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J: You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 187. We are talking all about saying yes to what you really want, saying yes to you; stay tuned.

Hey, ladies, I am so glad you're here tuning in to another episode of Vibrant Happy Women. We are here because we, essentially, we the listeners and even me the host of this podcast, we refuse to be victims of our circumstances, we refuse to let life sink us into a pit of overwhelm or stress or anxiety or depression, and so we're here because we're committed to live our best lives. And we do that by talking and learning from each other and by collecting a tool belt of tools that help us to be our happiest, most calm, our happiest, calmest best selves; I am so glad you're here.

My guest today is Becky Bixel who I met through the Vibrant Happy Women club. She was a podcast listener and then joined the club in the effort to kind of get more aligned in her life again, to find herself again after a series of difficult losses that she went through in her life including death, a job loss, and loss of her own fertility through menopause. So, if you have ever experienced a loss (and I know that's all of us) and if you too are on a journey to find yourself and to feel more balanced and aligned and say yes to you, you're going to love this episode.

Before we go any further, I want to share our review of the week, and that is from Moni Maya Liam, and she wrote (I assume those are her kids names, but I could be wrong), she wrote, "I absolutely love this podcast. I've been listening to this podcast while I jog with my baby and it has been so inspirational. I love hearing other women's stories and Jen's wisdom and truth telling. Thank you, Jen." Mona Maya Liam, I love that you shared that, thank you for your appreciation. I like to feel appreciated sometimes too just like we all do, so thank you for taking the time out of your day to show that love, it means a lot. Everyone else listening, your reviews help us so much. Could you leave a review today? If you're the kind of person that loves to pay it forward and loves to show gratitude, you can do it really quick in a minute by going to jenriday.com/review and you can leave that, and I would appreciate it and I might just read it on the air as well.

Well, I'm excited for you to hear my interview with Becky Bixel, especially the theme that we uncovered in the interview of saying yes to you; that is a big theme. And I remember reading Shonda Rhimes's book, 'The Year of Yes', and it kind of opened my mind to this concept. And I want you to think about that as you go into the interview, how could you shift a few things and start saying yes to yourself more often? And that's where we're going to be thinking about throughout this interview.

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Hey, everyone, I am with Becky Bixel, she is from a small desert town in California called Lake Los Angeles. She let me know it has no lake and it's nothing like Los Angeles, but she and her husband and daughter and their 3 dogs are happy to call it home. I met Becky through the Vibrant Happy Women club and I just thought, "Hey, I'm going to have Becky come on," because I was thinking of her one day and I thought, "She should come share what she's doing out there in Lake Los Angeles and with her life." Well, in her free time, Becky loves nature and being outdoors and spends her free time hiking, biking, swimming, kayaking, camping, and skiing; sounds ideal. And she did not start her career as a teacher, but she is a teacher now, and her husband is, too. And they both found their way to teaching because they want to make a difference and felt passionate about alternatives in education. Welcome to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, Becky.

- B: Thank you, Jen, I'm so excited to get a chance to talk with you.
- J: And I'm excited for the chance to talk with you and have everyone hear about your life. We were saying before we hit record that people just wish they could be a fly on the wall in everyone else's lives and see how it really works, so thanks for giving us that inside look at what you're doing in your life.

B: Okay.

- J: Well, your favorite quote to start.
- B: This quote has been with me since college, and that is going back 30 years now. I don't remember where I read it and it was attributed to anonymous, but it's always been important to me, and it's, "If you take a chance, something good might happen and something bad might happen. But if you don't take a chance, nothing happens."
- J: Mm-hmm, that's really good.
- B: Yeah.
- J: I like that. So, how did you apply that when you first heard that back in college? What's the first chance you decided to take as a result? Because obviously, you've remembered it all this time.
- B: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, and I have very much tried to live by it. When opportunities came my way, it was a reminder that I should say yes. This podcast, when you asked me if I would do it, my first thought was, "Oh, no!"

[Laughter]

- B: "No, I can't do that, I don't have anything to say, it'll go badly!" And then I took a breath and remember, "No, it's an opportunity and you say yes."
- J: I love that. And I hope by the end of it, you're going to be happy that something good happens rather



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than something bad...

- B: And that's the thing...
- J: ...that something will happen, yeah.

B: Yeah, usually, it is something good. Years later, I was reminded again. I was in my 30s and it had been a difficult time in my life, and I signed up for yoga class. My teacher was Sophia Momi, I still remember her, she was such a great mentor. And one of her yoga practices that she gave to us was to say yes, that was a practice, go home and practice saying yes. I mean, obviously not if someone was going to who asked you to rob a bank or...

J: Right.

B: ... do something that was against your morals, that generally opportunities come our way and we try and hide from them or run away from them or too scared. It kind of went along with my quote and it's kind of a shorter motto, "Say yes."

- J: Mm-hmm, that's a great rule, say yes.
- B: Say yes.
- J: I want my kids to always say yes to when I ask them to do chores.
- B: (Laughs)
- J: I'm going to hang that up on the wall, "Say yes."
- B: Right.
- J: "Don't forget... did you forget the family motto?" (Laughs)
- B: Yeah, that's great. I know I've said it to my daughter, but you... we could make it a family motto.
- J: (Laughs) Say yes.
- B: I try and live it with my daughter. I think the reason the quote and the motto has been so important me is that I've never been that bold risk-taking person, and I very much wanted to be.
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: As a kid, as a teenager, I was just afraid of everything, and it was such a hard way to live.



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J: Mm-hmm.

B: I worried about what people think, and I saw it in my own parents, they were very fearful. My daughter is a little bit like that in terms of trying new things or going down a waterslide.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: Perfect example, she did not want to go down a waterslide, she was too scared. So, we had the whole talk about saying yes and taking a chance, and she trusted me and we went down that waterslide, and it was amazing. And we spent the whole rest of the day, up and down, up and down, up and down.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: That is a way that I've used it with her to get her to say yes and try things.

J: How old is your daughter?

B: She is 10.

J: Oh, that's perfect, good for you. Well, tell us about the low points. I'm saying plural because you kind of sent me a note about your low points, and I think it might be interesting for you to just work through what you've gone through so people can have perspective and realize, sometimes, we're not struggling as much as another person might be.

B: Mm-hmm.

J: I don't hear in your voice any victim mentality about it, which is one thing I love about you, but yeah, tell us what's happening in your life.

B: Well, I've certainly had a lot of years to work through the victim mentality. I mean, I'm old enough now that I don't just have 1 low point, there have been a few. Because just when you think you've got it, just when you think you've got this whole living life thing down, you know, something happens, something changes.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: I'll talk about the most recent challenge, it was actually a few. My husband and I both worked for the same charter school for over 10 years; he was there slightly longer. And we worked with at-risk youth, students who for many different reasons, traditional school was not working for them. Oftentimes, they had fallen so far behind they could no longer graduate (so these were middle school and high school students), or they had been suspended, expelled, constantly truant, gone to juvenile detention. So, these were kids with big challenges...



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J: Mm-hmm.

B: And those are the kids that we worked with, and we loved, we had a passion for it. My identity was kind of rolled up in it, you know, "What do you do?"

"Oh, I work with these special kids." Our school closed quite suddenly. There were changes to charter law here in California and it meant that we were no longer operating within this new law.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: And we had expected some things to happen where we would be okay, there were some loopholes, there were... anyway, it didn't happen and we closed at the very end of June...

J: Wow!

B: ... last year.

J: Mm.

B: Yeah, it was shocking, it was like a death, it was like a loss. My students had already gone on break, many of them I didn't get to see and say goodbye to. My coworkers, we had a day to say goodbye. But my husband and I were very lucky, we both got other jobs, but very different jobs. And so there was this whole period of adjustment to these new jobs. At the same time, my mother who had been previously healthy and a very feisty capable 80-year-old woman just very suddenly could no longer care for herself or her mentally challenged son.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: I was in the process of putting her into care. I could not care for her, she needed everything, she couldn't do anything anymore; it was just such a sudden change.

J: Yeah.

B: At the same time, I had completed menopause and I could feel the end. It happens over years and your body changes and... but I was in a moment where I knew, "Oh, this is it now."

J: Aww, you could feel it.

B: Yes, I don't know if that's the way it works for everyone, but I did very much feel it; and it was also like a loss. My mother died, and that's not something that I had expected to hit me quite as hard as it did. I had already grieved because she was this, like I said, very capable, feisty, elderly woman, and suddenly, she was totally handicapped, I already kind of felt the loss; she wasn't the same mother that I knew. And dementia said in very quickly, I didn't expect death to be like the worst thing.



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- - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: It seemed like the way she was living, for her, was already not what she would want.
 - J: Yeah. You had all of this happen in what period of time, a period of a year or so?
 - B: Yes. Well, then my mother-in-law died.
 - J: Oh my goodness!
 - B: 6 months after my mother died, my mother-in-law died; and hers was quite sudden. Although oddly, she had been... she'd been bedridden for a number of years, but still remained very with it, very healthy. And hers, it happened suddenly. She went to the hospital, we thought she'd had a stroke because she couldn't speak, she couldn't swallow, but it turns out there was a brain tumor covering an entire hemisphere of her brain.
 - J: Oh my gosh, wow.
 - B: Totally untreatable, it had likely been growing for 20 years or more.
 - J: Oh wow.
 - B: There were times when I had called my mother-in-law crazy; which I feel really bad about now.
 - J: Yeah. (Laughs)
 - B: Yeah. And she was a very sweet, caring, loving individual.
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: It was a tough year with our family.
 - J: So, it was the loss of the job, loss of your mother... well, her illness which you grieved and then here death...
 - B: Mm-hmm.
 - J: ... then the death of your mother-in-law, and menopause.
 - B: Mm-hmm.
 - J: You're done, and you... wow.



- - B: Coping with that.
 - J: And you have a child too...
 - B: Yes.
 - J: ... you know, to deal with a spouse and life.
 - B: Yes.
 - J: Whew!
 - B: And then we was dealing with his own mother's death. And actually, that brought us together because I think he began to really understand more of what I had been dealing with.
 - J: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.
 - B: Strange as it was in a way, it was also a blessing, if you will.
 - J: So, what did grief look like for you, all of this process? I assume you really spent a year grieving essentially.
 - B: Or maybe a year trying not to grieve. (Laughs)
 - J: Oh, really? Okay.
 - B: Yeah. I think I was just kind of trying to shut it out and get on with my life. I had a busy life. And doing this new job, tried to throw myself into the job, and I had a lot to manage because there was taking care of my brother.
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: He had to be cared for. Cleaning out my mom's apartment, finding homes for her animals, there were lots of things to keep me busy.
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: And that busyness was a way of not really thinking about what had happened and how I felt about it. So, I would just start to cry in the car, exercising, just random times, I would just totally break down.
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: It would be something like... not always random. Sometimes, it would be triggered by, I would drive





by my mom's old department, or near my mom's old apartment, and then I would fixate on something that had happened; I maybe did the wrong thing.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: It was so difficult trying to figure out what had caused my mom to suddenly deteriorate in just a matter of a few weeks. So, I'd second-guess myself, "I shouldn't have trusted the doctor. I should have gone for a second opinion," and I would let these things spin through my mind over and over, I'd replay how I could have done it differently, how I could have saved my mom, how it had been up to me and I hadn't been maybe a good enough advocate for my mom.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: So many different scenarios. There were things that I should have said to her, done for her. I think I lost my dad maybe 13 years ago and it was the same thing. I was very busy taking care of the things that needed to be done after someone dies, and then I also had my mother and my brother to take care of. And I didn't really grieve for my father. It was maybe months and months after he passed that I broke down crying and I was trying to figure out what was going on. We were at a wedding, it was like this happy occasion and still I was a mess. I figured it out that it was about my father. He lived in Ohio, he wasn't a part of my daily life the way my mother was. And even though our relationship was not perfect, it wasn't as contentious or difficult as it was with my mother.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: So, I think there was just more to regret. I knew better than that. I knew that things happen the way they were supposed to happen and my mom and I did the best we could. And yet, here I am spinning out about all of these things.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: It made it hard to function in my daily life. I got to the point where I felt like I was walking around with this giant dark cloud around me. And people were talking and saying things to me and trying to help and try to give me positive encouraging words and I couldn't feel it.

J: Mm-hmm, wow, you were in full-on depression.

B: Oh yeah, yeah. And I would go between I'd be numb or I'd be just hopeless.

J: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. I think everyone listening has hit a place that's similar; maybe not as deep or as dark. But what on earth did you do to get out? What was your first thing you thought of doing that was the first step to pull out of that place?

B: This would not be everyone's choice, but I started antidepressants.



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J: Mm-hmm.

B: I had been on antidepressants at another period in my life, I knew they worked for me. It was also the most expedient, and I got to a point where I was feeling so bad.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: And when I called the doctor and we talked about options and I asked to see a therapist, that was going to be maybe 6 weeks.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: Or I could see a psychiatrist and immediately get on medication; I knew they would put me on medication.

J: I just want to say to anyone questioning when you said, "This wouldn't be everyone's choice," there's a shame built-in to antidepressants that is slowly going away; thank goodness.

B: True.

J: But I also have been on an antidepressant at one time in my life and it helped tremendously.

B: Mm-hmm.

J: It's a great first step. So, I want to just make sure everyone out there listening knows it's valid, it will definitely help. They aren't as bad as the media tries to claim they don't work, I don't find that to be true.

B: Right, right.

J: So, it's a great first step, so I'm glad you mentioned that.

B: Right. And they don't work for everyone, and it can take time to find out what works for you and... but I knew they would work for me.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: I knew the last time that I had taken antidepressants that I had been in this hole. It was like someone threw me a rope...

J: Mm-hmm.

B: ... and I did not have the strength to pull myself out.



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- - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: The antidepressant gave me that strength.
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: And it worked again, it really did. It gave me the ability to say, "Okay, I need to do something here."
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: "What am I going to do?"
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: It was things like, go hiking every day..."
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: ... in the desert with my dogs, with my husband. Make time to do that because that will make me feel better.
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: I began an exercise class, I made time in my day to go to an exercise class; did that every day, made me feel better.
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: A friend of mine steered me toward the podcast, Vibrant Happy Women podcast, and then I joined.
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: Because I knew I needed to fill my head with positive messages, I needed to be reminded of those tools that we have to help us function through our lowest points.
 - J: Mm-hmm.
 - B: I started journaling again, meditating again, started that long process of how do I get back to a daily meditation practice?
 - J: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.
 - B: Here and there, I started piecing my life back together, and giving myself time, permission to take





time to do that. It was no longer, "Well, I'll fit exercise into my day if it works out. If my families that I support through my job, if they don't need me or if I don't have to take my daughter anywhere or if my husband's not playing tennis, then I'll be able to exercise."

J: Mm-hmm.

B: I made it fit into my day. And I started talking to friends about my mother, about my grief. I have a very good friend who lost her father the year before and I really didn't understand at that time what she was going through, and I was able to say, "Hey, I get it now. Tell me again what it was like for you and what you did."

- J: Mm-hmm, oh, that's so good. You were listening, but also, you were reflecting back to each other, so...
- B: Mm-hmm.
- J: ... it was a joint therapy.
- B: Yeah, yeah. She also said how much it helped her. And I remember when her father first died and how shattered she was about it, my thought was, "Oh, well, she must have been really close to her dad, it must have been different." Because I had this story... and this is where... another thing that I've really been able to look at, the stories that I had told myself around my mother and I.
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: I told myself this story that we weren't that close.
- J: Ooh.
- B: That she didn't really understand me and I didn't understand her, it was more a relationship out of obligation.
- J: Mm, and then you felt guilty for that.
- B: And I felt extremely guilty for that.
- J: (Laughs) Yes.
- B: Yeah, did I mention the guilt? I don't think I mentioned the guilt. That was another big part...
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: ... of my grieving, my terrible grieving.



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J: Mm-hmm.

B: I've had to admit a lot of things about my relationship with my mother. I learned something important about forgiveness.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: I used to think it was one and done to it, that all I had to do was forgive my mother for this specific thing that happened, right? So, I could take one thing and say, "Mom, I forgive you," and like really feel it. And even if I didn't say it to her, I just had to feel it and to say it and it would be done. But for me anyway, that's not really what happens.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: I have to keep doing it.

J: Mm...

B: It keeps...

J: ... process.

B: ... coming back to me. And then, you know, I question, you know, "Well, then did I really forgive my mom" and I think in that moment that I decided it was over and I understand and forgive her, I think I did, but it still comes up for me, it's still there, it hasn't completely gone away.

J: Yeah, that hurt is there and...

B: Yes.

J: ... you forgive over and over again as the hurt comes up.

B: Yes

J: Well, I love your list of things you did after your antidepressant helped you have the strength to start pulling yourself on that rope. And it feels like you were saying yes to you in these...

B: Yes.

J: ... promises of hiking, exercising, joining the club, journaling, meditation. So, tell us, what are some things you had to say no to so that you had room for this yes for you?

B: Ooh, that's a good point. I had to say no to my job, to being super on top of things, and my idea of



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what it means to be doing a good job to be all in, all committed.

- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: I had to set boundaries. I had to say, "Well, some of these things are going to wait." And then I quit my job.
- J: (Laughs)
- B: I finally had the strength to say, "This is really not working for me, and here are my reasons."
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: And I don't know if I could have done that without getting to a place where I just wasn't so reactive and fearful...
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: ... all the time.
- J: So, you quit your job as a teacher. I mean, I know the charter school closed.
- B: After the charter school closed, I took a position support with a different charter schools supporting homeschool families.
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: I took it because it was a flexible position.
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: It would give me the time that I needed to... I would be able to drop my daughter off at school and pick her up at the end of the day and take her to her different activities. My previous job had allowed me to work part-time to do that. There's not a lot of teaching jobs out there that allow you to work part-time.
- J: Right.
- B: This job was perfect in terms of flexibility. I took this job, I took it full-time because I had just put my mother into care, and I don't know what it's like where you are, but in California, nursing homes are very, very expensive; it was basically like having a second mortgage.
- J: Oh my goodness, wow.



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B: I was concerned about finances, I didn't want to burden my family with that. So, I took this position full-time and I was... yeah, I was very fearful about not having a position, not being able to pay for that expense. I needed more time, I needed time. I decided that I would quit my job and take the summer off and see how I felt. If I needed more time, I would take it, if I felt like I could go back to work, maybe I would go back, but it didn't feel... after everything that had happened during the year, the job was kind of wrapped up with all of those feelings. Do you know what I mean?

J: Yes, yes.

B: Like, it was a bad time in my life. And, you know, even though I had great co-workers and a great manager and they supported me, they would have supported me even more had I allowed it...

J: Mm-hmm.

B: ... still it was wrapped up in all those feelings and I didn't want to commit to anything.

J: Time for a clean break.

B: A clean break.

J: A fresh start, fresh start.

B: Exactly what I wanted, I wanted to first start. And I did end up taking another position also supporting homeschool families, but I did it with my daughter's school.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: She goes to a school that... also a charter school that I really have a lot of passion around. They do project-based learning, they're very community focused, they're very student-driven. A lot of schools say, "Oh yeah, we must be student-driven," but they are. My daughter does something every day called 10 quiet minutes where they meditate in the classroom or do yoga, they practice 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Kids and Teens'.

J: Aww. that's sweet.

B: Yes, it is, it truly is. And she lives them, she lives the 7 habits. It's the same as the Franklin Covey '7 Habits of Highly Effective People' adapted for children, "Put first things first. Seek first to understand before being understood," these things; great life skills. Now, having joined their home study program, I get to be more a part of that, and I need that higher vision. Because their vision really is to change education to be what the 21st century needs; that the old ways aren't working. So, it just gives me this higher philosophy to work towards. And I am that person, I need that in my job, in my life, I have to feel like I'm doing something bigger.



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- J: Yeah, making your mark and leaving your contribution.
- B: Mm-hmm. So, even though it's the same type of job that I was doing before, now I'm doing it with kind of a greater purpose, if that makes sense.
- J: Yeah, we all need that. And I think, a lot of times when our lives revolve around busyness and all the things happening, we lose sight of contribution and purpose. So, I'm so glad you found a way that aligns that with your income, which is beautiful, right? (Laughs)
- B: I definitely took a cut to do this job, but I decided that it was worth it.
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: And so far, I don't think I was wrong. I was raised with this mentality that you should work toward higher salary, more benefits, greater... every job should be an advancement at some point, you should be doing better than your parents.
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: The world has changed. Now, I think more than... now, I see that more than money or a higher position, being happy in life, making your life work is more important to me; and this works for me.
- J: Perfect, I agree, being fulfilled and happy matter.
- B: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.
- J: Sure, sure. Well, let's have a break or our sponsor and then I want to come back and talk a little more about education, as well as your favorite things.
- B: Okay.
- J: Alright, welcome back, Becky. I want to hear, you mentioned the charter school you work for is set up to be what the 21st century needs in education. Where do you see education moving? Just to inspire us a little bit so we can get that bigger picture.
- B: Where I would like it to move?

[Laughter]

- J: Yeah, that would be great.
- B: I would like to move away from standardized testing.



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J: Mm-hmm.

B: Because I think when you have tests that focus on language arts and math, then you have teachers and schools that focus on language arts and math, and those aren't the only things that are important.

J: Mm-hmm, it's so true.

B: We all have different talents, intelligences, gifts, and yet we have these tests that only test a narrow part and they don't test things like creativity. That's what we need.

J: Yes.

B: Instead of these standards that were expecting children to meet at certain times, certain points in their lives, I'm not sure... you know, we talk about how important it is to be student-centered, but yet we still want to try and tell our students what they must learn.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: Is it in every kids best interest to struggle through algebra?

J: Right.

B: Maybe it is, but maybe we need to have a conversation too.

J: Ugh, it's tricky. I wish that there weren't national standards; well, that sounds horrible. I'm not sure, maybe I like them, maybe I don't, but...

B: Mm-hmm.

J: ... I just think my husband, who grew up in Switzerland, was on track to become an apprentice at a bakery because he didn't make the college track. And another friend of mine there became an apprentice who installed blinds. He is really good at installing blinds and he finds it fulfilling because he's so good at it. So, what do you think that means in terms of the college application or admission process and how the whole system needs to shift in order for this piece to work within the system?

B: Yes, I'm glad you asked, because I really feel like, as long as colleges still require these test scores, SATs, ACTs, then, you know, the schools are going to keep focusing on test scores. But there is change happening and some colleges have started to go to a different type of transcript, a transcript that includes things that the student has done beyond academics.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: What are they passionate about? What have they done in their community? There is a great speaker,



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he's a professor, he recently changed colleges, and I can't remember, but his name is Yong Zhao and he has written a series of books that talk about 21st century learning. And now, we're educating students for jobs we don't even know yet. We don't know entirely what the workplace is going to look like in the future.

- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: But we're pretty sure that students are going to need to be able to solve problems, they're going to need to be creative, and they're also going to need a certain amount of entrepreneurial skills; a lot of entrepreneurial skills.
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: Because more jobs are jobs that you create; like you, right?
- J: Right.
- B: A great example. And he talks about what you need in education is educators who can find greatness in their students, help their students find greatness in themselves, "What is it that student is great at?" and teach them how to make that their career.
- J: Mm, I love that. It's almost like we stopped focusing on all these skills that no one ever uses, and I don't taking so long to shift, but start making middle school about these skills you're talking about, problem-solving, creativity.
- B: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.
- J: Even upper elementary, entrepreneurial skills. I feel like college is unnecessary. I know, everyone's going to be up in arms.
- B: (Laughs)
- J: But shifting and making high school more like college where people build a portfolio of skills. For example, when you finish college and let's say you majored in advertising, well, you have to bring a portfolio of the work you've done, advertisers will come and try to snag you...
- B: Mm-hmm.
- J: ... at essentially a form or fair. Well, I just wonder if it couldn't work like that in high school and more of the apprenticeship approach and more of the hands-on internship approach. I think it would be fun that way.
- B: Right.



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J: And I'm dreaming, but...

[Laughter]

J: ... you Californians can lead the way.

B: (Laughs)

J: I feel like you are.

[Laughter]

B: Well, I do too, but now there's kind of a backlash against charter schools and there are new laws being proposed and enacted that really limit charter schools. And maybe it did swing too far the other way, you know? Not all charter schools have been reputable or have educated their students. I get it, but at the same time, there's a lot... charter schools have more freedom than traditional schools to be innovative. It's unfortunate that there does seem to be this backlash now.

J: It's really interesting.

B: I don't know what's going to happen.

J: It's super interesting; I don't know the answers. I do really appreciate public education to the extent that...

B: Yes.

J: ... they want everyone to learn.

B: Yes.

J: And it integrates everyone and doesn't create pockets of those who have money and those who do not. But... (Laughs)

B: Yeah.

J: ... ugh, tricky, for sure. Well, you got us thinking, let's just all dream and journal about our schools, and maybe that process alone will make it happen; Law of Attraction. (Laughs)

B: Right.

J: Becky, tell me a time that you followed your intuition and it turned out right; so gut instinct, God, the universe, whatever you call it.



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B: Oh my gosh, there has been... you know, with the benefit of time and working on myself, and I can look back and I see those moments in my life that were just so totally the universe helping me get what I wanted.

J: Mm-hmm.

B: I have a couple favorites. I was in my sophomore year of college, I was in English class, another student... I had seen a flyer that morning about a study abroad program in the London, England and I could just feel this deep, deep yearning, right? But of course put it out of my mind, there's just no way that made any sense that I could possibly do this. I was working 2 jobs, I was on scholarships and grants and loans, and no way this could work, but still, that deep yearning. And I sit down in my English class, another student sits next to me who I've never spoken to, I don't think she'd ever spoken to anyone really, she was super shy, super quiet, she started up this conversation with me. She started with, "Did you see the flyer about the study abroad program?" and I was thinking, "How odd that she's talking to me about this," but I said, "Yes. Are you going to do it?" and she said, "Well, I really want to. I want you to do it with me," (Laughs) and I thought, "Well, okay. Like, does she even know me really?" And I said, "I hate to disappoint you, I would love to, but there's just no way that this would be possible for me," and I explained the jobs, the financial aid, and she's like, "Come to the foreign students office with me after class."

J: Mm-hmm.

B: She said, "You can take your financial aid with you, and it cost less to go to college in England than it costs to go here."

J: No way; that's cool. (Laughs)

B: I ended up going to the financial aid office, and I don't know, everything just kind of fell into place and I ended up studying for a semester in London. And then I studied for a semester in Sevilla, Spain, and then I got a work permit and I went back to London. I ended up coming back briefly to the States to finish up my last semester of college, then I went back to London and I stayed for 10 years.

J: Oh, wow.

B: I traveled the world, it totally made me who I am and gave me a lot of the views that I have. That, I never would have believed that could happen. And the way it just fell into place, it wasn't me, I didn't have to do anything but say yes. And then my other favorite is I manifested my husband and my daughter, I am convinced that that's what happened.

J: Right! Ooh, fun.

B: A long time ago, I had a therapist who said, "If you are clear about what you want, the universe will help you get it." And my challenge has always been being clear in my life about what I wanted. You know, I always just kind of went along wasn't clear about what job I wanted to do, so I would just take



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the next thing in front of me and the next thing in front of me. And I wasn't always clear about I wanted a family, but I'd gotten to a point in my life, quite late actually, I was 35, I knew that if this was something I wanted, you know, I had to do it all quickly. I had this very clear vision one day at the park of myself walking next to a man with a child on his shoulders and it being my husband. I had been going to a church that believed in manifesting. This isn't really something that I had thought about before or knew about, but they believed that people can manifest for you. One Sunday, they were having people write what they wanted, what they wanted the group of practitioners to think about to send out to the universe. And so I wrote this, "I want to get married and I want to have a child," and it was after this vision. It was within a month or so that I met my husband. We were both 35, we were married a year later, then 3 years later... no, 4 years later. Yeah, well, I was 38 when I got pregnant with my daughter, so was of advanced maternal age, I had my daughter. One day we found ourselves in that park and, yeah, I'm convinced.

- J: You saw the whole thing.
- B: Yeah. yeah.
- J: Mm, I love that, that's a great story.

B: Yeah. Even meeting my husband was kind of... it seemed unlikely. I had gone to weddings for friends of mine, they had both met their wives on eHarmony, and I thought, "Well, I'm going to try this," but eHarmony, it was a lot of work and a lot of money, so, "Oh, I'm just going to do Yahoo for \$9.99 a month," because that's what you want to do when you're looking for a life partner, right; go cheap. I joined Yahoo and they had these different filters so you could put in your ideal mam, income, career, geographic location, anything you could think of, political affiliation, religion, whatever. And I did, I filled it out completely exactly what I wanted, and I hit search and 1 person came up, and it was my husband.

- J: (Laughs) That's crazy.
- B: (Laughs)
- J: That's so crazy, Becky.
- B: It was crazy.
- J: It's a great story.
- B: (Laughs)
- J: That's awesome. Well, I appreciate that. You inspired me to think again about, "What's my vision?" Once in a while, I just check in and make sure I'm on track with my past intentions and vision, but sometimes, you got to create a new one. So, I'm going to check in and see what mine is for my future; thank you.



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- B: Yeah, I'm trying to do that right now. I'm not sure at this point.
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: I'm working on clarity.
- J: Okay, create a whole new school system for the whole country...
- B: Oh my gosh.
- J: ... (unclear) [40:48]. (Laughs)
- B: Wow, wow.
- J: That's a little big, but...
- B: But very interesting. (Laughs)
- J: Yeah, right, for sure. Let's have a challenge from you to our listeners and then we'll say goodbye.
- B: Okay, alright. What about the challenge of saying yes?
- J: Mm-hmm!
- B: Being open when your first thought is, "Oh no, I couldn't do that," instead, say yes and think about how it could work.
- J: You know, I feel like I'm gypping you, Becky. By the way, I love that, "Say yes," but are there any favorite things you want to whip out super-duper fast...(Laughs)?
- B: Oh yeah.
- J: (unclear) [41:23]
- [Laughter]
- B: Oh...
- J: Let's do like a lightning round. Ready? Here we go. Favorite book.
- B: 'Inner Skiing'.
- J: Ooh! Okay, favorite easy meal.





- B: Roasted veggies and tempeh.
- J: Favorite kitchen gadget.
- B: Instant Pot.
- J: Ah. Favorite life hack.
- B: Kanban. It's a Japanese time management tool.
- J: How do you spell that?
- B: Kanban.
- J: Kanban, okay, you have to go (unclear) [41:46]...
- B: Hopefully I'm pronouncing that right. Okay
- J: (Laughs)
- B: So, it's this time management where you'd use 3 columns, to do, doing, and done...
- J: Okay.
- B: and you use post-it notes, but you can never have more than 3 things in you're doing column.
- J: Ah.
- B: When you move 1 thing out, you can move the next thing in. It just... it helps me focus because I can be all over the place.
- J: I have tried that system, it had a different name. Let's see, what was it called here? Anyway, I've tried something similar. That is cool, but I didn't ever know the rule of 3 things in the doing column only. (Laughs)
- B: It helps me because I tend to freak out about a long to-do list.
- J: Mm-hmm.
- B: If I limit my to-do list, then it feels more manageable.
- J: So, the columns are, to do, doing, done.



- - B: Right, right.
 - J: And you can't forget to celebrate when that done column gets really full,.
 - B: Yes. And you could call them in progress or complete.
 - J: Beautiful. Okay, everyone, say yes, get out your post-it notes...
 - B: (Laughs)
 - J: ... get Becky's system, Kanban, K a n b a n; I love that. Okay, one more, what does it mean for you to be a vibrant happy woman?
 - B: Feeling connected, connected to my family, my community, my co-workers, just this great love and connection to the world around me.
 - J: Perfect. So important, and getting harder to come by with technology, I feel like sometimes.
 - B: Yes. True connection, it doesn't always happen through technology.
 - J: We have to be intentional, yes.
 - B: Mm-hmm.
 - J: Whereas it used to be natural. Well, Becky, this was awesome!
 - B: It was!
 - J: Thank you!
 - B: Thank you!
 - J: Yeah. Thanks for being a vibrant happy woman and sharing that story of really you overcame a lot and you're moving forward and living purposely; I love it.
 - B: And thank you for helping.
 - [Laughter]
 - B: Couldn't do it without Vibrant Happy Women.
 - J: Aww. Well, thanks for being on the show.





B: Have a great day.

J: I love gaining insight and wisdom from other women, I love being across the microphone from so many amazing women, and especially this episode when we talk about saying yes to you. And I hope the wheels in your brain are turning and that maybe you'll even pull out a journal and write a few thoughts on what you want and how you could more often say yes to what you want, which probably means saying no to some other things. It gets really juicy and empowering when you get to say no to things that suck the life out of you and yes to the things that bring you joy and energy.

Now, in the episode, Becky mentioned that she is a member of the Vibrant Happy Women club and that it was helpful to provide her with tools that could help her lift herself out of that pit that she found herself in. Now, the club is for more than just people who are depressed, it's for anyone who wants to amass a collection of happiness tools, self-help tools that help you to feel more vibrant, energized, happy, positive, bubbly, radiant, that help you to have a vision, that help you to take action, that help you to have healthy boundaries, all these good things that we want in our lives, that we want to teach our kids, that will help us to feel amazing; that is the goal of the vibrant happy woman club. And if you want to be a part of it, you can join us at vibranthappywomenclub.com.

I will be back later this week with a Happy Bit, talking more about the idea of saying yes, specifically around saying yes to your vision. First, you have to know what you want, creating that vision of your next 3 years, and then repeatedly saying no to the things that aren't going to get you closer to that and saying yes to the things that are; that is coming later this week. I will see you then. Until then, make it a vibrant and happy week, take care.



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