

# Small But Mighty Agency Podcast

## Episode 55: 5 ingredients for happiness “soup”

### Speakers: Audrey Joy Kwan, Katie Jefcoat

#### Audrey Joy Kwan

Do you believe in planning for more happiness and joy in your business? I do. If you're like me, you probably got your planning done in December, and are super excited about what's to come. Or maybe January is the month you start planning. I don't know a business owner who isn't doing some sort of planning. Whether you do it at the end of the year or the beginning of the year. There's no wrong or right time. But there is one thing that many small business owners don't do when they make strategic plans. You don't actively plan for more happiness and joy. That's why in today's episode, we talk about making happiness soup in 2023, and the five necessary ingredients. See you there.

Welcome to the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. If you're a creative consultant, or agency owner, who wants to know what the roller coaster ride really looks like to grow your business from one to many, you're in the right place. My guest and I pull back the curtains on the realities of growing and running agencies of different sizes, and what it takes to build a team. And if you're anything like me, you want more than the highlight reel. You want to learn from the mistakes of others so that you can stop short of making the same mistakes. I'm your host, Audrey Joy Kwan, I spend my days as a coach and consultant to multiple six and seven figure agency owners. For the last seven years. I've been behind the scenes, helping people grow, lead and operate small but mighty agencies. Here at the Small Mighty Agency Podcast will uncover what works and equally as important what didn't work to get these business owners to where they are today.

Hey, friends, Happy New Year and welcome back to the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. We're doing something different today. On the regular we talk to agency owners about the ins and outs of running their business, making money and growing a team. Since it's the new year I want to take this time to explore a topic that most of us including myself want more of every year. The topic is joy and happiness. Joining us on the topic today is Katie Jefcoat. She has a podcast called Everyday Happiness. Before starting her own business. Katie was a federal court trial attorney at a big law firm in Washington DC. When we connected Katie said that as a lawyer, the anxiety of her ambition weighed her down. She described how she would lie down, close her eyes at night and feel the weight of more items on her to do list than the day before. Her thoughts resonated with me. Every ambitious career woman or business owner knows that feeling. When you're in that space. You wonder how you will get off the hamster wheel and start living life for more than the hustle. If that resonates with you today, or you've experienced that in the past, adding more joy and happiness is relevant to every season of our lives. I know this is true for me. Before we jump right in. Katie, tell us a little bit about you.

**Katie Jefcoat**

Great. Well, thank you for having me. I'm so excited to be here. I love your podcast. So this is such a thrill for me. My name is Katie Jefcoat I live right outside of Washington, DC. And I am a happiness expert. I've been diving into happiness, I am obsessed with kindness and how kindness can be a ripple effect to create not only more happiness for ourselves, but just this idea that we can live in a kinder world and we get to show up.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

Katie, let's talk about happiness soup. You talk about the concept of happiness soup, what is it and what goes into the soup?

**Katie Jefcoat**

Oh my gosh, it's so much fun. So what I have discovered over so many, so much research, I love like diving into like the journal articles and following all the scientists and like distilling it. And basically what the, what the thought leaders and the scientists will say is that happiness is really about 50%, genetics, 25% circumstantial, like what's happening to you. And then 25% is in your control. That's about like, everybody's different, right? We just talked about genetics. So if you're looking at that, like, you know, pie, so to speak, then we have 25% that's within our control. And the thing is, is that you could try lots of different things that you think will help make you happy. I mean, you just go on the internet, you can find all the things. But the fact is not everything works for everyone. And you get to decide what works for you. There are a million ways to do anything. And that's really the message for the happiness soup.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

What goes into your happiness soup?

**Katie Jefcoat**

The definition of happiness that most scientists will agree on is really a two pronged approach. So most people think of happiness as the emotions right? The contentment, the positive well being, the elatement, the joy, the bliss, you know, we call it all different kinds of things. It's this idea that you look for a parking spot, and you get a great parking spot at the mall and you're so happy, right? It's this emotion. But the second prong to happiness is purpose and satisfaction. And I think that's where a lot of the magic can happen, and where this striving kind of comes from. So purpose is how you feel when you're doing the thing you love. Right? How you feel when you're doing the thing you love. This can be academic research, or work, building a business, being involved in the community, being a parent, it could be any of these things. And then satisfaction is simply what you have more than what you want. So we want to appreciate what we have more than we pined for what we want. And that's where we start getting into the happiness soup. So one of the best ways scientifically, to change those chemicals in your brain, you know, the serotonin and the dopamine is to practice gratitude. Right, everyone says, practice gratitude. But the thing is, and what I was mentioning earlier about, there's a million ways to do anything. So many people will tell you just get a gratitude journal, write 10 things down a day, you'll be happier. But the fact is, a lot of us want to poke our eyes out when we think about writing in a gratitude journal. So maybe that's not it for you, maybe it's a gratitude jar, maybe it's two text messages every

morning, that to someone saying how much you appreciate them. Maybe it's sending out a thank you card.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

What you're pointing out is that one person's gratitude practice might be another person's pain in the butt. If one type of gratitude practice doesn't work for you, for example, journaling, than getting creative to find different type of practice is needed because gratitude is essential. So how do you practice gratitude?

**Katie Jefcoat**

Yeah, so I am a verbal processor. And I tell people all the time, how much I appreciate them, whether it's the UPS man dropping off a package, the, you know, barista at the coffee shop, the children, my husband, the people in my life, I love sending cards, it's my love language, I created a product line around kindness cards, like literally sending cards to people that say like, the world is better with you in it, like just fun things like just because I love it. I love sharing gratitude.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

I can resonate with that gratitude can be a practice of daily spoken words. It sounds so simple, but speaking gratitude out loud or verbally expressing gratitude for the little things has a big impact and making the small things more meaningful. What are other ways to practice gratitude that some of us might not think of?

**Katie Jefcoat**

Well, I think there's so many, right, I love the gratitude jar, I think it's fun to like, see a bunch of little notes and see the jar pile up. And, and all of that, you know, and then, you know, even if it's just like a post it note or something. And are you you know that you fold it over? So the obviously they don't all sit together, right? Like, let's be real, but like, How fun is that? Because we all have colour post it notes, I am sure that I'm not alone and your audience will all agree that we all have colored post it notes. And it's really like that's so fun. And you know, it's even taking a walk and just being mindful and grateful for the leaves on the ground, the fresh air you get to breathe, the legs that allow you to go for a walk, right. It's savoring you know, what it smells like.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

What about doing gratitude with a family together, I love going around the table at dinnertime hearing praises that everyone has for the day.

**Katie Jefcoat**

We do. As for our family, we do our gratitude in the morning, we do family meeting in the morning, where we do breakfast, set the kids up for success for the day, like all the things and one of the things that we do is gratitude. And sometimes, you know, it could be breakfast, it could be dinner, it could be a text, my mom, she sends me like memes, like just like silly things that she sees on the internet. And she's crazy. Most of them are about like Elvis Presley, or like, just silly stuff, but it's her way of like showing gratitude and having connection. You know, so it's just it can be any of those things and appreciation.

You know, if you can think about what you appreciate, it's so much easier to find. Find the gratitude, even when it's hard.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

We've identified gratitude as the number one ingredient in happiness soup. What else goes inside your soup?

**Katie Jefcoat**

So, the second idea, the second you know, ingredient that you could add to this so called soup is performing random acts of kindness. We all know about the helpers high, and how that scientifically proven to increase serotonin, give you that boost. And you can do that by giving to a charity. Right, maybe it's \$5 or it's \$50 or giving to a charity or volunteering for that charity. Right before this recording, I was researching charities for volunteering at for 2023. And so I was feeling really good about being excited about what we get to do as a family and communities and all that you can open the door for someone, that's a random acts of kindness, you can help someone carry their groceries or, you know, here we have like grocery carts that go out to our cars, and we have to walk them all the way back usually like the store or to a corral. If you're walking by, you could say all take that in for you, you know, just like, it doesn't have to be like literally carrying their groceries. It's just an idea, right? You could send a kindness card, obviously random acts of kindness, you could, you know, do, I like to do like fun mail on Mondays, and, you know, like, create, start my week that way. And so I try to write kindness cards on Mondays. And it's just a fun way for me to set up my week, I look at my planner, I set up my week, I write a few cards, feels all aligned in the universe.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

If you create a complex business that makes you feel trapped, you will never want to grow your business, you'll do little or big things to self sabotage growth, because nobody wants to scale overwhelm, not you, not me, I've been there. I learned this lesson as a second in command of an agency, I could not turn off my brain and relax because I would worry about what was and wasn't being done. It wasn't until I looked at the business reprioritize service perspective, it gave us more bandwidth to double the revenue and sell and exit the business. Since then, I've been behind the scenes, multiple six and seven figure service based businesses, helping consultants and marketers who are at capacity, get out of being stuck in service delivery and growing. It all starts by looking through the lens of a productize service. Download the free Productized Your Service Roadmap, go to [audreyjoykwan.com/roadmap](http://audreyjoykwan.com/roadmap) or click the link directly in your show notes.

Random Acts of Kindness don't need to be grand gestures. One of the kindest things someone can do when I've had a bad day is to hold the door for me. I don't mean the person in front of you pushes the door wide enough so you can squeak through but when someone stops to hold the door open and catches your eye, maybe they sense you've had a bad day, or they knew it will be a kind thing to do. It's just the act of being seen reminds me that more people care than I know.

**Katie Jefcoat**

Yeah. And you know, it's so interesting, because that's contagious. That's how we, you know, one, when someone does that for us, like we don't go home and like kick our dog, we actually do something nice for someone, right? Because you're like, wow!

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

Absolutely the analogy of going home to kick your dog or in other words, bring home that negative energy disappears when we get ahead of kindness to get out of that negative zone.

**Katie Jefcoat**

Yeah. And that's where we get to create this ripple effect where we get to decide how this, how we show up. I mean, there's all this science around this idea that people will do what they feel is normal. And so if it's normal, to help a bystander who falls for whatever reason, everyone will flock to that bystander. But if it's normal for people to be like, Oh, I don't know, oh, I'm, I have a tendency, like maybe I don't want to do that, or whatever. And people won't. They're like, there's all these studies around like groups like that, and how they act if no one is like, jumps out. And I think that's so interesting, because if it's normal to be kind no matter what more people will be kind, will normalize it and just will be like, it'll just be the thing. And it's, it's fascinating, but 100% works. There's no way about it. Like our brains are just wired that way, we can't help it.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

I love it. We can't underestimate small acts of kindness to create our own happiness and create a ripple effect for others.

**Katie Jefcoat**

But it's not just what like the kindness ripple effect if it if you do it or it happens to you. It's also when you talk about it or when you hear about it. So we see beautiful stories on the Internet about someone being kind or on the news. And you you have a feeling you're like wow, that's so great. You get the goosebumps or you like really have that feeling. There's a chemical reaction that happens in humans that even when they hear about random acts of kindness, or hear about kind acts that they also get that serotonin and that dopamine hit even though they weren't even a party to the the experience.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

That's so good. Thank you for highlighting that point. Okay, let's get more ingredients in our happiness soup. What else goes into our pot?

**Katie Jefcoat**

Another ingredient is social connection, creating social bonds. What we know for sure, is that so social connection boosts happiness. Now, clearly, if you are having social connection with an energy vampire, and you want to poke your eyes out, those are not the type of people that are creating all of these good feelings of social connection. But if you find the people that you can build strong relationships with, or even passer bys, right, but that you can start to build that social connection, you can't help but also boost your happiness. So that happens in calling a parent once a week maybe or building social connection with the, you know, you know, the coffee shop barista, if you go to the same coffee shop over and over, you know, how fun is that when you walk in somewhere, and they're like, Hi, Katie,

regular order today? Like it just it you can't help but smile and be so feel so good about it. So social connection can be a monthly coffee date with a friend, right? Birds of a feather flock together. So it's this idea that we get to have, you know, this great social connection with people that are like minded that often will also pour into you, share happiness, all of those things. It could be planning a date with a spouse or a partner, you know, someone that's significant in your life, be booking a vacation with your best friend, right? It could be any kind of social connection - book club, yarn knitting club, Zoom meetings, talking with your business bestie. Any extra time with your kids.

### **Audrey Joy Kwan**

It can be easy for business owners to get disconnected from others, we put our heads down to focus on our goals. And then we keep adding more to our plate. It can get lonely when we feel like we're doing it alone. And speaking from experience, creating new bonds is necessary to thrive. As an introvert that isn't always easy. If having social connection is happiest ingredient number three, what is happiness ingredient number four?

### **Katie Jefcoat**

I believe and again, the science supports this, which is so stinking much fun, is that one thing to boost happiness or another thing is to get out and exercise. It's this idea of being kind to our bodies. So whether that's outside or inside, it's a you know, fresh air is always good. And there's lots of reasons why that is, you know, amazing. But we're not going to limit it to just being outside. And you know, just moving our bodies, doing something that's somewhat healthy - could be dancing around the house, it could be doing 10 jumping jacks in between meetings, because you just need a little break to reset, right? It could be playing tennis or practicing yoga or doing something that just is, you know, being kind to our bodies. It could also you know, if you don't want to think about it like exercise, you could also think about it like getting enough sleep, right? Being kind to our bodies, eating a well balanced meal, drinking lots of water, maybe skipping alcohol or sweets for a certain amount of time. Breath work, you know, taking some deep breaths. Man, does that make a difference, especially when it feels hard and heavy and like you're in the quicksand.

### **Audrey Joy Kwan**

100% endorphins are real from exercise. For years, I needed a full hour like heart pumping sweaty workouts to get maximum benefits. But this year, I've been easier on my body and noticing that thirty minutes is enough. When I can't get 30 minutes, 15 minutes is good. Do I always want to exercise? No. But in seasons where I've been injured or sick and unable to do workouts, I notice a difference in my mood and clarity.

### **Katie Jefcoat**

Yeah, it helps for so many reasons, like happiness is just the tipping point, right? Just clarity and all of that that comes with exercise is just, you know, it's the aha moment. It's incredible for for so many people and look, if exercise isn't your jam, maybe think about sleep or you know, yoga or breath work. You know, this is your soup friends, you could make it however you want.

### **Audrey Joy Kwan**

We've gone through four ingredients for the happiness soup. What is our last ingredient?

**Katie Jefcoat**

Okay, so the fifth and final ingredient is making intentional margins. So I have this concept called intentional margins, which is really simple. It's finding the harmony between your to-dos and your priorities because so many of us have 747 things on our to do list and we get 745 of them done and then beat ourselves up for the two we didn't get done. I'm included in that like guilty as charged, and it's just so silly, but we do this. So how do we create intentional margins to then foster more fulfilled happiness? And we do that through creating our intentional day. I have a free worksheet on my website that walks this, walks you through this but it's this idea that we get to decide like what was great yesterday? How do we create an intentional day today? And like, what does that look like? So it's not a plan or it's not 9am to 5pm. But more of a, you know, what's my theme for the day? How am I going to show up for myself? And then this this idea, you know, people say that there's balance work and life. And I'm not, I wouldn't necessarily say there's balance, I don't think it's equal. But there's this harmony that you can have, you know, this yin and this yang, and identifying what that looks like, where are my priorities, am I living in my priorities do at the end of the day, to I feel like I did something that lit my hair on fire, something that felt fulfilling that was for me, instead of just the grind of the to do list. It's looking at your to do list and saying, what's important and what can I move off of it?

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

What stands out to me is the word intentional. Unless we bring awareness to the things that light us up and create intentional margin for things in life and work it won't magically happen. I don't know if balance is the right word for me, it's about choosing priorities. I accept that when I say yes to something, I have to say no to something else. And I trust the boundaries I set.

**Katie Jefcoat**

100%. 100%. Having those firm but flexible boundaries, really saying no. When you're very clear on your priorities, it's a lot easier to say no, because you know what's aligned,

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

Katie, tell us what keeps you motivated and inspired.

**Katie Jefcoat**

I absolutely love digging into the happiness science, but especially kindness. So there is no question that there's a ripple effect. And I'm obsessed. I'm obsessed with creating kindness where our world feels a little better than it did the day before. And it lights my hair on fire. I mean, there's so many things I'm multi passionate, but kindness is at the top of the list right now.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

Thank you so much for joining us and sharing your happiness soup ingredients. If people want to connect with you about all things happiness soup, where can they find you?

**Katie Jefcoat**

You can find my tiny little micro podcast everywhere you listen to podcasts and on Amazon Alexa at Everyday Happiness Finding Harmony and Bliss. And we're on social at Katie Jefcoat or at Everyday

Happiness with Katie, and my website is Katie Jefcoat. There's a ton of free resources, a lot of blog content, and anything you might need is right there. And I love hanging out in the DMs. So if you hear this and you want to chat, you just send me a message and I will respond.

**Audrey Joy Kwan**

Thank you so much, Katie.

Hey there. Thanks for hanging out with me at the Small But Mighty Agency Podcast. If you enjoyed this episode, it would mean the world to me if you hit the follow or subscribe button in your podcast app and share it with a friend. I'll see you in the next one.