

Ep #175: Simple Pleasures & Soulful Practices That Keep Me Going



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With Your Host

Kristi Angevine

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Are you feeling a little frayed at the edges right now? Mentally, emotionally, energetically? Do you find yourself craving something both grounding and light, but also tangible and real? If so, this episode is for you. Today, I'm sharing a mix of simple pleasures and soul-touching concepts, things that are keeping me afloat lately. Some are delightfully tangible (think stuff that I love when I go traveling), and others are a bit more philosophical, like rethinking what someone else's annoying behavior might be pointing to inside me.

So today is a fun, light list of things that are keeping me going. And consider this your invitation to pause and take stock of what's saving your life right now, too. Welcome to episode 175.

Welcome to *Habits On Purpose*, I'm your host, Physician, Master Certified Life Coach, and IFS Practitioner, Kristi Angevine. Let's get started.

Hello, hello everybody. Welcome to the podcast. I am so glad you're here, whether you are a new listener or somebody I've been talking to for years. Before I start, I just have a question. Are you on the email list yet? If you're not on the *Habits on Purpose* email list, please join me. And then if you like what you hear on the podcast, I would absolutely love if you felt compelled to share the podcast with a friend, leave a rating, leave a review, all the things.

Now, today is a light and fun episode. It's almost summer. It may be summer where you are, but it's just sort of turning into summer where I am. There are these gorgeous poppies and lupine that are in our backyard that every time I see them just make me smile. And I really love to take note and really bask in some of the things that are bringing me joy and pleasure. And as the podcaster and author Kendra Adachi says, from *The Lazy Genius*, "I love to bask in the things that are saving my life right now."

So, here's a list of, I'm not sure exactly how many things. Some are concrete, some are tangible items, some are more conceptual, in no particular order, that are all keeping me afloat and bringing me a lot of joy.

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First on the list is my reading light. I have this reading light, it clips to my book, it curves over the pages of my book, and it has just the right amount of light. It was a present from one of my kids. It is the best. I actually got my kid a reading light just like this a few years ago, and I liked their light so much that I kind of was begging them and trying to persuade them to think about getting one for me also, even though I, of course, could just go buy myself one. And then I got it as a present.

So not only do I love it just for the amount of light it has and how practical it is, but I love that it was given to me after somebody sort of heard me really pining for this thing. And it helps me wind down when I read at night. And then in the morning, it helps me keep that really inky black morning darkness, like this nice cocoon, when I'm not quite ready to be in full light in the morning.

Next thing, when I'm traveling, one of my favorite items is a collapsible water kettle. This is a collapsible kettle that holds quite a bit of water that just plugs into, you know, electric power, and it boils my water that I can then pour over my coffee that's in a collapsible pour-over coffee filter holder, into a big thermal mug. So this combination of the three things, the collapsible water kettle, the collapsible pour-over coffee filter holder (I think that's what you call it), and a really big thermal mug, helps me caffeinate and really enjoy sort of just a morning ritual before I see other humans when I'm traveling.

And I've found that, you know, whether I'm traveling or not, mornings can be a bit dark and heavy for me. There's this residue of my dreams, of stress, of lingering sorrow, and all of that is kind of big in me in the morning in particular. And it's kind of my preference to have some solitude as I meet all of that. And this, when I'm traveling, helps me do that so that I don't have to go navigate the world in order to get a nice hot drink. I can just stay in my own little cocoon and do it all by myself. And it all collapses, so it's really small and it's great to travel with.

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All right, so speaking of travel, I want to talk about points. Points and using points and creatively finding ways to use points that I didn't realize, and then finding points that I didn't realize I had. I love this. I've had some impromptu travel recently where I wanted to and needed to get from Oregon to Massachusetts and back again in a very short timeline. And when I was doing this, I ran into three big flight delay issues that were separate events with separate airlines, all in the course of about 20 hours. And they left me kind of feeling like I was in that old reality TV show, *The Amazing Race*.

I didn't really piece that together until I was sharing with my brother what, how many flights I'd changed and all the things. And he said, "You know, that sounds like that old reality TV show." And that's what it was like. I was figuring out flights kind of like you would hail a taxi in the rain. And it was so freeing during this process to have points to make it happen without any sort of heavy worry about being reckless with money.

So, the person I've learned the most from points about is Devon Gimbel. She's the host of the *Point Me to First Class* podcast, and her podcast and her email newsletters have taught me all the things. I've saved so much money and so much stress from the things I've learned from her, and I've only learned a just tiny bit of all the things that she teaches. So, if you don't already follow Devon, go follow her and open yourself up to either refining the world of points as you use them or learning them from scratch, like me.

All right, next thing is Uno and Mad Libs. These two things give me a dose of fun, levity, and silliness, much-needed silliness. And this silliness just opens the door to connection with my family in a way that is just amazing. I get to see my kids talk shit to one another. I get to see them struggle with maybe laying down a plus two or a plus four wild card on each other because they really adore each other and they don't want to do something that might be hard, even as they, like siblings do, drive each other a bit crazy sometimes.

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And then Mad Libs, I think I may have mentioned this on the podcast before, but I have found that it is just such a nice way to lighten the mood even if things have been really difficult during our day. And my favorite thing about Mad Libs is when someone picks the most perfectly absurd or obnoxious word that makes everyone laugh so much that they can't speak.

All right, so shifting and taking a like full right-hand turn to a different topic. Francis Weller. Have you heard of Francis Weller? If you haven't, please go learn about him. I've heard him interviewed in a variety of places, and I am just now starting his book called *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*. I am learning so much from him all about grief and sorrow and how both of these things can coexist and actually deepen things like joy.

He references being a lifelong associate of melancholy and invites everyone to take sadness seriously and to really slow down and grieve where there's loss. And his work with this has informed my acceptance and embracing of other emotions like anger, outrage, and disappointment. And I'm going to give you two quotes just to sort of get your interest going.

Francis Weller says, quote, "Grief offers a wild alchemy that transmutes suffering into fertile ground. We are made real and tangible by the experience of sorrow, adding substance and weight to our world. We are stripped of excess and revealed as human in our times of grief. In a very real way, grief ripens us, pulls up from the depths our souls what is most authentic in our beings."

And then one more short passage from him. Quote, "Grief is subversive, undermining the quiet agreement to behave and be in control of our emotions. It is an act of protest that declares our refusal to live numb and small. There is something feral about grief, something essentially outside the ordained and sanctioned behaviors of our culture. Because of that, grief is necessary to the vitality of the soul. Contrary to our fears, grief is suffused with life force. It is not a state of deadness or emotional flatness. Grief is alive, wild, untamed, and cannot be domesticated. It resists the demands to remain passive and still. We move in jangled, unsettled, and

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riotous ways when grief takes hold of us. It is truly an emotion that rises from the soul." End quote.

Now, in a similar vein, I've mentioned this book before, but another thing on my list that brings me so much joy is the book *Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times* by Katherine May. Go read it, even if it's summer. I love the acknowledgment of the necessity to slow down and involute for more than just the time it takes you to go to sleep. And I love the invitation to tend to the things that are easy to gloss over when we're just trying to get through the day.

Now, here's a quote from Katherine May. Quote, "Doing those deeply unfashionable things, slowing down, letting your spare time expand, getting enough sleep, resting, is a radical act now, but it is essential. This is a crossroads we all know, a moment when you need to shed a skin. If you do, you'll expose all those painful nerve endings and feel so raw that you'll need to take care of yourself for a while. If you don't, then that skin will harden around you." End quote.

Now, next on the list, having a middle school kid introduce me to music has been so fun. So when I drive my kiddo to school, she will play music for us along the way, and it's music that I just wouldn't think to listen to. And lately, one of my favorite ones is Billie Eilish. And this is started on the drive to school, and then it keeps playing and follows me home as I drive home. And there's something about Billie Eilish's voice and the lyrics that's both haunting and lovely.

All right, next on my list is Becky Kennedy. If you don't know Dr. Becky Kennedy, she is the author of the book called *Good Inside*. She's a podcast host of the podcast with the same name, *Good Inside*. And I have learned quite a bit from her. And one of the things that's on my mind is the idea that behavior needs a context to be truly understood. She talks about how behavior is a window to something going on that is happening behind the behavior: a struggle, a need, a fear, a hurt. And when we understand this

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about other people, we can get curious and compassionate. And when we understand this about ourselves, we can do the same.

And I've also really loved the shortcut to radical acceptance and self-compassion that comes from this simple statement I've heard her make in a variety of her episodes. The statement is, "This feels blank because it is blank." So, for example, "This feels hard because it is hard." This statement, ironically, it does not invite you to wallow in self-pity and inaction like you might think it does. This statement invites validation, and validation is a catalyst for productive action.

All right. So the next thing on my list is called the Oregon Battle of the Books. If you have kids and they don't already have a summer reading list that you're sort of engrossed in, or if you don't have kids and you want just to learn about some books that might be a little bit different than what you would ordinarily gravitate towards, Oregon Battle of the Books has these amazing book lists that are set up well in advance of their actual battles.

Now, Battle of the Books is a thing that happens in the state of Oregon where kids get together on teams of three or four or five, something like that, kids. They read a set list of books, and then they go to these competitions where they are asked questions about minutiae that happens in the books. And the way they win their battle is they answer more questions correctly than the other team, and they get points, and they go on to different rounds, and they compete at their school and in their region, and then apparently in the state.

Now, these lists of books, they're just so good. And they are giving me books to be exposed to that wouldn't ordinarily be on my radar. And what I love about it, in addition to access to these books, is the competition itself gives a container to encourage my kids to read and to work together with their friends. And the sweetest thing happened recently. My daughter told me that the adults in our house, we are not allowed to read to her brother any of the Battle of the Books books because that is what she is going to

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do. She's the only one who's allowed to read him the books, and she quizzes him along the way, and it is the sweetest thing.

All right. The next sweet thing is our pets. We have two cats, one dog, and they come with all the nuisances and shenanigans, and all the pains of pets. There's hair, there's lint rollers, there's messes, there's finding pet sitters when we have to travel. There's all the usual work that goes into feeding and exercising, and all the things. But what they provide to us in return makes all of that maintenance worth it. They are so funny interacting with each other.

We have these cats that are these flat-faced silver tabby American Shorthairs, and they kind of look like silver tigers. And I swear, these two cats we have, they're two sisters, they co-regulate one another. They are these little sidekicks. They thrive on being close to one another. And our dog is smaller than both of them. And seeing the three of them interact is hilarious. It's more collegial and fun than just tolerating one another.

And then on top of that, when any one of the humans that lives in my house is dysregulated, these animals help all of us center and regulate. It's not just the kids. My husband and I both get the same calming, soothing benefit from being around them. And I honestly, I think my husband is part feline or part cat whisperer or something because he gravitates towards cats everywhere we go. And it's really incredible to see he has this skill with engaging with and kind of messing with cats in ways that make them just glom onto him. And they are such a source of joy.

All right. Next thing is, this is an idea that I love. The idea that the very things that I want to change in someone else, the things that make me crazy about someone else, those things are never about the other person, but they're about what comes up in me in relation to the other person that feels uncomfortable or incongruent or conflicted or painful inside me. And the other person, they are just simply a spotlight that reveals something important inside me that needs attention.

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And this idea helps let go of all the efforting of trying to change or fix what other people do, and then use anything that hurts my feelings, invokes agitation or irritation, brings up my insecurity, use those things as a cue to look inside to see what's coming up in me before I go wagging my finger outwardly. Because what it does is it brings clarity in myself so that I can tell how much of a situation is colored by what I'm making something mean, so that if there is indeed something external to me that needs to be corrected or discussed or somebody needs to be held accountable, I can then do it from a very non-defensive and more matter-of-fact, very clear way.

All right. I think the last thing on my list is voice memos. I have mentioned these before, and if you've talked to me in real life, you've probably heard me just go on and on and on about how voice memos have kind of changed my life. And I love them so much that I will probably mention it yearly. I am obsessed with them.

Sending and receiving voice memos has helped me deepen my long-distance relationships with both friends and family. I live in different time zones than my family and many of my friends, and the asynchronous connection is better than always saying, "Oh, we're going to meet up on the phone one day," and basically never getting on the phone. Or when we do get on the phone, trying to remember and summarize and give the highlights of all the goings-ons.

So with voice memos, I love listening to them. I love recording them. I love getting a reply that mentions something or replies to something that I said a few days before, when, since the time I left my message, a hundred different things have cropped up, and I've nearly forgotten the message I sent the person. And their response helps me remember things I would ordinarily completely forget. So, if you haven't ventured into the world of sending and receiving voice memos back and forth with friends or family, I highly recommend it.

So there you have it. This is my list of things that are really saving me right now and helping keep me afloat. It is my reading light, my travel coffee

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setup, learning about and using points, voice memos, our pets, playing Uno and Mad Libs, the music of Billie Eilish, the idea that other people's behavior that makes me bristle is an invitation to look inward as opposed to outward. I love the Oregon Battle of the Books and Francis Weller and Dr. Becky Kennedy, and Katherine May's book *Wintering*. I think that's all of them to recap.

So that is my list for now, anyway. And it's basically a handful of tools and ideas, people and objects that are helping me feel a little bit more human, a little bit more sturdy, and a lot more connected to what really matters. I hope this list inspires you to reflect on your own list, because noticing what nourishes you is itself an act of nourishment. And if you enjoyed this episode, please let me know. Just hit reply to any email or send me a message, or find me anywhere you do social stuff online. I would love to hear what is saving your life right now.

If this potpourri of ideas spoke to you, you will love the upcoming events I'm doing. Soon, the Befriending Anger course and the Habits on Purpose Preview week will be getting started. You also might just love the next round of Habits on Purpose for Physicians small group coaching.

For information on all of these things, see the show notes or go to habitsonpurpose.com/anger for the Befriending Anger course, habitsonpurpose.com/preview for the preview week, or habitsonpurpose.com/hopp for information on HOPP small group coaching.

Thanks for listening to *Habits On Purpose*. If you want more information on Kristi Angevine or the resources from the podcast, visit HabitsOnPurpose.com. Tune in next week for another episode.