

Ep #97: 9 Ways to Improve Your Life Right Now



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With Your Host

Kristi Angevine

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Welcome to Episode #97. I'm Kristi Angevine, and I'm here to help you understand why you do what you do, so you can be more intentional and live your life on purpose instead of on autopilot.

Now, I love a good list with tips and ideas. So, today, I'm going to share a list of the eight things in my life that are really helping me right now, that have really helped me this entire year. So, if you also love a good list, you're going to love this episode. Let's get started.

Welcome to *Habits On Purpose*, a podcast for high-achieving women who want to create lifelong habits that give more than they take. You'll get practical strategies for mindset shifts that will help you finally understand the root causes of why you think, feel, and act as you do. And now, here's your host, Physician, and Master Certified Life Coach, Kristi Angevine.

All right, hello, hello, everybody. Welcome to the podcast. When this podcast comes out, it will be December. As I'm recording this, we are on the cusp of December of 2023. I thought it'd be really fun to do an episode that gives you a list of the things that I really love in my life right now.

This is going to be beyond the typical things that we're thankful for, like our family and our health. This is going to be some things that are both a mix of concrete, physical material things, as well as things that I do, as well as concepts and ideas.

If you are new to the podcast, this type of a 'list podcast' is a little bit new for me. If you want to get a sense for some of the other ideas that I talk about in the podcast, I invite you to go back and listen to the first six or seven podcast episodes. They are amazing. It will give you a sense of the typical flavor of the things I talk about, as it relates to habits and how habits are learned.

Habits are things that serve a purpose, even if they perhaps have overstayed their welcome and are things that are counterproductive for us now. But as you listen to this list that I'm giving you today, you're going to hear some of the same messages and tenets kind of infusing everything. So, I hope you enjoyed this list. Let's get started.

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The first thing on the list is reading for fun. Right now, I am on book seven of the *Harry Potter* series. I was never really super into *Harry Potter*, when it came out and it was big. But my daughter started reading it, and she wanted to be able to talk about the story with me without spoiling it. So, I started reading a book behind her. It's been really great.

The reason why this is a standout thing is I used to do a lot of reading for pleasure and then I just stopped. I got busy. Lots of things came up and I just wasn't doing it. Now, I hoard books and sometimes I buy more than I actually read. So, starting reading for pleasure has really helped me get back to reading some of the books that I've purchased that are just sitting there.

It also reminded me that I have this pure love for reading just for pleasure, and not just reading to learn a new skill or to improve my parenting or to get better at coaching or to get better at surgery. This has been a really big deal for me, because reading purely for pleasure is something that I did all the time as a kid, I did all the time in high school and in college. And then, for some reason I just abandoned this.

So, for me to actually take time to do something that was not discretely productive, actually became something really uncomfortable. For me, it's like I lost the ability to do unproductive leisure activities. I would give lip service to the idea, and I would say things like that I loved relaxing and I would wish I had more downtime, and I would pine for whitespace that was unstructured.

But then when it came down to it, and actually had an hour of unscheduled time, what would I do? I would find my to-do list, I would check my emails, I would do small household tasks. I would busy myself. For a big chunk of time in my life, I essentially didn't have the skill of just being, of just doing nothing, or just doing something fun for the sake of fun. It wasn't something that I did that often.

I didn't even notice that I wasn't doing it, because I had enough fun, I had enough relaxation, I just didn't notice it wasn't as present as it was. So, for me, reading for fun isn't just about the reading, it's actually emblematic of

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this deeper shift. One where I'm shifting my hustle productivity mindset to one that is slower, more spacious, more deliberate. And, it represents me taking time for fun and play.

Alright, number two on my list, in a similar vein, is I am a bit obsessed right now with the app called Duolingo. Now, before I go any further, there are no affiliate links, there are no sponsorships. This is not me telling you to go purchase something that I'm going to get a kickback for. I'm just simply obsessed with this app.

I'm trying to learn some Greek before going on a trip. And, I rather reluctantly signed up for Duolingo. This is kind of my mojo, I hear about something that it sounds like a lot of people like and I kind of skeptically check it out, and then eventually, reluctantly, take the plunge. Like with many things, lo and behold, I found out that it's quite amazing.

Here's what I like about it. Number one, it is very easy. It has built in repetition, so I don't feel like I need to draw on brute memorization like I did to learn the Krebs cycle or the clotting cascade or to memorize conjugations when I was working on French. It's just simply built in and very easy.

Number two, it takes very little time. Five minutes, 15 minutes, whatever feels right, and that works really well with my life right now. Number three, it is fun. I can't describe exactly why it's fun, but there's a bit of silliness built into it. The little characters that cheer you on are kind of cute. And, there's also a bit of commitment and achievement and competition built into the copy. You get to log a streak.

So, right now, I'm on a 14-day streak where I've done the app for 14 days in a row. You get to check off these "daily quests," where if you spend 15 minutes you check off a quest. If you get more than 80% right in a little activity, you get to check off a quest. If you like to compete, it'll show you ranked with other people who've been doing the lessons during the day, to show how many lessons you've done.

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It encourages you to do more in a way that's really accessible and feels very much like a fun little game. It's also really great because it combines my love of learning with my desire to do more hobbies and have more play in my life. And it's been really fun, because both my kids are doing it too. I really never expected them to be excited about learning a new language, in this particular format, and doing something that I also enjoy.

So, right now, I am obsessed with Duolingo and it's really fun. A side note, and you heard it here first, it makes me want to make an app that brings in the fun of this particular way of learning, for something like mindset and habits meets Internal Family Systems. It's an idea that's brewing in the back of my mind and we'll see where it goes.

All right, number three. The third thing that is really helping me in my life right now, and this year, is sleep. This is likely saving me in more ways that I can actually articulate. Since stopping taking 24-hour calls, I noticed I needed more rest than I ever thought was reasonable to need.

Now, if you're listening, and you currently take calls, either night shift or 24-hour calls or 12-hour calls or weekend calls, or you work a 60–80-hour workweek or more, and you love it and you feel great, that is amazing. There's nothing intrinsically bad about doing that volume or that kind of work.

That said, personally, I didn't realize how tired I was or the impact of working the hours that I did until I was months away from doing it so regularly. So now, my favorite thing is to get to bed early. I'm talking eight o'clock early. And then, I love to wake up around four or five so that I can have a silent, dark house to sip coffee in. One of the things I didn't appreciate till recently, is how nice I feel when I go to bed after not having a glass of wine in the evening.

This isn't to demonize wine or alcohol in general. And, I've personally done a lot of work to have a very deliberate relationship with alcohol. And over the last year, I've been drinking more regularly at events or get-togethers and really loving a big red Cabernet at night. While I know that

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physiologically alcohol can make sleep suboptimal, I never really noticed a tremendous difference until just recently.

So, this one evening, I didn't have any wine. And not only did I feel more present in the evening, I had no exacerbation of restless leg syndrome, which drives me crazy. And then, I woke up in the morning with so much more optimism, so much more calm. I realized, that insidiously, I've been waking up with what I call a case of the 'I don't wanna.' I don't want to move. I don't want to get up. Kind of just a blues, down, bleh feeling.

It was really easy to attribute this to things like less sunlight, because of the time change and how dark it is at the latitude we live at. To attribute it to some life stress, to PMS, or just the early morning crankies. But when I left out the wine, all this evaporated.

This is just a tangent plug. If your mood feels a bit off or your sleep doesn't feel optimized, try taking a break from your evening booze and just see what happens for you. For me, sleep, and optimizing my sleep, is just amazing right now.

Alright, so far, to recap: Number one, reading for fun. Number two, Duolingo. Number three, sleep. And now, number four, an air fryer. Again, this is not a plug for a specific brand of an air fryer. We are very late to the game on air fryers. So, probably everybody listening either already has an air fryer or already has some upgraded version of something that is like an air fryer.

But we just recently got one and it has been the best. Heating up pizza, making easy chicken, and my husband makes egg bites in the morning for our kids filled with vegetables and meat and cheese etc. It's just been a really fun game changer. It doesn't take up too much space. It gets things nice and crispy on the outside, and it cooks them really nicely.

I feel like I was a little bit of a kitchen snob, in terms of thinking that maybe this was going to be some kitschy, trendy, silly thing that really there is an old school, normal way where you just use your oven and do the same

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thing. I found that this is actually different. It has made my evenings and it has made my mornings so much nicer.

Alright, number five. In stark contrast to talking about things like an air fryer or sleep, this is the concept and the model for approaching the mind called Internal Family Systems. Internal Family Systems, as an approach to life and as an approach to coaching, has been a total game changer for me. Understanding this approach, in practice and life, has shifted how I see myself and how I see the world.

Now, if you haven't already listened to Episode 79, I give an overview of Internal Family Systems there. You can check out the show notes for other relevant episodes for Internal Family Systems. If you don't know what I'm talking about, go pick up the book called *No Bad Parts*, and you can learn more.

Here are the highlights of Internal Family Systems and an 'in a nutshell' version about how it has impacted me. Number one, using the language of "parts" for my experience. Where I say things like, "A part of me feels this... A part of me feels that..." is a very holistic approach, and feels very validating for all the varying and sometimes conflicting thoughts and feelings that I have. And, it helps me make more sense.

Secondly, being very explicit about the fact that I feel most like myself when I feel the 8 C's and the 5 P's. Which are: Curiosity, Compassion, Clarity, Connection/Connectedness, Creativity, Courage, Confident and Calm. The five P's being: Presence, Perspective, Patience, Persistence, and Playfulness. When I feel these things, I feel most like myself.

These are the qualities the Internal Family Systems refers to as self, with a capital S. Knowing that this is when I most feel like myself helps me notice when I'm not feeling that way. It helps me notice a departure and then identify, oh, that's when a part is present.

Now, the next part of IFS that I really love, is the analogy that they use for Self as the sun, and parts being the cloud. So, Self for all these qualities that I just mentioned, and if they're like the sun, the sun is always there

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even if it's obscured by clouds; which are considered "parts." And so, even if you go and you can't see any sun, you know the sun is still there. And when the clouds move or fade or soften back, the sun emerges. These qualities of Self emerge.

This idea of always being able to access these qualities like calm, clarity, confidence, playfulness, even if they're obscured by other qualities, I find super useful. Especially when I'm dealing with emotions that I find kind of difficult or unpleasant.

The last thing about IFS I think has really affected me, is the idea that knowing that every part of me has a positive intent. Every part is present for a good reason. And this helps me approach all my thoughts, all my emotions, all my experiences, with curiosity and openness instead of with distress or judgment.

This idea that every part has a positive intent fits really perfectly with what I teach about habits, that every habit you have is there for a good reason. It was learned, it was adaptive or protective in some way, it served some purpose initially, even if it overstayed its welcome.

And by understanding how a habit was originally resourceful, you can understand yourself at a deeper level. Similarly, to what happens when you understand the parts of you that show up so you can understand more about yourself at a deeper level. Alright, so Internal Family Systems is number five.

So, number six, this is moving to something that is a hard right turn, something totally different. I really, really love local thrift and local consignment stores. We are so lucky in this community to have found this really great kid store that curates children's clothing and shoes, and all sorts of things.

Since the kids have been young, we have gone there regularly. It's a sweet place called Stone Soup Kids. The owner has always been so nice to our kids and to our family. We're also really lucky because there are a few really good second-hand gear stores that have things like sports gear for

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snow sports, and biking, and pretty much any outdoor apparel that you would need, like skis and jackets, etc.

More recently, I've really enjoyed some of the more typical thrift stores where you go in and you dig past hundreds of hangers to find that one thing. Here are the reasons why I love these thrift, consignment, and second-hand stores.

First of all, they speak to my frugal side. It feels like a really good way to be a good steward of our money. Secondly, for kids clothing, they grow out of these clothes so fast, and I find it's so nice to find a great batch of clothes that really work for our kids, they get to wear them for a few months, maybe more than a few months, and then we take these clothes and we bring them back to the same store.

We turn them back in. It's almost like having our own personal closet, that grows with the kids as they grow. Like a clothes rental service for children.

Thirdly, for the sports stuff. This stuff is pricey. If you do any snow sports or any sports related to biking or climbing or anything like that, you know this stuff has a pretty high price tag. So, when I can find something that is from last year, or it's half off. Or it's 75% off just because somebody maybe didn't like the color, and it's still got the tags on it.

Or there's some sponsored pro athlete who's getting rid of last year's equipment that is so much more sophisticated, and at a higher price that I would actually never pay full price for. It will get me and my family into really functional nice gear that leaves us with extra money to do whatever we want to do with our extra money.

Now the last reason that I've really love thrift stores, and it's been on my mind lately, is going there with my daughter. Seeing her delight over things like \$2 earrings that have a vintage flair, and then watching her calculate how much money she's going to have left if she buys these \$2 earrings versus something else.

Or if she buys this sweater that she's looking at, that cost \$5 as opposed to buying something that maybe cost \$35, has been just a fun thing to do. To

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see not only her delight at a bunch of things that seem like treasures to her, but also seeing how she is considering the impact on her wallet with the material purchases that she gets. Alright, so that's the sixth thing that I'm really loving right now.

The seventh thing. The seventh thing that I'm really loving in my life right now, are our pets. So, we have two cats and a dog. We never really thought that we would have a family this large, especially not with multiple animals joining us. Our two cats are now a little over a year old, and they're sisters.

The fun thing about them right now, is that they are starting to act more like adult cats. They're a little bit calmer. They're a little bit more predictably cuddly. And yet, they're still very playful. They have these extremely entertaining zoomies, where they get very active, particularly at night.

Our floors in our house don't have much traction on them because they're hard, and when they run around the corners, they will drift like a rally car driver around the corners.

Our new dog, he's maybe 10 months old now, he has gotten some obedience school training and some lessons, and there has been so much joy and sweetness and silly play related to these pets. I'm just so grateful that we have them right now.

One of my favorite things is seeing my husband bond with them. He will be holding a cat while he's making coffee, he lets her smell the coffee, lets her smell the cup, lets her smell the spices, talks to her, and just has the most fun with this sweet cat.

Then, seeing the kids smile and giggle, not wanting to get up when maybe a cat has found them and is lounging on them. Or pet the dog, who's this tiny little dog; he's even smaller than the cats. It has been so nourishing not only for them, but for me.

Before I just wax poetic and gloss over all the difficult things about pet ownership, it has come with some work, a lot of tedium. And a lot of cost for their care, for food, for getting care for them when we travel, for lots of

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messes, and dealing with these 'oh shit, was this a mistake? What are we thinking getting these pets' moments. Especially, with a puppy, and the shenanigans that come with a puppy.

But overall, it has been such a huge deposit into the joy and fun bucket in my life, to have these animals incorporated into our family.

Alright, so on to number eight. Number eight. The thing I love so much are my journals. I use these very simple journals that I get through Amazon, by this company called Lamome.

They're moleskin, they're lined, they have a little pen holder that's elastic on the outside, and a little bookmark. They are just the right size. They're not cost prohibitive, they're like \$12 or \$15. They come in different colors. I can label them on the front, like what months they are.

They bring me so much joy, especially in those early morning hours when I like to get up in the morning, drink my coffee, and write.

This is a bonus; I'm just going to go for number nine. As I record this, I'm realizing how much I also really appreciate soft, comfortable, functional clothing. I have these, I don't know how you pronounce it, but Vuori soft joggers. And tops, by that company Athleta.

Then, I have some great bike clothing from this company called Endura, that are just so soft. They're comfortable and they're functional. They make my day so lovely, to wear them, whether it is for work or for pajamas or for bike rides. I just think they're amazing.

The eight, well, bonus nine, things that I am loving in my life this year and right now, are: Number one, reading for fun. Number two, Duolingo. Number three, sleep. Number four, our air fryer. Number five, Internal Family Systems. Number six, the local thrift, consignment, and second-hand gear stores. Number seven, our pets. Number eight, my journals. And number nine, my soft, comfortable, and functional clothes.

This is a list of all the things I'm loving and appreciating in my life right now. Coming up in the last few weeks of the year, I'm going to bring back an old

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episode. I'm going to feature an interview with someone that I know you're going to adore. And I'm also going to give you at least one short, sweet episode that I think is going to be perfect to fit into your busy holiday schedule.

Now, the last thing I want to leave you with for this week, is just a little teaser for something fun that's coming up. To celebrate the podcast getting to 100 episodes, and to celebrate the shift into 2024, I am doing a really, really special giveaway for one woman physician listener. All I'm going to say about it, is it has to do with something related to wellness and something related to a tropical location.

So, stay tuned for that. I hope you have a beautiful week and I will see you next week.

If you enjoyed what you listened to this week, let me know. Find me on Facebook at Habits On Purpose Facebook group, and consider scrolling down before you listen to the next episode. Let me know what you thought of this podcast with a short review. Literally, a sentence or a phrase about the podcast helps more than you know.

It helps other people find the information here. And, your word of mouth endorsement is better than anything that I can do alone. I know your time is valuable, and I appreciate that it's no small thing to take a moment to do a review. So, thank you so much in advance, it means so much to me if you do it.

If you're listening, and you're thinking you would like help bridging the gap between consumption and application, that's what coaching can do for you. My coaching comes in two flavors, private coaching, and an intimate small group coaching program, with CME, for women physicians.

To learn more about private coaching, go to HabitsOnPurpose.com/private. Or to learn more about the *Habits On Purpose* for Physicians small group coaching program that's going to come up in early 2024, go to HabitsOnPurpose.com/waitlist, to get on the waitlist and be the first to hear about when enrollment opens.

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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.