amy Vaughn:

So it's like that whole negative self-talk, it starts so early and it's so real and it stays with us for so long. Obviously, here I am in my forties, and it's still something I, you know, constantly constantly working on.

Jennifer Guttman:

So hard. So hard. I mean, of the 6 that I wrote in my book, avoiding assumptions is the hardest one. That's still for me. So

Amy Vaughn:

Right? Yeah. And avoiding assumptions too, when you were speaking of it, it reminded me of this whole, like, problem I have of, like, a what I used to have. I feel like I'm much better at it. Now it's, like, rumination. Right? And that mental energy and mental load of rumination. You're right. It can be such a burden. It impedes upon your sleep.

Amy Vaughn:

It impedes upon your ability to think clearly, to think forward versus ahead, you know, on things. And one of the thing I had kind of learned through the practice of mindfulness was, like, attachment to outcome and that whole notion of, like, being attached to everything being a certain way, but then also realizing that just because things don't go a certain way, it's like, that doesn't mean that things aren't going to go fine. Right? Just because it didn't happen exactly this way doesn't mean that the outcome is going to be bad per se. Right?

Jennifer Guttman:

Absolutely. Because the door that opens to the next possible option could turn out just as well as the initial option that you had anticipated. You just don't know organically how it's gonna turn out. I mean, the way that we anticipate, you know, a potential outcome Mhmm. Could be great or it could be that other possibilities are great too. I mean, sometimes we play these mental chess games in our minds, like moving pieces around the board, thinking that we know how things are gonna turn out. But those games tend to not work out the way that we anticipate because the conversations we have with people, the actions other people take, we can't really anticipate their moves.

Amy Vaughn:

Exactly.

Jennifer Guttman:

And because of that, we can't really anticipate how it's going to turn out and what ends up happening could be even better than what we anticipated when we were playing this mental chess game in our minds.

Amy Vaughn:

Oh, 100%. I can't tell you how many guests I've had on this show where they have kind of come and bared their soul and told me that they were at the pits of their life. Like, they were at the bottom. They lost their dream job or things just kind of went to hell in a handbasket, and then everything turned around. And it was that moment of getting back up off the ground that they had that moment, that epiphany, that idea where they were like, oh, this is the thing. This is the moment. This is the time in which I'm gonna figure this out and do the thing. So yeah.

Amy Vaughn:

Exactly. Absolutely. And then you've got another book Beyond Happiness. And within that, you talk about the secret of life satisfaction. I'm kind of curious. How do you believe that it could be useful to our listeners who are maybe striving for success while also seeking personal fulfillment? I think there's a struggle. Right? We use that term and we thread around a lot, work life balance.

Amy Vaughn:

And I know everybody finds that word a little noxious. Some people don't believe it exists, but I'm kind of curious about your thoughts and ideas on that.

Jennifer Guttman:

Another one of the techniques that I talk about in Beyond Happiness, a minute, I talk about avoiding assumptions in Beyond Happiness. And another one of the techniques that I talk about in Beyond Happiness is that in order to achieve personal fulfillment and success in different areas of your life, it's really important to be authentic in the choices that you're making. And it's very difficult to be authentic in those choices because a lot

of times we wanna follow the path that somebody else is setting for us. And, people that care about us often have ideas about what our dreams should be for us, what our passion should be for us. But our passions and dreams may not be in alignment with what those people want for us, and that can get very complicated. And for that reason, it's important to learn that one of the techniques in my book is to reduce people's pleasing behaviors. And it's there because it's important to reduce people's pleasing behaviors because it's important to be able to not subserve what your passions, desires, and wants are in the service of what somebody else wants for you. As humans, we have a strong need for connection.

Jennifer Guttman:

So we're at risk of falling victim to something that's called sociotropy, which means foregoing the desires that we have for ourselves altogether in order to maintain social connection at all costs. But that inevitably leads to us giving up all of our dreams, which can then eventually lead to dissatisfaction and resentment. Mhmm. 1 of one of my clients is an investment banker, and that dream of becoming an investment banker really was something that was a path that she was put on because of her family. And while she was an investment banker, she realized that, like, this wasn't something that really interested her, and she really wasn't satisfied. What she really wanted was to go back to school and get a PhD in art history and become an art historian, And that created a lot of tension with her family and within herself. But, eventually, she did take the brave step of, you know, grabbing onto her dreams and passions and leaving investment banking and getting the PhD. And today, she's much more satisfied with her life, and her family has come along.

Jennifer Guttman:

But in order to do that, it means, like, taking charge of reducing people's pleasing behaviors, setting boundaries with people, and becoming better at saying no to things that feel inauthentic to you early on and that's difficult. Some of the strategies that I suggest to people is practice saying no and not apologizing for yourselves so that it doesn't give people a door to continue to make requests of you that may feel inauthentic to you. I think that it's something that's really important to model for our children also so that they see that boundary setting is an okay thing to do and that they should feel comfortable boundary setting. Not not just with others, but even with, like, with us, with their parents.

Amy Vaughn:

Yeah. I love that so much. I think that can feel like such an overwhelming task, especially maybe for women because I think we are overly conditioned to people, please, and to serve and to give more than take. Yes. And, I think a lot of times we get, like, a deer in headlights situation when we're talking to women, and we're like, well, what do you really want? You know, at Together Digital, we have what we call our ask and give exchange, and we really try to encourage our members to step up and ask for what they need. No guilt, no shame. But you ask women to ask for something and they're like,

Jennifer Guttman:

I don't even know what to ask for. Or you

Amy Vaughn:

ask her, what do you need? And she's like, I mean, she's thinking of a million things, you know, she

Jennifer Guttman:

is. Yes. Right. And then, but she says, I don't know. Or

Amy Vaughn:

it's like, the

Jennifer Guttman:

first thing she wants

Amy Vaughn:

to say nothing because you're just so used to not even thinking about asking for anything. So your suggestion and advice is to really start small. Right? Just to look for those spaces and places. Right. Start Just to look for those spaces and places.

Jennifer Guttman:

Right. Start small. Start I mean, honestly, I think that it's also just not rushing into do things so much for other people that you forget to, like, focus on what your needs are because I think that also women are so easy to, like, try to, guess about what other people's needs are, rush in to help other people, but then they're stop being mindful and attentive to what their needs even are. I mean, their needs are taking such a back seat that they're not even attending to what they are because they're so busy trying to focus on what everybody else needs. So one of my suggestions is to pause before you rush in to help other people. Wait for them to ask for help, which they will. So instead of me rushing in to guess about what people in my life need, wait for Jennifer, I need help with this or Jennifer, can you help me with that? So once I'm asked, I can help. But before that, wait so that my mind isn't clogged up with trying to, like, guess about what everybody needs.

Jennifer Guttman:

That will help me be a little bit more attentive to what I need.

Amy Vaughn:

I love this. I'm gonna give an example, and I'm gonna make myself an example. Because this came out for me recently in therapy. I've been doing really good at getting back to, like, the gym and things like that, carving out that time and space for myself. And I guess just by proxy, my husband's like, I need to go to the gym. I need to go to the and every time he says it, I go in and I'm like, okay. What time do you wanna go? I will watch the kids. Do you want me to start putting it on your calendar? Let's send you up for classes.

Amy Vaughn:

My therapist is finally like, Amy, did he ask you to do any of these things? And I was like, crap. No. She says, you need to just let him say that and just let it sit. And I'm like, oh, yeah. And I think then I start to see it. Right? I start to see how many times people just put things out there where they'll just say one thing, and I jump on it, and I just start to do it for them. And I'm like, crap. Okay.

Amy Vaughn:

I see it now. So I just wanted to share that because I hope that helps some of you, maybe start to be more aware of just a little nugget. Yes. What's for dinner?

Jennifer Guttman:

Yes. Yes. Yes. I have practice.

Amy Vaughn:

What's it gonna be? What's that little nugget gonna be that drops today for you ladies and gents that that you're just gonna pick up on and just you're gonna not even think twice and you're just gonna figure it out and take care of it for everyone else before you even think about it for yourself.

Jennifer Guttman:

Yes. Exactly.

Amy Vaughn:

Oh my goodness. Yeah. Exactly. I know.

Jennifer Guttman:

So much so much of that. I mean, there's so much of that. We're, like, literally, we're having whole conversations for them with ourselves. I mean, we're doing the whole conversation. The whole thing. Like, we started and ended all on our own. That's so true. We did it.

Jennifer Guttman:

The whole thing. We take care of the whole thing. Nobody else has to do any thinking.

Amy Vaughn:

I was looking at them from there. The snack's taken care of. Dinner's made, and they're all coming up to practice. And they're like, I mean, I don't know. I just said I have practiced and it happened. I don't know. Right.

Jennifer Guttman:

That's great. And some of my clients are like, I don't understand why I'm not being appreciated. I'm like, well, it wouldn't be a surprise if everybody thinks the fairies did it since, like, the whole conversation is happening around them. Of course, they think the fairies did it. It's magical. It's hard to be magical.

Amy Vaughn:

Oh my goodness. Alright. Let's keep going. Oh, no way. This could be a rabbit hole for sure. It's a massive hole. I'm definitely digging. Alright.

Amy Vaughn:

Could you share some insights into resilience building that might help some of our listeners, particularly those who, you know, this is a perfect follow-up question. You know, we're handling multiple responsibilities a day, whether those are, you know, self induced or otherwise.

Jennifer Guttman:

Absolutely. I I talk a lot about resilience. And in order to build resilience, it means that we have to learn to trust in our ability to cope and our ability to pivot quickly, especially if we're dealing with multiple things at one time or if something doesn't work out the way that we had expected it to, which is we were just talking about a little bit earlier, that we need to know make sure that we know that we, believe in our ability to course correct quickly. All of those things are what builds resilience. And that means that we have to make sure that we're comfortable with our problem solving ability, our decision making. We make an incredible 35,000 decisions every single day. 35,000. Think of that number.

Jennifer Guttman:

And most of us think that of those 35,000 decisions, they're high stakes, right or wrong, irreversible. So that makes those 35,000 decisions very stressful. And of those 35,000 decisions, they can be very small decisions all the way up the ladder to larger decisions like, should I ask for a promotion? Should I switch jobs? What curfew should I give my children? I mean, they're very varied decisions, you know, and down to like, what should I make for dinner? What we don't realize is that decisions are actually just guesses. People don't talk about how that's really, at the end of the day, what a decision is. It's just a guess. Some of them are well informed guesses. Some of them are just guesses. But when people tell you that they're more objective in making a decision for you than you, that's just not true.

Jennifer Guttman:

A guess is what a decision is. Some people may be guessing with more education. Some people may be guessing with more experience, but they're not guessing with your lens. The only person that can actually guess with the best lens about your life is you because you're the only one that has seen your life. And no by and large, no decision is

irreversible, most decisions. Once you make your best guess, it's important to remember that if it doesn't turn out the way that you expected, you can pivot. Open another door. Open a door, and you will see that there's the next best solution.

Jennifer Guttman:

As long as you have the flexibility of mind and the creativity of thought to find what the next best solution is. And that's how you actually build resilience, having that faith in yourself. One of my clients was a CEO of a company and almost all of her friends were retiring to Florida leaving their jobs, and there was a ton of pressure on her to do the same. And she was entertaining it because there was so much noise around her to do that. And then one day she was walking through the halls at her job, and she thought to herself, I don't wanna do this. Nothing about this feels right to me. Like, this feels like it's right for them. And then very assertively, she said to them, I don't wanna do this.

Jennifer Guttman:

This is ill timed for me. Like, this is through your lens. When it's right for me, then I will stop working and leave. I think that what's important is to think about the action steps that are involved in making decisions and reminding yourself about the fact that they're guesses, and that starts with owning the decision. Own it as your own. And then remind yourself not to make assumptions about what other people are going to think about your choices because there's no right or wrong choice. How can there be a right or wrong choice if it's just a guess? And then remind yourself that you can always pivot. There's always the option to pivot.

Jennifer Guttman:

Then evaluate your decision and decide if it didn't work out the way you had hoped. Is there something that you would change the next time so that you can use that information to help you in the future? And remember to reinforce yourself after you make these guesses and decisions because it's much easier to delegate decision making than to take it on for yourself. So often we delegate decisions. When you make decisions, you should reinforce yourself by making them. But ultimately, I think it's critical that people remember that we're the only one with our own DNA and our own

fingerprint, the only one. Who better to make the best decisions or the best guesses for us than us?

Amy Vaughn:

I love that so much. Yeah. Don't don't delegate that decision making power over to anyone else, but it's so easy to do.

Jennifer Guttman:

Right? It's so easy to do. I mean, it's so easy to do.

Amy Vaughn:

And it's such a disappointing thing. I wish I would have heard you speaking on this, like, 5 or 10 years ago, like, to talk to Amy because I, I back then especially, had such analysis paralysis. Yes. It is. I am, a, I am very you know, an Enneagram 9. I don't know if you're familiar with the Enneagram types or anything like that, but I am a, they're like the peacemaker. They're very much about harmony. They really want, you know, that kind of, like in a sense that they just don't want disruption.

Amy Vaughn:

They don't want conflict or anything like that. And so sometimes it's hard to try to own those decisions when you know it's going to disrupt the lives or the thoughts or the opinions of others. And so that's, that was always like a hard thing for me when I was earlier on in my career. And so, like, I even remember there was a time when I was kind of poached by another agency and offered to double my salary, and I still was sitting there, like, I feel bad for leaving. Should I be going? And I'm looking back at myself now. I'm like, look at you goober. Like, what were you thinking? You should have been, like, just riding out on your high horse being like, look at me go. It is so funny, but it was that whole sense of like, oh my gosh.

Amy Vaughn:

I'm creating a disruption. I mean, I was doing well at the company I was at. I was winning awards and doing good work and getting accolades and moving up in the company, but they couldn't touch that offer. And I was like and I don't know why I just didn't just, you know, walk on out with my head held high. It was really a difficult thing for me. And, you know, I struggled with the decision probably a lot more than I

Jennifer Guttman:

should have. Right.

Amy Vaughn:

You know, and, again, it's not always just about the money either. It was, like, it was a good move. It was a good position, a good opportunity, a good move to a good company. So but it is just so funny, you know, you talked earlier too about it. I think that kinda comes back too to that, like, whole, rumination and avoiding assumptions. We start making assumptions. We worry. Okay.

Amy Vaughn:

What is everybody else gonna think about this choice? Why are you worrying about that?

Jennifer Guttman:

Exactly. And that's how they're all so interrelated. What you just said is perfect because you can see how within what you were going through, avoiding assumptions involved with that. Reducing people's pleasing behaviors is involved in that. Making decisions is involved in that. And that's why when you look at my book, the 6 techniques that are involved in the book are all very interrelated because becoming a master at all six techniques is necessary because they are all so tightly wound together. They coalesce

together. And in your story, you just said it so beautifully because there are pieces in all the different aspects of your story that relate to all of those different techniques.

Jennifer Guttman:

And it's important to think about all of them when you're going through a story so that you can dissect what the struggle is that you're going through in some difficult decision like that because there's so many aspects of it that make it difficult.

Amy Vaughn:

Well, and I think what ultimately that does for you right there is creates clarity because it gets the roadblocks out of the way. Yes. Your book's gonna be a gift for a couple of my friends right now that I know are struggling with some things, and they are like, but I don't quite know.

Amy Vaughn:

And and so I think for me, like, being kind of, like, outside of certain things now, I'm like, I'm

Amy Vaughn:

I am seeing what it is. Like, you're not there yet, but I really do. I think your book's gonna be a great, great guide for that. It's gonna help remove a lot of those roadblocks. Yeah. Alright. Let's talk about some, one of my favorite topics, cognitive behavioral therapy techniques. And how can these techniques be helpful for some of our listeners? Maybe we define that too in case people aren't familiar with what that is.

Amy Vaughn:

And managing stress and maintaining our well-being, especially given the pressure of some of our roles in our lives at work and at home, maybe.

Jennifer Guttman:

Mhmm. In cognitive behavior therapy, we work individually with people to help look at what potentially their their thoughts, how their thoughts might be interfering with their behavior and try to address any cognitive distortions that might be interfering and also help with relaxation techniques and and other behave, you know, behavioral techniques that might help them, optimize their their life, more effectively. I I can, I'm gonna talk about a few different techniques that would be very easy to implement at home or at work that won't take a lot of time but have very good results. One of them is a relaxation technique that's super easy that you can implement anywhere. It's called box breathing. Some of you may have heard of it. What box breathing is is you just inhale for a count of 3, hold for a count of 3, exhale for a count of 3, and you do that round, like, 3 to 5 times until you feel more relaxed. Another one is self-talk.

Jennifer Guttman:

How do you self talk with cognitive distortions? Cognitive distortions are related to thinking errors. There's 4 different kinds of thinking errors or main ones that I focus on usually. Magnification, minimization, fortune telling, and all or none thinking. I think if I run through the definitions of all of that, it's gonna get, like, a little overwhelming. So Okay. I'm gonna just focus on fortune telling for a minute. Fortune telling is expecting bad things to happen. So the idea would be that if you identify that you have a cognitive distortion of fortune telling, expecting something bad to happen, you might notice that you just had a bad interaction with your supervisor.

Jennifer Guttman:

And then because you had this bad interaction with your supervisor, you go back to your desk, and then your mind goes into a thought spiral that you're gonna have a bad review because you had this bad interaction. And as a kind of behaviorist, I would say, where is the evidence that bad interactions with your supervisor lead to bad reviews? Do you have evidence that in the past, bad interactions, a bad interaction with a supervisor led to a bad review? And likely, you would not have that evidence. And then barring that evidence, I would say balance your thinking. And then the balanced thought would be, I don't have evidence that bad interactions lead to bad reviews. Bad

interactions are just bad interactions. And then that would decrease your anxiety from, let's say, if you're measuring your anxiety on a 1 to 10 scale with 10 being the highest, might decrease your anxiety from an 8 to, let's say, 2, which would be far lower. And that's what you would do with any of these if you were magnifying or or all in none thinking. Another technique that you can use like a quick and dirty technique is called a thought stopping technique.

Jennifer Guttman:

It's a rubber band technique. My clients love this technique. Basically, what it involves is putting a hair tie or rubber band around your wrist. You have a negative thought. It could be one of these like I'm gonna get a bad review. It could be, you know, any negative thought that you're having. When you have a negative thought, you snap the rubber band on your wrist. Don't give yourself any welts, but snap it so that it doesn't sting, and you tell yourself to stop.

Jennifer Guttman:

So I'm gonna get a bad review. You snap the rubber band, tell yourself to stop, distract yourself with a pleasant memory. The pleasant memory could be a vacation that you took or a party that you went to. Distract yourself with a pleasant memory. And then brains don't like to be snapped, So likely you will then think of, you know, something else, but you will go back to thinking about the bad review. Snap the rubber band again, tell yourself to stop, and then think of the pleasant memory. In the beginning, you will be snapping the rubber band a number of times when it comes up with a review. But, like, as I mentioned, brains do not like to be snapped.

Jennifer Guttman:

Because of that, your brain will learn to stop thinking about the bad review because otherwise, you're gonna get snapped. And then, as your brain doesn't want to get snapped, the idea of a bad review will go away, and you won't be snapping yourself anymore. This technique works extremely well for a lot of things. I've given it to people for lots of negative thoughts about a lot of things, like not getting a phone call back, not getting an email back, not getting a text back. Like, it can work for conversations or and,

truly brains get hip to when you're gonna do something painful to it very quickly. And, like, you will, you will stop. And then there are mindfulness strategies that you can also engage in mind. There's tons and tons of mindfulness strategies.

Jennifer Guttman:

Mhmm. I think that a quick one that I can say right now is just like, you can get yourself grounded in a chair or in your office or at home. Like, feel your body in the chair. Put your feet on the ground. You notice how your body is sitting in the chair. Say close your eyes. Say your name and the date and your address, and the location you are in your home. And then just keep repeating to yourself 3 or 5 rounds your name and the date and your address and your location in your home so that you're grounding yourself in space and time 3 to 5 times.

Jennifer Guttman:

And when that is over, when you open your eyes, you should feel calmer.

Amy Vaughn:

I love it. Those are all so fantastic. And they are such great tools because it's like you can be anywhere, anytime Right. Using those things and doing those things. I think, you know, because we're all running around doing lots of things all the time. And there are great tools and tips that we can use for ourselves, for our family. So those are great great ones. One I learned recently, if you don't mind me sharing too, one, was heart centered breathing, I just learned recently.

Amy Vaughn:

Oh. And just kind of goes with the fact that, physiologically, obviously, it's like our minds influence our bodies, but our bodies influence our mind just as much. Right? Yeah. And so, we were talking about how, like, our heart rate obviously influences how our brain is responding and is reacting to certain things. And so whenever I'm kind of getting, like, racing kind of thoughts or I'm having trouble slowing my nervous system down, outside

of, like, putting my hands on top of my head, which is one that I like to do to kind of slow myself down. I also practice heart centered breathing, which is, like, placing my hands on the center of my chest, closing my eyes, doing some of the box breathing you mentioned. But by actually focusing on breathing from my chest and slowing down my focusing on slowing down my heart rate actually slows down my brain kind of speed because the heart rate is directly correlating and infecting my brain speed. So yeah.

Amy Vaughn:

And, like, I guess there's, like, there's, like, even, like, a little machine you can get that's, like, like, measuring the space between your heartbeats, that is also affecting, like, your brainwaves and things like that. There's more science behind it that I still haven't totally nerded out and learned about yet, but I was like, I learned this, like, 2 weeks ago, and I'm telling everybody about it because I think it's so cool.

Jennifer Guttman:

That's great. That's awesome. That's awesome. That's great.

Amy Vaughn:

Yeah. It's just so fascinating to me because it's like those things. Right? You get scared, and it's like sometimes our body and the way, like, adrenaline hits us, it doesn't know the difference between physically, it doesn't know the difference between scared and excited. It's just the way our brain decides to react. Right? The emotional response is just the way we decide.

Jennifer Guttman:

Nervous system response throughout. Yeah. Exactly.

Amy Vaughn:

Yeah. It's so fascinating to me. So fascinating. Yeah. Alright. Let's talk a little bit too little about self care because that's another important aspect of this whole, in my opinion, conversation. Do you have any tips for our listeners on fostering patients, giving ourselves grace, self care in the midst of busy professional and personal lives?

Jennifer Guttman:

I think that in, like, how busy and overwhelming, like, our lives are between personal and professional, especially in today's modern day world with everything hitting us so fast with technology. It's easy to forget about self care, but self care is critical in order for us to return to whatever tasks we're doing refreshed and with the most effective and efficient brain space, which means that we have to intentionally and purposely take charge of our self care. And the way that I look at it is you need to decide, like, at what point or after what task am I going to engage in self care, which means being super attentive to it so that you have a plan around it. And one way that you can do that besides figuring out when or after what, is to create a list of what kinds of things I could do to take care of myself. And the examples of things would be, you know, you can write down something that you can do or something you can purchase or you can do or even, like, a note you can write to yourself. What do I mean by that? So something you could do would be, like, go for a walk, take a bath, cook a special meal for yourself. None of those things take a tremendous amount of time, and many of them are things that you would normally fit into your life, maybe just in a little bit of an elongated way so that you're adding an extra 15 minutes to them. And so you're just giving yourself an extra 15 minutes of grace or something that you like to buy.

Jennifer Guttman:

And sometimes when you buy something for yourself, you're pausing to purchase something that you're going to like to do in the future. But it's the pause to do something that's nice for you that shows that you feel worthy of something that you're then going to get excited about for something that's gonna happen in the future. So you might buy yourself tickets to a movie, tickets to a game, or even buy yourself flowers, but it's that pause that can have a double, you know, get, like, double worth, you know, the pause and then later on doing it. Or you can simply write an affirmation for yourself in the notes app on your phone or or in a notebook. But I think it's critical to engage in self care and not wait for somebody else to encourage you to do it because the outside world is not gonna encourage us to do it. They're not gonna remind us to take care of ourselves.

The outside world is fickle and unreliable when it comes to, like, hey. You know, you've done a great job.

Jennifer Guttman:

You should take a mental health day. Like, that's not gonna happen. So it's really important that we figure out a way to build it in, because our brains need that refresh in order to, honestly, in order to work as effectively as and optimally as we're hoping to work.

Amy Vaughn:

I believe yeah. I agree. And I think as you're kind of like I'm wondering too, like, how would you correlate that in with, like, satisfaction, like, that long term sense of satisfaction?

Jennifer Guttman:

So the 6th the 6th technique in my book is active self reinforcement and self care. Like, that is the 6th technique. And the reason that it is there is because I think that people are very over focused on delegating reinforcement, validation, the need for self care to the outside world and they've been bred like that. If you think about participation trophies, gold stars in elementary school, we've been told that the outside world is supposed to give us feedback about when we're deserving of certain things but in the end, the external world doesn't really do that. It may do that a little bit when we're young but then it sort of just falls off of a cliff and it doesn't do that anymore. And we're waiting for it and it doesn't come. Right? And I have so many clients who are at work wondering why they're not getting any positive feedback work. They get negative feedback, but what happens is that most of the feedback they get is nothing.

Jennifer Guttman:

And and they interpret nothing or neutral feedback as negative, which

Amy Vaughn:

Yeah.

Jennifer Guttman:

Is not the case. Neutral feedback is just neutral, but they interpret it as negative because they're not getting positive feedback. But the fact of the matter is at work, you just don't get positive feedback in an adult world most of the time, which means you have to do something for yourself in order to convince your brain to continue to do challenging things or your brain's gonna be like, why should I keep doing this? And in order to create a positive feedback loop, you have to create a positive feedback loop and say to your brain, I'm in charge of this now. I am. So if I'm in charge of this, then the reward will definitely be dispensed because I'm in charge of it and you don't have to worry about the external world anymore because now that I'm in charge. And that's one of the things that I write about in the book and I talk about with my clients when a lot of them are lamenting, I don't understand. What does it mean if I hand in a deliverable and I hear nothing? My answer is it means nothing.

Amy Vaughn:

Exactly. You did it. And it can mean a lot if you let it mean a lot. Like, I just yeah. You know what? The longest relationship you'll ever have with anyone is am. I know it's gonna be easier for me, but, like, because I wanna run my own business, but I have quarterly treats. It's like a day. I take off once a quarter, and put it on my calendar.

Amy Vaughn:

I decided when we did our Together Digital, we host an annual, we call our goal getters. It's kind of like authentic ambition, like, goal setting type of thing, workshop. And that was my goal for last year was, like, I'm gonna schedule quarterly meet treats. And, honestly, it was like, I didn't do anything crazy. I went to, like, the library for free. Went to the art museum free, went to the conservatory free, took myself to lunch or brunch, and

that was, like, the only thing that would cost anything. And it was a wonderful day. I spent, like, an hour inside of an art exhibit.

Amy Vaughn:

And when I came out, the guy was like, you're in there for a while. I was like, yeah. I have no children. I read every talk. I watched every video. It was great. That was my self care, which was just getting to go somewhere that I normally would go with kids. And it's like, I don't have time to read or look at anything and, like, really get to pay attention.

Amy Vaughn:

So yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I love that. I love that so much. I'm a big self care fan and really just finding out what works for you. Because, again, self care, I think, sometimes gets kind of stereotyped into being, like, certain things. And it's really about, I think, exploring what truly kind of makes you feel like that's why I love your idea of satisfaction.

Amy Vaughn:

Like, feels that sense of just contentment and happiness and joy kind of in the long term, and then just sort of doing that thing and not being ashamed of it and just kind of getting in there. And, yeah, spending an hour and a half looking at class. You know what, dude? Just deal with it. I'm happy.

Jennifer Guttman:

I mean, it really has to do with, like, getting away from the shoulders. Like, this should be the thing that you do for self care. Yes. Ignore all shoulds about everything in your life and focus on, like, what feels like the right thing to do. For some people, walking a dog is going to feel like a chore and for other people walking a dog is going to feel like self care. And so that's why it has to be authentic because that's the most important thing. Like, somebody's chore could feel like someone else's, like, passion.

Amy Vaughn:

Yeah. That's a great point. I've got a couple more questions here for you that we've got about 5 or 10 minutes left, so I just wanna make sure our live listening audience knows they always have the chance to ask questions if they would like to as well. One other question I wanted to kind of put another pin on here, kind of just building off of the last few questions we've had. How do we ensure that, oh, no. Wait. Sorry. I jumped ahead.

Amy Vaughn:

Given the competitive nature of our industry, advertising in particular, and marketing, it's pretty competitive. Do you have any subtle but maybe effective ways or techniques that you could recommend for boosting confidence? I know that that's something that a lot of our members when we survey them talk about either that or just a sense of self worth.

Jennifer Guttman:

I think that the best way to boost on a regular basis, the best way to boost self worth and self confidence is using self talk. And I mean, I think that to boost overall self worth and self confidence using the 6 techniques in my book would help overall boost self confidence. But on a daily basis, besides the 6 techniques, I think that you can also use self-talk to boost self confidence and that as part of the sustainable life satisfaction method, there are responsibilities that you have to yourself that you can remind yourself about every day. And they are a responsibility to yourself to believe in your right to be true to your authenticity, drive, passion, and inspiration, responsibility to reduce your negativity bias, a responsibility to not let other people's opinions dampen your desire to fulfill your dreams. A responsibility to embrace challenges and opportunity for growth and a responsibility to find validation and reinforcement within yourself instead of from the outside world.

Amy Vaughn:

I love it. All such good stuff. Seriously, all my friends, I hope you're listening. You're all getting copies. How do you ensure that the strategies for achieving life satisfaction are

inclusive and considerate, for our listeners who may be coming from diverse backgrounds or have different needs?

Jennifer Guttman:

I consider sustainable life satisfaction to be made up of 3 things. Part cognitive behavior therapy, part positive psychology, and a big dose of Jennifer. As far as cognitive behavior therapy and positive psychology goes, I brought that skill set to my counseling from the very beginning. It was interactions with those clients in the very beginning that helped me begin to understand happiness versus satisfaction and how I was going to guide people into an understanding of what satisfaction was, what it what satisfaction meant, how I was going to understand satisfaction. And those interactions helped me once I began to dissect satisfaction. And I spent the first 10 years of my career in a family homeless shelter. The clients that I saw during those 10 years had very diverse backgrounds, had very diverse needs, and those were some of the best 10 career years of my life. It was amazing.

Jennifer Guttman:

And it was an extremely difficult job to leave. And the only reason that I left that job was because of the birth of my second child. Even 20 years later, I still keep in touch with some of the residents from that family homeless shelter. They have kept up with all of the work that I've done since I left the shelter, supporting through emails, the work that I'm doing with sustainable life satisfaction. They write to me about it. And at the same time, it gives them the opportunity to update me on their lives, their children's lives, now their grandchildren's lives and in that way, I know that sustainable life satisfaction is something that crosses boundaries and is considerate of people with diverse needs and diverse backgrounds.

Amy Vaughn:

That's fantastic. Yeah. At the core. All human. All human. I love it. That's wonderful. Exactly.

Amy Vaughn:

That is wonderful. So let's dispel some myths and misconceptions, which I always kind of like to do. I usually do this earlier on, but I actually kinda stuck this towards the end just to kind of poke some holes if we've got any sort of lingering doubts out there. But what are some common myths or misconceptions, about finding balance or fulfillment in life that you would like to address, particularly for, let's say, high achieving women like us?

Jennifer Guttman:

I think that there's a belief, a myth, a misconception that we can have it all and be happy. Mhmm. And that just is not true.

Amy Vaughn:

Mhmm.

Jennifer Guttman:

And I think social media propagates this myth with things like LinkedIn and Instagram. Yep. LinkedIn and Instagram show snapshots of people excelling at work and excelling in their personal lives as if they're doing that at the same time. And when they show us snapshots of this, then we fill in the gray areas of these snapshots with mental movies romanticizing these people's lives and then minimizing our own lives. And it makes us feel badly about ourselves and what it does is it makes it seem like they're defying common humanity. Because common humanity is what defines the struggle even if it looks like someone has figured out the key to success.

Amy Vaughn:

Mhmm.

Jennifer Guttman:

So when they are doing that, it's doing common humanity which would bind us all together in a really positive way, a disservice.

Amy Vaughn:

Mhmm. Yeah. I agree. I agree. I think, I was doing a bit of a cup I was doing a series of talks last year talking about how connection is a form of self care and how community is really essential and and forming kind of more transformational versus transactional connecting deeply and meaningfully with others is so important, because perceived loneliness and isolation is on the rise even, like, since the pandemic, even before the pandemic. It's it that affects us even physically, not just emotionally and mentally. And, you know, I was equating it a lot to that sense of the comparison trap. Right? We see things on social media and we constantly, constantly compare ourselves.

Amy Vaughn:

And it's like, that's a great way to make yourself miserable, is to just constantly compare yourself to others because, again, we know what goes on social media. We're marketers. We get it. Yes. We put the pretty pictures out there. We make pretty pictures. We write the lovely captions. And so to fall into that comparison trap, it's just a great way to make yourself miserable.

Amy Vaughn:

And we know that success without strife is not necessarily real. While others might have a tremendous amount of privilege in their lives and be able to kind of achieve certain things without maybe as much strife, it just isn't a thing. Like, there's still struggle. And that's why I love, you know, bringing in guests into the Together digital space, having the conversations that we do, where women are willing to be open and vulnerable, whether it's here or in our Slack channels or at our events to be able to share, like, what it's really like to go through some of these things and have these experiences so that women know that, yeah, like, you can do it. You can do the hard things and have the hard things and get through them and kind of come out the other side. And I remember

once, it was a while back. Gosh. I can't even remember her name now, and I feel terrible.

Amy Vaughn:

This woman, who was, like, a really high up banker, at one of, like, the top 5 banks in the country was up there on stage, and they had asked her that question of, like, how do you have it all and do it all? And she was like, I don't know what that means. Like, she just flat out just, like Exactly. Dissed their questions, which I loved. I wanted to just, like, stand up and give her a round of applause. I was like, would that be really weird? One person in the crowd was like, yeah. Tell them. And because this was, like, 10 years ago now. And, she says, you know, I don't. I don't really think that there's ever an all.

Amy Vaughn:

There's just what I have now, and I'm just grateful for what that is. And what all is today is gonna be different than tomorrow. And what my all is is gonna be different than what her all is and what her all is. Because I think this was a panel if I remember right. And so she's like, you know, I'm just really I'm there that I'm sick of that saying. Totally. There's just really no such thing.

Jennifer Guttman:

Yeah. Totally.

Amy Vaughn:

I love it. So I'm glad you're. I'm glad you're in agreement there. Yes. Alright. Last question, since our live listening audience just seems to be wrapped in the conversation. If you guys have any questions though, of course, feel free to reach out to Jennifer. All of her information and links are in the chat. Thank you, Kaylee, for being so awesome in dropping all of those in there.

Amy Vaughn:

Looking back on your experience, what timeless principles or lessons have you found the most impactful for individuals like our lovely listeners who are striving to lead fulfilling lives amidst very busy professional lives?

Jennifer Guttman:

I mean, trying to find balance is a tricky business. I mean, in my opinion, personally, in my opinion, professionally, there will be so many moments where you feel like you're not operating optimally personally at home, or you feel like you're not operating optimally professionally at work. And there are gonna be so many really, really hard days. I think that the key is to look at it holistically because if you look at it on a day to day basis, that's gonna not be a recipe for finding fulfillment. I think that if you're looking to assess fulfillment or balance, the way to assess that is not daily. Look at it monthly. Look at it yearly because the days are hard, and there's no way to get around that. So my suggestion is zoom out.

Jennifer Guttman:

Like, out. Mhmm. And what do you see when you zoom out? How does it look from a distance?

Amy Vaughn:

Mhmm.

Jennifer Guttman:

And it's when I do that that I can really assess how I'm doing in terms of my feelings of fulfillment and how I do it in terms of how I think I'm doing in terms of balance.

Amy Vaughn:

I love that so much. Thank you. Thank you, Jennifer. I think that's such good advice. We had a journaling prompt, one that was at where our 80 year old selves had to go back in time and, like, visit us in the present and, like, kind of give ourselves that perspective of, like, how things were going and how things went. And I was like, oh, maybe that's how I'll think of things. It's like that zoomed in on an 80 year old me. How would we do it? How are we doing? I love that advice.

Amy Vaughn:

Thank you so much, Jennifer. This was such a great conversation. I really hope you all found it as helpful and informative as and inspirational as I did. Like I said, loads of great links in the chat. Hopefully, you guys get the chance to grab those. If not, they will be added to our show notes. Thank you so much, Jennifer. This has been fantastic.

Amy Vaughn:

I really do appreciate your work and everything that you're doing.

Jennifer Guttman:

Thank you so much for having me. It was so much fun. Awesome. Thank you.

Amy Vaughn:

Okay, everyone. That's all we've got for you today. Until then, everyone, take care. We hope to see you next time. Until then, everyone, keep asking, keep giving, and keep growing. We'll see you later. Bye. Produced by Heart Cast Media.