Brandon Averill ([00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GFFnnWQQkZmGm09CXA9CwMt0k8HdLTZSt2qpOewHFk1kEaeCa7mp9VGufHGjOz6_fQ9SXFokjvB6KrwIXIecOn5J_I8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.86)):

Hey everyone. Welcome back to the Athlete CEO Podcast. We're your hosts, Brandon and Erik Averill. As you know, we're the co-founders of AWM Capital, where we believe that you are the greatest driver of your net worth. We call this your human capital. And so, this podcast, the Athlete CEO Podcast is dedicated to bringing you the knowledge, the skills, and access to world-class experts to help you unlock the full potential of your human capital.

Brandon Averill ([00:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MNhLRqJk-5OMzfjTXyTr1j6L4wJqvuB3_J9BLk_yBl4EW6_Ri5mdJO3kQubRnyn-CjpgtvqOHc05Mv5RqWNHZI3dqpk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=27.12)):

Today, we have the privilege of sitting down with one of the leading experts in positive psychology, and somebody that I know we're all excited to hear from, Smaranda Lawrie. Smaranda is currently an assistant professor at Providence College. She has her PhD in psychological and brain scientist from UCSB. She's the spouse of a former NFL player. So I know we're all excited to dive in with Smaranda. She's also the founder of UCSB's Resilience Summit and had a tremendous amount of experience as we've navigated these waters of COVID.

Brandon Averill ([01:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=y2JoUGUoP3x71lwGYjSFpIF-a06aPc1IfQ69cRJr_28eKga84wFDNAKufblnuYrUOt-Ns5RHlAAbN1ml43KEGoEEvSY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=65.86)):

I'm really looking forward to diving into positive psychology, one of her specialties. Also, parenting, something that I found absolutely fascinating when we first met. With that, welcome to the podcast. We're excited to have you, Smaranda.

Smaranda Lawrie ([01:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6RwQYVsTX_N9zlmbIfhCBq00SxloN4TcJrFGukM7gib5IDPHk58GPJH5BUO-cnnNeicU4effLmf95WBgoMyAAZoHOAU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=82.64)):

Thanks. I'm so excited to be here.

Brandon Averill ([01:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1NbHU7DRnn9zK4ukxfFztdwAZy-H6YpCDqnTKSe8_Omd7ytkI11Ltttv8lfQnppa7wqkz1fdqe34XKUeDiJeb43bbIA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=86.3)):

Great. As I let on, we first met at an event, one of our venture partners. I came home immediately and told Erik, hey, yeah, sure there were a bunch of athletes there, and those are the people that we work with and surround ourselves with. But the most fascinating person I actually met is somebody that I wouldn't have expected to meet at one of these conferences. So it was such a pleasant surprise.

Brandon Averill ([01:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0nc03rmbeey7vMzuklWljWct4EJxXUnSDWlBOBDK_GHumMrwwVdhh0_AG5bvRU__gq33AFK5Rctfr_x-VsZKIbt5NXw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=109.11)):

Where I would love to start is just your background, I would say how either you're an immigrant to the US, how did you get here, what was that experience like, where does positive psychology fit in? I know that's a broad ranging probably topic, but I would love to just start there at the very beginning.

Smaranda Lawrie ([02:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=C6wzToWK0XUmR9itN773ZkhP-mHMKK65lzQoNvlvRSB4rKixjKwZeTPtULyX1yo4qScXntW8FVHhWldvjhhdSqBKPGY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=135.36)):

That's quite a bit. Yeah, so I'm originally from Romania. I left Romania with my parents. I was just along for that ride. We lived in Hungary for a little bit in underground tunnel situation. We were hiding out in somebody's apartment. Ended up in Austria, where we were in refugee camps as political refugees for about three years. And then, we ended up in Connecticut. I went to my undergrad in Connecticut and stayed there until I met my husband my freshman year of college.

Smaranda Lawrie ([02:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=OL2dJDCY83mnZMUcucGquqU5erAE6OSH9p-dHjQK-09iP9cUOCgeKGXp8dOR5FSpHC8AzkF066IIr3iiy0gzFhPrlvA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=167.18)):

And then he dragged me around in a lot of places before I took him to Santa Barbara, beautiful Santa Barbara for my grad school. Now we just made the long trek back across to the other side and we're in Providence, Rhode Island. But in terms of positive psychology, it's funny. Some of the research that I'm doing now is actually based in my personal experiences and something that I learned from my parents. Being an immigrant in Austria was really difficult, hopefully things have gotten better now.

Smaranda Lawrie ([03:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LMI_gYIZd6Plv7sMMSe7yTADElQ0pojKfXFFk49w9gII6j4I-U9QKLwEbiOWtd-Sb7NlV7zFhTQrxZCLsXRGGvi-uPI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=199.41)):

But when I was a child, people were openly very racist. So it was things like I wasn't allowed to participate in gym class because they didn't want me wearing shorts. I had to take a separate bus to school. The one memory that really sticks out from that time is my first grade teacher who made me lick food off the ground one day when I dropped it, and made this comment to the whole class that immigrants are like dogs and they need to be treated as such.

Smaranda Lawrie ([03:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=s3HvyhnXwsiLiShULvvG8RsUe42OKMXb692GM_CZB18YMeR5Pepvbf9luYYYzGsB8TrcSPOp1cg_Ii9zYon4jhBVxqI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=227.63)):

But what was really interesting was that my parents didn't let me stay in that negative space for too long. They were very open about like, "Okay, this is going on. And it's very difficult. But you know what, you're still in that school. You're still getting good grades. All the other students and all the other kids around you, they're not going through all that, and you are. And you're getting through it and you're still there. So pat yourself on the back."

Smaranda Lawrie ([04:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pu3a7oBmA_h_w9UXqXW3mxju02pCzgvXNJh8uclQBh34RVcAf7IhCnYw8q39t4pCO8Fsh7abx839btbt43jB185TWU4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=255.43)):

That really influenced, I think, positive psychology maybe because of the name, but it's gotten so much attention in recent years in podcasts or in the popular media and blogs and all over the place. I think sometimes people think that it's all about happiness and having this Pollyanna smile on your face all the time. And it's really not. Humans are much more complicated than that, and emotions are much more complicated. I think what my research shows and what my personal experiences shows is sometimes our biggest strengths really come from our biggest struggles, from our failures, and from that teacher who made you feel humiliated.

Smaranda Lawrie ([04:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3HmotCkSmr1RGezNdQePpGGFOn6O0eCwIxbhuEER0UxatYJuy6fxKG0robBHLU0ESicSrnW9-VjybMFiUT64u0rZv8w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=297.73)):

That's still a source of strength every day. I actually, even on my desk right now, I have this little picture that I made in first grade. It reminds me of that moment and it doesn't make me feel bad anymore. It makes me feel kind of bad ass. Like, "Yeah, I'm still here.” Sorry for my language. I took that in a totally different direction, but-

Brandon Averill ([05:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3ExzeC8yJrHxuGA43inMJaQOmTa2QpIyRuHuttegr9wUiRjn0tMloXi-9f396U2j7dsYPr80h1KuSnjO-6c_u8tCx2g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=318.9)):

No, that's fantastic. It's no secret. This country specifically, and let's not even touch the world, is dealing with a racism problem and really, I think, being brought to the surface for so many people, unfortunately, in this time. And so, I think it's great to focus on that, and the positive psychology isn't ignoring the pain. I would love to hear you hit on that a little bit of, it's okay to probably be angry. How do you navigate those waters, whether it is racism, whether it is anger around being locked down because of some virus that we have no control over?

Brandon Averill ([06:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Mys32LHJxe8e0QCkgk58SBNtOmGjf5K6dvBv7mGpGDV6mDtwXfZ6hzEvFWALJDxzwefABwCvnu_flrPSqxfZoYUIUlc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=363.55)):

Bad things happen. I would imagine it's okay to be upset about that, but how do you use positive psychology to move beyond that? How do you use it so that way you look at a picture from the first grade and not have so much hate and ill will in that moment?

Smaranda Lawrie ([06:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ehL7GCRKQkgmPJ3DDZDtQOPe7CSNEZTX4tbXFFh638Xub0-uIubYA-RbIwf_eZYDgGE6eF1aqRMNbRZ0uH6YwrOdXio&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=381.84)):

Yeah. There's this really famous psychologist from 150 years ago named William James. There's a lot of really great quotes from him, but basically he said that we can't really control our environments. We can't always control our circumstances, but we can always control how we respond and react to them. Can I give you just a little bit of my personal definition of positive psychology-

Brandon Averill ([06:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=A7FXNFpOr5F3AEi2nI1tS2wlXl6VAQ_HI_XfNsCkyAjY27V99DNCQH_oGEGEoajwCT_jz5G_K_vBGsoixKl4e9vDoHw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=407.42)):

Absolutely.

Smaranda Lawrie ([06:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=A3zOq7xv1yBxc1MyF5gXz3tuZzc1P5fyD-KDurLx6UHQK2cYUNZRhqMZkvkxvhTZytByKMY8-Ag1tO4SPrun8VUhRMM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=407.62)):

... just to set the stage a little bit? The way that I think of positive psychology is always in relationship to what I call traditional psychology or business as usual psychology. Traditional psychology really came to power in this country after World War II. There was a lot of government money coming in to help soldiers that were coming back dealing with things like PTSD. As such, it really adopted a medical disease model. People were seen as weak or fragile and casualties of battered environments, or a combination of all these bad things.

Smaranda Lawrie ([07:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KDt3xy1Jq6A-0l8pRSR-IjwQ93i3uLnIONSErt6yc7P2l7WbiiXu6Z0qHmDn0KA2eyHZoUHz9sEh67-f54gphcSJPyM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=441.85)):

It was really about, how do we help these people? How do we make it better? I think that's been really great. There's a lot of mental illnesses and diseases that in the past were completely untreatable. Now we have some cures. We have treatments that work and make people's lives better. So for me, traditional psychology is, how do we take somebody who's suffering? How do we take somebody who's at a negative eight and maybe bring them up to a negative three or a negative two, or somebody who's at a negative two and bring them to a zero?

Smaranda Lawrie ([07:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=P5GqV8duyGxFjk7iTa0UGqp56Msu5HhY5tOFX4Iw72HcJCIWq9rTNr066RuY1aH_zRHGHkHM7uBlGtFn7e7QeautQvE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=469.52)):

That's been the good side of where psychology has been. Unfortunately, I think what it means is we've forgotten to pay attention to the flip side of the coin. How do we take somebody who maybe isn't in a bout of depression, isn't in a bout, of anxiety, but maybe they're just not living... This is an overused phrase, but they're not living their best life, somebody who's just languishing. How do we help them flourish?

Smaranda Lawrie ([08:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=B_EQ-gI3G10gGhEb3sfztGAmkKgm3aHaYJHilw-uoERyHt5YahLLGnbsrKKDG-funTa1uwgPYLkUSgz9Bmfxd7BFpf8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=495.3)):

How do we take them from a five to a 10, from an eight to a ten, from a five to an eight, whatever it might be. So helping people to live up to their potential. For me, I always think about myself and I always think about everybody as drafts that we can constantly work on and improve, and drafts of hopefully better versions of ourselves. But I think one of the things that I always tell my students and my research assistants is life is hard. It really is. Some people have it easier and some people have it harder, but it's hard for everyone.

Smaranda Lawrie ([08:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SGpAs03aRlcO5SAX7PW3NVM5vY93jfzKMrk5oc0h3ziMCnB7hbOHWtPw-2IPPFeI1TC89J5yenELTziWom-_2sFRBgk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=532.68)):

I think a lot of people hide their struggles, but everyone deals with something, whether it's money issues, or sicknesses, or secret anxiety, depression. We've all got issues, and life is a roller coaster. There's going to be better times and there's going to be really shitty times. And then there's racism pandemics, and then there's COVID pandemics. One of the things that's really great about positive psychology is it's very much tools based.

Smaranda Lawrie ([09:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ulkdGOPAqLa0QcebSgVptUi_9enLh74EVF1AUJLBN9xfptAc9C7AkqRbzGvrWaU2utMpsUThgZ-9GOQXVcAloEKFclU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=560.95)):

So I can give you tools. I give you a toolkit. I give you practices, you figure out what works for you, and hopefully they become habits. They're intended to make things better during good times, but also help you during difficult times. Like you said, when we're dealing with difficult things like COVID and racism and everything else going in the world. So it also builds resilience. What's resilience? It's the ability to bounce back in difficult situations, or even be better after a difficult situation.

Smaranda Lawrie ([09:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PiMP8abnO2yMIwY53Xs095drhknt0nYkzd_KUimg_mcV7vSvXa3MH344v1a6AmBUTSsX4GvqgSltjCFT144wa30dvE0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=592.05)):

There's people doing research now on post traumatic growth. Oh my gosh, I talk so much. Like I said, you've got to stop me at some point because I just keep going.

Brandon Averill ([10:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yJU00XoT5UWHzZKvRlevyHJ5rDXb3B2FhZsvtMBVng5HBquFZSqFG85brVlYwYDpxCMWu8lhKusntgqov_rdRoUEJyg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=600.17)):

No, it's so great. I think maybe a good tangent to take from there is, because I love that, traditional psychology, dealing with what we all think of off the top of our heads, people dealing with depression, but more towards this make people that are already good, but dealing with some issues, a little bit better, I would love to hear, obviously, being married to somebody who's competing at an extremely high level. You said you guys met freshman year in college, so you saw every up and down. So maybe we'll start speaking to the wives right now.

Brandon Averill ([10:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=60X03a39IdTwq4SPXOlHZV_dV4tcWQvQrcrqiuHc5LG8w1AtGXj_0EbflrdBkmYdR1TaenzAGtbyegYE8pof18Mnttc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=634.04)):

But how do you take what you've learned and maybe some tips and tools for people that are supporting the athlete. I would love to know supporting not only the athlete, but also maybe even potentially raising families. I'll throw in too that the first time we met, the question that set my interest off in our conversation was, how am I screwing up my kids and how can I not screw them up? So I'd love to just hear you talk about being a spouse.

Brandon Averill ([11:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xwIGLfgcUyWxrmXaIhiayf9-4Nrbfq6pHqupU11Dr9X5ilL5Sb26ilVbc0CnPINrLySKa68zrqntogO7rdvrUCoDL7A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=663.14)):

You had mentioned you didn't have children yet, but I'm sure you could speak to that. How are you a good parent through supporting somebody playing at a high elite level?

Smaranda Lawrie ([11:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=eU5PO4B-Ll1p57Lql3xOmIvds7h9jNQ24Z-FVMF3MxvWm1Skhih5ziYjyWAG3inXdAkjiL6iCdnaCGcEpyTcA0X268w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=674.42)):

Got you. Oh, that's a lot of questions.

Brandon Averill ([11:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4SKJCuMuMVkNgCJWAOwfer996L6-7oIyXyfKUpoDNpHmaPLTjsxpTqId1NC3Gf6e5pun-A3xYTJhbGf5PNqVCgjW3dE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=676.51)):

Yeah. I know. Sorry.

Smaranda Lawrie ([11:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZdOILOoHX2GBvOwb-OEiuMjMArKMfBwKhgG7PNRgQAcE9hyWiwS1Euep0U49oX-9_aZEi98dMRUPomCT2_w3msa_mj8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=679.76)):

No. I don't even know where to start. It was really difficult being the spouse of a professional athlete. I mean, just dealing with the uncertainty. Uncertainty is really hard to deal with. I think that's part of why this past year has been so difficult for so many people. But that's just a part of being, I think, in that professional athlete world that people don't realize, you can get hurt. There's a lot of uncertainty. Honestly, I think there's a lot of overlap between the sports psychology, performance psychology, and positive psychology.

Smaranda Lawrie ([11:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lPQqBvBPyNAUMlqQbuMylNyXBtQALbTiqlFEFN0iwhXoAYQgIc6feY7LZktxXjEfnnw5IEL5ht6DtQeoOC4mlHkMmvM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=713.78)):

A lot of the work that I do now and that other positive psychologists do, a lot of it athletes and coaches have been doing for a really long time. They've already figured out this idea of mindset, that the rest of us are just getting to now. I will say that I've learned so much from my husband and his experience with being in the NFL. We both went to Yale, met freshman year of college. Yale's not a big time football school. He managed, as we all know, he did get drafted in the sixth round, but then had some injuries.

Smaranda Lawrie ([12:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XKMG5SwGO_PNUrI-SqNLGvHVYoHmhQyL-cqYpbFNf-lY5xbKoQwQPEoMc0xULHvJih5cxz9cb1HX3JXtO4h08_CUH1M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=751.75)):

There was a lot of bouncing around. We bounced to different cities and different teams. I remember he'd go into work and then come back a couple hours later, and that was it. He'd be moving to a new city the next day and I'd have to pack up everything. It's a lot. But I was always so impressed by him because no matter... And he hates when I talk about this, but no matter how many times he got cut or fired or whatever you want to call it, the next morning he'd still set his alarm clock, wake up, and still keep going.

Smaranda Lawrie ([13:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sMFJWbnXRJtdEP1setDu-6uhfvLOzEmnpgzZ8Ctc8n_gq11qHEAzoSMHJIi_hvQxYXPyQwaM4ReeTgBB7rqGG1rov4A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=783.85)):

He was really passionate about what he did and he loved it no matter what the external outcomes was. For him, it was like he just kept on pushing forward. Of course, now he's retired and he's like an 80-year-old man getting out of bed in the morning because everything hurts and is achy. So I don't know how he's feeling about all that now. But there's something really, I think, has been just really wonderful for me, to just see him be so passionate about something, care so much about something. And no matter what the outcomes, you just keep going forward.

Smaranda Lawrie ([13:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LNKhIX_xZQRLhvzCGNi7zyC6OAE15AisEDRIWPT-bNu6KvHRTkpx1Y4NIGVi7ryYBP_OMRDOwdDkM_LvIAZTzmB_J0M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=817.33)):

But yeah, as a spouse, it's difficult. It's dealing with a lot of stress. This was before I went to get my PhD and my master's and this stuff. So I didn't have the tools that I have today. It's funny too, I mean, just thinking about my own life. You mentioned the UCSB Resilience Project that I put together. I was working with this really wonderful undergraduate student, Samantha Blodgett. At the end, in one of our meetings, she said, "You are the most optimistic person I've ever met."

Smaranda Lawrie ([14:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DZhEVnY8SUObZKcWFdDzp2pCRAFRahj_koaEvDO1jeSJgDWys-5Z2H51dCc_7SLA_GU6FAov0OIN_4AkWvMnOFmaUIA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=848.15)):

It took me a second and I was like, "You know what? You're right. I am," which is wild because I'm from Romania and the stereotypes, if you've heard about Eastern Europe, [inaudible 00:14:17] true, we like to complain and we're gloomy. When I started teaching positive psychology and doing this research, I was getting really positive feedback from students saying, "This is the most life-changing class I've taken. Why doesn't everyone get a class on this?" After a couple of years, I was like, "Maybe I should try the stuff that I'm teaching."

Smaranda Lawrie ([14:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yh8D65ykRSIvjU_lQKtuYb2zMO4KH1nw6wDIcRLfmRbUocWGMAlXounjnq9mLIrb47SVPrfMLPI41hmDR3bAFXuOEVs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=879.1)):

I took about a year where I dedicated a month to different topics, whether it was gratitude or mindfulness. Yeah, at the end of it, at some point, I guess, like you talk to a student, you're like, "Oh shit, this does work." Again, I'm all over the place. But yeah. I don't know. I don't know. I'm all over the place.

Brandon Averill ([15:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9fDe4BJxV0-1C4SV4Ahra4ZgYQA6kAA8Me9WHDS4-34P4BOEN9ihE2UK-hJNTMBvAQsmAblSddv4ss2YdcEJwzKTZeY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=901.11)):

No, I think that's great. Shifting, because I asked you too many questions, on kids, and you hit on it there, but the gratitude, I know that was the answer to one of them. But I would love to know, yeah, I mean, none of us want to screw up our kids. We're all going to screw up our kids. Especially, we're talking to a lot of families that do have this uncertainty. How do you pack up a family and move them to another city, potentially?

Brandon Averill ([15:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=f7JsUtT8H26zLgKkW1QEg6ouJT70Sv-QwBRa_hkbnIDaZmobBJlBakeCVcb0Yx7S-R5W4RaVX6GJEBkklTuANt2pNzs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=929.63)):

You're somebody that went through the extremes of that, and your parents did such a fantastic job of reinforcing, it sounds like, that positivity with you. I would love to know, and maybe it's even repeating the advice you gave to me, but what are some things that the parents, amidst all this uncertainty, and I think, again, applies to everybody given the times of uncertainty. But what is some of the advice that you give to parents on raising kids, in the professional sports environment, the environment that we're currently living in?

Smaranda Lawrie ([16:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ox7By_6iYOSIWJ1BqT4UIqQ1jhXKNGTF3GH2iYB-dgpH_tiptURnevzb03M0gJUlQE5UYMB0A5eVrQw65Rpao6QrYv8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=964.48)):

Yeah. Honestly, I don't remember exactly what I said to you when we met. But I am a parent. I have a son who just turned nine years old and a daughter whose birthday is next week and she'll be five. You're right. As a parent, you feel like you're always screwing up and you're always worried and you're trying your best, but it never feels good enough. When I was an undergrad, I worked with a famous psychologist, a developmental guy named Paul Bloom.

Smaranda Lawrie ([16:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jme-Lz70ubCHsKH5eIxY_3ZGgVxWHGlqJD_yuWZd5aDnhWY59Os-18GTYOD2gC2zgdfKPgwYxFeXUKCLqE49tvxcNTw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=988.81)):

When I was pregnant with my son, Finley, I went and asked him for advice, and he was basically like, "Mom and dad, they fuck you up." That was like, "Just come to terms with it." No, but I think what's really great about my specific job in my career is that I get a lot of flexibility in what I do, and then especially in my research. So as a parent who wants to do their best, I've really, in the past few years, I've switched a lot of my research where I am looking at parenting and parenting processes, especially across different cultures.

Smaranda Lawrie ([17:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=j-fnKP0eFj907FGS2m5fx9EyRTOnTLPlEAf-XVIEEYpXYWib4K6EgEQlcdiL6E7HPeHwcydpMXMRcoQ-RQH-aJcGHso&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1021.02)):

One of my recent studies that's been really interesting is I was really curious of, when you look at every year, we get so much data. We get data in terms of how do students do on academic tests like the PISA? How do they do in stuff like math and writing and science and so forth? And then, we also get a lot of data on the happiest countries in the world and less happy countries and least happy countries.

Smaranda Lawrie ([17:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=r2JWDXfRDAqAiOKX8Wzu-6QhoWK-CDmIwQbFS9UUEtTBA8xg0S_nS-cop__Vti8pNy9Fx45vnKStOFVbhPvcybtvPxE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1047.22)):

One of the things that was really interesting to me, I started having a lot of conversations with my PhD advisor. She's originally from Korea. What we saw is, in a place like Korea, the kids are doing so well academically. They're just completely beating us academically, but they're really not happy. Were not doing so well in terms of wellbeing. When you look at place like the United States, they're just like, "[inaudible 00:17:50]", academically and like, "[inaudible 00:17:52]", in terms of their wellbeing.

Smaranda Lawrie ([17:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U2moh2M4xoAVBpV8U30KfXvUOT28IxaqrGH_J5V2J2WvGGsGxYNSSkyPCXCmVBMDOY1rt3aXTcS8pmj42B5TYck7bTA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1073.69)):

And then you look at some places like in Northern Europe. So places like Denmark and Finland, and you've heard all of the news around this, but they're doing awesome academically and they're doing awesome in terms of their wellbeing. That's where a lot of my research right now is, like, what are we doing differently, whether it's in a school environment, and what are parents doing differently?

Smaranda Lawrie ([18:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BGVI5kDDJaFtXCg4N9oWJ0qZcCtzt4pNDfQJfLk3Ovk3rbGFzLMuveQ8BlGrqfsxkWQpkMAjTvYkG7_a3PXi5hODvMQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1095.05)):

One of the things that I'm really noticing is that here in the United States, there's been a dramatic change in the culture of parenting. We talk a lot... I mean, the United States is a highly independent, highly individualistic country. We talk a lot about these ideas of individualism and we want our kids to be independent and we want them to be their true selves and be unique and so forth. But then when you look at actual actions of parents, it tells a very different story.

Smaranda Lawrie ([18:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FvTWTaI3kthWGbKqjkheEGcIkmEqnHnpmbM9JuG9bnAeUlSrO-Ze5Fg6errYNH0jntzrkCymioUWKsIskDLPnRTh6tc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1127.22)):

We've become, in the past couple of decades, just increasingly more protective of our children. I know it's very well intentioned, but on one hand, we're telling them that they can do anything in the world and that they're their own person and they can reach for the stars and whatever. On the other hand, we're handholding them along the way. I mean, I have college students I work with that are fabulous people and their parents still call up and still email to make sure their kids are doing their homework.

Smaranda Lawrie ([19:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1zC1C1QWOWZyc9pbdiy6Rm9IRnk67Zzh2TdsM3I8Z1ZUIYQctBfrSyRMiIF0VBljjlEvrqmOnSMUkFcxW4-lZiChsO4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1158.97)):

My kids get in a fight on the playground and the parents step in and give me really dirty looks because I'm not there to solve their arguments for them. For one reason, I mean, I think there's many reasons for it, but as a culture in the United States, I think we've become a little bit too protective of our children. One of the things that I see very differently in my data from Denmark, for example, is they don't talk so much about independence, individualism, but they give their kids a lot more opportunity for that.

Smaranda Lawrie ([19:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=I0VUhnMqQduMdYMd1AiN2lpBHfDYMmv1qMiSGlR7TMqkr0xHDOfe9ujy-IssyBAU1QaNHsh2MdFp_SSpFTGI4hyJpq0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1189.35)):

I'm sure you've heard some of these stories, but just letting their kids ride their bike to school, or going to the park on their own, or using knives much earlier, just little things that. I think, in this country, in my data, we see that parents think of their kids as fragile, almost like butterflies that need protecting. And in my Danish data, parents really just think of kids as smaller versions of themselves, like these are just little humans, but there's not that big difference between parent and kid.

Smaranda Lawrie ([20:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=73hgUkQhz40cqma4Aha-s68wgaryAm_xGl0n5w3-u6GzLvNY4BbGzy4UhdSXlxEmLGh759J343DsXNdwNruCJqi2BzA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1219.24)):

Some of the data that's coming up, you ask American parents, "At what age would you let your child go to the park on their own?" I think the average in my data was like 15.7 years. It's like, "What 15 year old wants to go to the park on their own? Who wants to a park on their own, at 15? They're over it. And then in my Danish data, it was five. One thing that I think I try to do with my own kids is give them a little bit more freedom. That means freedom to fail, whether that's falling off the bike, falling off the tree and scraping themselves, getting a bad grade in school, getting in a fight with a friend.

Smaranda Lawrie ([20:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vs5I5bLHgvlzoblfi36t-BJ8iIsOHzZyww_tV9I0-0Y9-fxOrNgvjp7dhM3CvHHHhmta6A-M7LAuPFSxh9W4tNQc-80&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1258.75)):

I think we don't give kids and students enough opportunities to do that as kids. When you get into life later on, and mom and dad can't protect you forever. Like I said before, bad stuff's going to happen. If we've always been protected from it, we've not developed the skills to deal with that. If you look at animals in the wild, one of the things you always see, it's adorable. But one of the things you always see is they're always fighting with each other.

Smaranda Lawrie ([21:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vKlRSvJ0XReFtGcAYzn0h6JqLCTb3W9Sld2tSIxOsJds2ZnOO4pNRdZADSnOhM-L2sg-nYzBCridzUdCeRb_rSffmAs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1285.85)):

Through that fighting, they're learning the skills that they'll need as adults. We don't let kids experience that. The way I think of little failures and bruises and cuts and arguments with friends and all this stuff for little kids, is like vaccines. Everyone's talking about vaccines. But there's vaccines that are giving them the skills, preparing them for later life, which will be hard because life is hard, and I don't think we're doing enough of that.

Smaranda Lawrie ([21:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MX4TybS6B1fx8ywSFn0M7cCTmL_8_AERVh2wR0doGnCrZzxZF5B2iC9O5-KikLYOaxAfHc5nyjfPjR6oPrnm1s__cJk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1313.13)):

It's funny because I do this research, and then when it comes to my own kids, it's different. It's hard to not want to do everything to protect them and to save them. I don't know, and to worry that like, "Oh gosh, I just moved them across the country and took them away from their friends and they're living in a new..." Did I mess them up, kind of thing, where some of those experiences, I really... The difficult experiences that I had as a kid, I think have given me some of the biggest strengths. I'm not talking about like trauma here. I'm talking about just little [inaudible 00:22:29]. Yeah. So, yeah.

Brandon Averill ([22:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yMpcPkAeoAabv2dy3mZ1_feUBIe4-nXcs-r2Hl2JzxQhErmkWfNUhIqH0F3MfwvPeSJ1PaqCpG9snJ0-c8v6S2jeY8E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1351.35)):

No. Yeah, no, I think it's fascinating. You keep referring to data and I think that's so important. Obviously, everybody knows we're on the investment side and we're very data driven. But so often the data doesn't line up with the emotion or the feeling. It feels a lot better to go and try to pick the next big stock, the next apple, or whatever. But we all know that the data says that's not the most successful route. Same here. It's like we know the data, but it's hard to grapple with the actual action.

Brandon Averill ([23:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wDGe1VALyoO6poZLiMIt67bdDQdJPKGO6RYLdzMfNSht0NkqqbwEsYw-0YUJPH8XWEMD42HDBVsTLTg0ay4eIaKe6Xc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1383.41)):

It's like, "Okay, I let my four-year-old run how far down the street? Does he stop at the stop sign and not run out in the street?" That's a hard practice, obviously. But I think it's good, these reminders, and it does go back to the data. Like if you go back to the data and you're really trying to accomplish something, that's what we should all rely upon and push ourselves, it sounds like, and maybe borrow some of that positive psychology, that what's the worst that can really happen, type thing. But...

Erik Averill ([23:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oLUPvZjU2qXDxYb0QcCRt2sjdcJ2jgUpNveNniPqH3afRyUNoknEPhUz49nHHITKp8pRtLQ3haJPxF8reQoVEeV98oE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1419.04)):

Yeah, just one comment I'd want to make is, it's interesting to me before you redefined what positive psychology is, the default from what I've heard through social or these other things, that really is this feel good, all rainbows and butterflies, yet you're actually talking about developing tools and skillsets because of the resilience that's necessary to flourish as a human. That wellbeing is really defined of, how do we have the skillsets to regulate our emotions and decisions, knowing that it is inevitable that we live in a broken world, that we live in the reality that 100% of people die?

Erik Averill ([24:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GIrEH1M_FoDkI10TaV2ORqBxInYTWguDxLMiCqH7NeJHKjZGfY5ZYwuTEhl3pnglO4UfN64ha53kHtFqbMSEKifOmFc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1466.2)):

That we live in the reality that this is actually probably the safest time in history, at least in the United States, where I was joking around with my wife yesterday, as yeah, we're so unsafe with our ADT alarm and our clean drinking water, all of these realities that is, as when you start to look at past history, like, oh my goodness, could you imagine being terrified of dying of animals and diseases on a daily basis? This was really helpful for me to hear.

Erik Averill ([24:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7Xp46y7AEBGV-o6P_QroNYgq1rcv8oMzS0KBF0avPwPWNzC0mU_SHFOAg_7MWQLA_W0HtQzgqFQw2QXRxd97Eix-6uk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1499.83)):

A question I have is just even somebody where we've had other therapists and people on this podcast, I think a lot of times I know we do this as parenting. It's this belief that we can control things. It was helpful when somebody, it's really like it's a God complex, thinking that we can control all things. Can you talk about maybe what are some of the skillsets that we can set our kids up for success?

Erik Averill ([25:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sHbWiWsdBhQ_obGPOP0U0WUJAFaGl9a9cX4M8hpnkamNm_BMJY9vnUlchT0j_syXE2If0TowZuJzFD82cBW5yJXqBq4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1534.75)):

I guess, what are the most important skills? Guess letting them fight things out and cry a little bit. I think of a book called Permission To Feel by Marc Brackett, from Yale. What are the things that parents need to know, that we're preventing our kids from doing?

Smaranda Lawrie ([25:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7AiDZoOE0kDvz4B0Cuobbw0eCQRkQOTzdILeNiA99lcVSlbRUBg8Obhf6IgerNo05geVsy_dUrpnot9ybEOGAUNpqU8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1553.08)):

You guys have really good questions. Yeah. What are some of the things that you're saying listeners can actually do with their kids? Is that kind of what your...

Erik Averill ([26:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BWWrD6bapmaJi1hPF2DFfC4WYE5-tMKU3nAMqKwOnnqf93zpmACvHFdUNrLKxze5X-s0TMTf1TAoLLALhsVGqE9X07c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1565.78)):

Yeah. I think that that would be if... We always ask this question. If I've got a five-minute conversation with a parent and they say, "Hey, I'm never going to get to meet you again. I can't read any more books. I can't listen to any more podcasts. What's the best life advice you can give me, that's going to have the biggest impact?

Smaranda Lawrie ([26:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kWWWXrG6KoTKm-ptv8U4zxpfDRhDvxwWTuvOljZfxQLjXIAQ9cOz5zlvaPzjTW3AaQM1nCV6Pu1mZKauQGo42y3d77w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1584.94)):

Okay. I will first agree with the first part of what you said about, I think we give ourselves a little bit too much credit as parents, that we don't have quite as big of a role. Again, there's a lot of data and even studies on studies, the meta analyses coming out, that show that parents really don't have nearly as much control over outcome of their children's lives as they think they do. So that's totally true.

Smaranda Lawrie ([26:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4m32zR2IXQ4Ydzv0axW96jB5yjFRAnmRxUs3S-ky5sFAPIVlhEXL-dsQMcp9sVASAzmpjQ1yPdf5xQuSgBjdfc6y1pI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1611.46)):

At the same time, I do think there's certain things that we can do as parents, to make it a little bit better for them. One of the things that I do with my kids, and one of the things that I do with my students that's super simple and you've probably heard about it, is the three good things or three blessings exercise. Super simple, super effective. It's literally just, what has gone well in the past 24 hours? Can you give me one thing? Can you give me two things? Can you give me three things?

Smaranda Lawrie ([27:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GNvQXKu7W3L903RA_S8hA8zPDEki42aHSSzJmQFETDgRcW3SCNQ5sCcPvQuArz0t-PL-A2_RowakgJfHPXJuuZuKBGU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1638.76)):

It could be something really big, like they just won their state championships in flag football, or whatever's big in a little kid's life. Or it could be something really small like chicken nuggets tasted extra good at lunch today. But I think that's something that's super small and effective. I know you guys have had different speakers talk about this before. But from a biological perspective, it's much easier for us to focus on the negative, to ruminate on the negative. When something goes wrong, that's what we hold onto, those negative emotions is what we hold onto.

Smaranda Lawrie ([27:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5OAfWzmt4N1yenjJhxN1IwxLgELrIM1KpyGFNCmvOYptDuxGJBuiV8G350iWjydkk67lumyvXWJn7hp0X5yGsZteHH8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1671.73)):

This is a really simple, very quick, easy gratitude exercise that you can implement with anyone. I've seen this implemented with two-year-olds, and I've seen it implemented with CEOs at Fortune 500s, and it's effective for everyone. But that's a really easy way if you do it three to five times a week, to train yourself for a minimum of 30 days. I can look at a brain scan. I can look at a neuro imaging scan of your brain, and I can see actual brain change where you're rewiring your brain to also pay attention to the positive, because it is so much easier to focus on the negative.

Smaranda Lawrie ([28:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=c1urQNLshvGugwW8amdVScejK691jYLdSSXorGt37NDQdclLGj9X1Bw9sxvZB_hZ2uzW5BvwEk2mFCJ2em2Wk6EtWwg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1707.92)):

When we can do that, I mean, we all know we all have days where we get out of bed and we're in just a crummy mood. Maybe there's a good reason for it or maybe not. I'm sure those are the days where it's hard to drag yourself to the gym and it's hard to call your clients or whatever it is that you do. And then there's other days where we just happen to get out of bed and we're feeling better, and that gives us a lot of energy to go conquer the day. We think we can do anything on those days. We tend to be more productive. We tend to have more energy.

Smaranda Lawrie ([28:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=btNb9eMX2F1hbfaRvEujSDr9KAqHF8BUvEUpH60O9MBY1-NU9XA8OnmJJhB6aMzsySLORFRAV0O8eWyt0mPeYoVnqHY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1737.83)):

So cultivating this type of gratitude, building optimism over time, I think is something super easy to implement as a parent, or as a teacher, or as a co-worker, as a boss, or as anybody. That's one little thing that I always tell everyone they should do because it's just so effective in so many different situations. But other than that, as a parent, I mean, like I said, the biggest thing that I'm trying to do is really just give my kids... Realize that I don't control their lives in every way, and I can't direct their lives in every way.

Smaranda Lawrie ([29:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kNmTsTrhoLBSKObEnxhJYOUyF6j-zZ5gfYoHwo6-ink--HlNAOxzKgwR2S3hakpDYFANap-OHqBaKXKyp_lnfCn7hNw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1768.95)):

I'm trying to give them more opportunities to struggle and not try to solve everything for them, not try to fix everything for them, and let them be okay when they're mad. Let them live in that mad space, live in that sad space, live in stressed out space so that they learn how to do that for later on. Did that answer your question at all?

Erik Averill ([29:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lb2l6Hm3Lc64RCotu2IoMe0znKl0mOZrQIYRa059Yc1vCqPTD2AjBl0fJNg55w4U7gOoZyOKUb_ysEudNp4MGxVLUkg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1791.88)):

Yeah. It's helpful. I think of, one of the things that we've implemented, I have a now almost six year old daughter, a three-year-old son, and then a one year old is, we started doing the five-minute journal with her over a year ago. It's the, "What am I grateful for? What's one thing that would make today great?" And then, the last question is, "I am..." It's an identity statement. Then at the end of the evening, it's like, "What went well today? What are you thankful for?" And it really does.

Erik Averill ([30:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4YgCZJokMHqdbmjfphNe6GrvYCUQNO7rVVl5-pGLeJ_pmaurwlRENfwxQ3xj0lecbSQPvtHnNKlbSWwUuFnH-HI0hxU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1824.69)):

The funniest thing is when we started doing that with her, is it forms and shapes us as parents. Totally here I am trying to form and shape my child and it's actually making me answer these questions. And so, a follow-up question I'd love to hear you talk about is just, where does identity fit in? It's interesting that we want our kids to have this individual success, but we're almost robbing them of having their own identity as we try to helicopter over them. And so, I just think it's interesting that, where does identity fit in to this conversation?

Smaranda Lawrie ([31:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vqbjKbqLaw33EKrKw5dG4Wg8LyE7bcbMkk9B8Xzn_SZmGzGtJFbly8tOSTbcyf_1rx0l-G76CrlFa0WPzqC943YF8yE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1862.4)):

Yeah. It's interesting that you brought up a question about identity, because when you were talking about doing this activity with your daughter, I thought, "Oh, this is great. You're also giving her the opportunity to reflect on her life's, and what she cares about him, and I think that's really important as well. I say this to my college students too, it's a really tough time to be a kid. It's a really tough time to be a high school student and a college student.

Smaranda Lawrie ([31:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CR6Nutff-XYcvQx8nVyGF3EaPPlifvb1GJ-8ElTN60Q97ajGfFWHTuzoBYqeWbfNRlar-cI23FnKMoo9kb5M8OmC8mo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1889.45)):

First of all, we live in a world that is incredibly just busy, right? We're overstimulated by stuff all the time. There's social media and all the comparison that comes with it, and everybody's fake perfect lives, that aren't really anything like they look at on social media. But I think the other part of it is there's so many expectations, and maybe this comes from this God complex that Eric mentioned as a parent. But everybody wants their kids to be the best and the greatest at something and make some big impact on the world. And that's really great.

Smaranda Lawrie ([32:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vDlQF-72PHr93T0QDt2bNwzm8ZkXFoE7lhoZCsuuAipiUZxuQ5Np69lD6ZAgnEAjdyVHdHnJDkpjKrCh6oRfTY6zMAU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1922.02)):

But on the other hand, I feel like we just put so much pressure on kids. One of the things I see by the time that students get to college is they're on like a treadmill. They're on a hamster treadmill. It's just bad. They do sports. They do clubs. They do social stuff, good grades. They're expected to do everything. It's so much about doing and one foot in front of the other and one foot in front of the other. They're all outside expectations.

Smaranda Lawrie ([32:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JJOe_xgibQtbpn_QrR2mikHh0miMWO9xrXXedkvntIvCStPq327CvNtaY9FY4WiSU-GdYgerTeadPlb418m5zhIku8U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1948.02)):

I think we don't do a very good job giving kids enough space to figure out, what's important to you? What do you care about? What do you want to do? What are you good at? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? That doesn't even apply to kids, really. I think it speaks a broader statement on our culture, where we've become such a culture of doing. That's what's appreciated, is grinding and hustling and grit and work, work, work, and productivity.

Smaranda Lawrie ([32:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=W-inMaF1IPazTTb6P6DViullGlgbq1l7_kOl4HJ7rfwgnVyaLydZz_bqpjZP5bOv-W6kq_4tXR2EJRjRmMXEwQTZnls&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1975.38)):

I think that's great to an extent, but we've forgotten what it means to just be. We don't know how the being aspect of it. I think that's really important too, because I don't know if this happens to you guys. I mean, you work with athletes who are retired and trying to figure out the second phase of their life. I think a lot of people, a lot of young people, a lot of students don't really know what they want, what they care about, what their values are.

Smaranda Lawrie ([33:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jj6ZUeD6KzJehfcHEkuLsIib8xbXhVAvIxl6ngk8jpLa8FKCS_7_CG89jhwY1xO2-VJGtsES0wAyWwQYPIZuTSvyk-4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2001.74)):

So I do a lot of that with them too, where it's like we spend a whole class, a 90-minute period, sorting through values and getting to, what are your five highest, most important values? If you guys have heard of some of the research on character strengths, figuring out, what are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? How do you use your strengths to prop up your weaknesses? Yeah, the bottom line is, Eric, that I don't think we do enough.

Smaranda Lawrie ([33:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jdEuLgmWgr8OQJE73E01loT8etZxnlWaXMszq1_Wn_NvNUrGUdTm6lPjOOSSn3h7nj5VgS6IcMgkThW0bY3vnsuq5l0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2030.26)):

We talk the talk in terms of independence and individualism and uniqueness and so forth. But I don't think we actually give enough space and opportunity for kids, or really anyone, to spend some time just being bored and thinking about that kind of stuff.

Brandon Averill ([34:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hxNyIW6SitNS6U_MF2M9VvSN7C_88F537ynhbAjs_YWOPHjxqE8fnvUU6uJmJ5hSLFB7FtmnnF8RThWGdtV8KcmKVMQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2048.63)):

I mean, that's a fascinating point, and you've brought up cultures several times. I think, how do we change culture? How do we shift culture? That's also a difficult thing. But talking about the values I think is really interesting because we try to have that conversation often because money is so tied to values and decision-making. I think of a conversation I had with a client this last week, in fact. He's on a multi-year contract. He's got more money theoretically than he should ever need.

Brandon Averill ([34:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gYdYOmVsLilWWUesy3O4ERUNHT_XCIBe9evqYXKn7owHjczLRDCplTkXQr9DimlUxJp0c4Wwqew8j-dVJ6wWhTNcZUo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2080.87)):

But it was really talking through like, "Why are you making certain decisions? Okay, you said you want to make more money off of the field than you made on it. You already have more money than you're ever going to spend. So there's something else behind this. Let's dig a little bit deeper." But it seemingly, I'm curious, why do you think we don't spend more time on that? Are people afraid of it? Is it lack of resources and process? Why don't we spend more time thinking about the values, in this country specifically, as opposed to Norway or one of these countries that maybe does spend more time on it?

Smaranda Lawrie ([35:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qGO0JfvkWp8ssRqC7SSvdV-uqXCGMUw1eP2T4i2Ulg6MXAKDUPRsxaBpaxoI7GaZABMF2Pflt2AUtjqrgJEQ3YecyKI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2127.29)):

Gosh. Okay. First of all, I'm a positive psychologist and I'm a cultural psychologist. So I do a lot of my work around the world and that's why I'm obsessed with thinking about cultures. So I apologize if I brought that word up too much.

Brandon Averill ([35:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=v7aRaeM0IJ7vdPbChedYkSCLq6IOZe6I2ojy3UN9tlAIdHjAYSJpEATzqYyNXJQVQ_cQjXiUNJyVil-lh5JzeK4dsGo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2140.82)):

No, it's great.

Smaranda Lawrie ([35:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5ADMZATe549nO-xaU5OAxp0nAeHNPrhXbhxnttibggIefojgbodk_JK6knWbD7wVzimEpmhEVDn0zR6RspIX9NuQ07g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2143.94)):

Gosh, these are some big, big questions here. I will say that one of the things I really liked about learning more about you guys and what you do is this idea that money isn't important just for money's sake. It's important for what you can do with it and getting to do... How you want to have your impact on the world. So I really love that. I think that's really important to realize. I mean, one of the things that I do at the beginning of my positive psychology class is I look at, what do students really want in life? What are they hoping to accomplish?

Smaranda Lawrie ([36:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TYavPq3HVRugTEJpe-OpdIJXAzYyu7DAUUat6bQcROubFvZsGRTFslCybvChR9w9BhxIcoqVrnRcOA4FGIS4tvxR1Q0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2180.44)):

I've done this a bunch of times. Everyone has done this all over. It's always the same stuff. They want to get a really good job, which means a really high-paying job. They want to get the great house, and the great car, and the great fit... It's all these things that social media, and TV, and everything tells us that we should want and should have, and they're going to make us so much happier. Then I show them that that's not really what the data shows at all.

Smaranda Lawrie ([36:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4BOA5qDl225AbB5rCthk5xMWZ8TKO8rnYnPMW3QUpIg-CfuW4KTKbxAw3KBOgJ3DXH6qPnhdjNoLBXm2dUYp30gAcNk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2209.92)):

Money is very, very important when you don't have it, when you don't have enough money to live in a safe neighborhood. When you don't have enough money to feed your kids and to stay warm, money is very important. But once you've hit a certain point where you can live a normal, safe life, money doesn't really contribute all that much to our happiness and wellbeing, not anywhere near as much as people think. And neither does that fancy house or that fancy car, or the surgeried face that looks five years younger or two years younger.

Smaranda Lawrie ([37:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mhcGSFovJwmszvybXtkXmvaUBzJg8e6bvUc2CZ5-KaU2AlYQva4MxmuYy9DtcSpedCJnV8hES8aAsyhQ1WFZ3hZaB7E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2241.73)):

None of that stuff really matters as much as we think it does. What does matter, though, is relationships. There's a famous positive psychologist that died a few years ago, Chris Pearson, but he was doing an interview like this, and they asked him, "What's the most important thing that you've learned in the past two, three decades of research in positive psychology?" He said, "Other people matter." So relationships are really important. You need to spend more time on developing those relationships, deepening relationships.

Smaranda Lawrie ([37:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jsoDvY1dpsuKcrJdKtlIIeNSyFs5XTdOYiPPYNZASM5hd887WFt-hh3-uLqvojQaMuTjwGra9heELpw6lsukY_l127A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2271.69)):

We're incredibly social creatures, and we're meant to be together, living in line with your values, having meaning to your life, a purpose for, why am I here? How do I contribute to this world? Those are the types of things that matter more. What was your other question? You guys, you do that simple [crosstalk 00:38:12]-

Brandon Averill ([38:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MFRzxD1O_84AlVLqZylJog4yc4z9xtv1L4iBU4hRc8pm4GBM2KlRv-Uk6RrzyyjsdcJV0ErI5SNV6Psi5OUQa9yIdd8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2291.67)):

Yeah, I know.

Smaranda Lawrie ([38:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vDdJyTShMhuUm5r31Y-sZfW3CtuLJK58WJyyHpd2VtNV--3QPJ3Q1dinJh1ue3RMaay7ZYwWp3QOadFZ5f80AHF5l_8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2291.67)):

I feel like I just [inaudible 00:38:17].

Brandon Averill ([38:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GJ2Bpsiuy1p_ZsxlpbmPS2xex9q-K3_CMsbQysIROX4I-zfgD5sJ9KUZ6ROA4KaHcBGCjcJaVjyq5pqmwoJSGvGP8MY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2296.79)):

I'll try to get a one, but I'll actually divert and stick to one topic here too, because it's around this wellbeing. I think there's some famous research around the PERMA acronym.

Smaranda Lawrie ([38:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=w--Sowe2SZxVBPzHoPFDUo5_OTSxwYKwVT0yspo5YOVZ16PLH7K0iGCo5lndApzFaqrvy4aSlIeJvg8R5AEt36Z2yZM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2308.53)):

Nice. Seligman. Yes.

Brandon Averill ([38:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NcmpUOGDOU7RGQR_dN73cU22gghNuVRYWu_Fl8YqnVD5eANYdov711-g2gvqQU8BdAozktCbNAEwlYDTFO3a0hUV704&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2310.55)):

I'm wondering if you could maybe explain that a little bit, because as I was preparing for this, reading through that, it was just so helpful. It's a framework to work through. It highlights, okay, what is wellbeing? It's not having a hundred million dollars. It's something else. I'm sure you're familiar with it, but if you find value in that, or maybe I'm taking this in a way you don't want to go. But I'd love to hear your thoughts.

Smaranda Lawrie ([38:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CkZO5j2RoGGCzwF7e9qCV6R9LJa_3wQJ188RYx-eknbf92g4treEELLz6gFxnoFDKp5fG2LWRrzCZzIHRXjFTo1ia78&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2338.28)):

Yeah. PERMA is a theory of wellbeing that comes from Marty Seligman, who is this brilliant, brilliant professor researcher at the University of Pennsylvania. He has a masters in applied positive psychology that he started there along with some other great people like Angela Duckworth. Yeah, he's a really interesting guy because he is also quite famous for his work on learned helplessness as a model for depression in the lab.

Smaranda Lawrie ([39:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=w1iQjLR_RXNbOdYuE_LHstFzEgGzXjIvirxuZbyl6rDZ-thkkNi1c6qFNKpHpcDoKht-_IwRnNN1AN6hQi0sc1goaPw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2369.62)):

I won't really get into that, but a lot of his early work were really looking at depression. And then, in the late 1990s, as the president of the American Psychological Association, he really became famous as the father of positive psychology. But it's really interesting to see his progression in the field because early on, when he started this field of positive psychology, his early book was called, I think, Authentic Happiness.

Smaranda Lawrie ([39:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4AqbWoTcoHfmGOO4nAo6x4lK1M8i0l1DWaUDPkig8XQzARdois3otUaX4mFbg1goUipeM9g6qP7RO9FFIlttfPWVaKo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2395.62)):

And then, he shifted away. He cringes talking about happiness now and talks a lot more about flourishing and has this PERMA theory. PERMA stands for Positive Emotions. We're not saying that positive emotions don't matter, but again, it's not just about that Pollyanna smile. There's other emotions in there like love. There's a lot of research showing how, again, tied to relationships, but the emotion of love is so powerful. E stands for engagement.

Smaranda Lawrie ([40:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qy5YlW30wDVxW5CTqUiKkims-Q2lSwtkUmmALd6XwGTq7G_V7DcWKQXSv9ssD_-Q6ffmsuMv7BueIx5ZQE8GYW4LCy8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2425.56)):

You guys have heard, I'm sure, of the term flow. So having an activity, whatever it is, whether you're doing... You guys are baseball players, whether it was while you're playing baseball, or whether it's you're running, or you're an artist, or you're a musician, or you're crunching numbers, whatever it is, but feeling fully engaged with what you're doing in a way, where you don't even realize time passes. It's just you're in it.

Smaranda Lawrie ([40:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lcn4o-SvBr1ZUz-mo0VxJetCbxJDH-UmJl3dIWS0pHooikalZUaicVwq3zPL5t2Hwv0Bi2DoADmoU3-gypJnlTUaMWM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2448.5)):

R stands for relationships. Again, we touched on that already. But M is meaning, so having a purpose in life, a why for why you exist, a why for why you get up in the morning. And then A is accomplishment. Accomplishment can mean very different things for different people. I think what's interesting about all of this, and taking the time to reflect, taking the time to figure out who you are and what's important to you is because all these things look very different from person to person.

Smaranda Lawrie ([41:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3l9YcYqR7K-qQq_wxYB3SFYSWCIQjJU-R-c4M1aBDxp9thZ-UgcZNloxli34_jqBRVs--sSQUz1cT4mVGj1VZRiqfvo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2478.37)):

Accomplishment can be doing awesome on the football field, or it could be being the best parent that you could be, if you're a stay-at-home parent. Accomplishment doesn't need to mean bringing in all the big bucks. But anyways, I love PERMA. It's really great to shift away, again, from this conversation around happiness and realize that a life worth living, a good life, there's much more that goes into it. It's much more multi-faceted and complex.

Smaranda Lawrie ([41:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=J7wF3O2jfFelW0Ma-ZGND8unLPaspWesEfk1F95RJkH8_XJO7cdphdnmWisprUwpiaCjBPrkxA-NH83BOx2lkTujqds&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2506.01)):

There's been people, including Marty, that have in recent years tried to add to that, things like health and independence. It grows and shrinks and grows and shrinks, but those are the main components of wellbeing, as we look at it. That's a popular theory in the field.

Erik Averill ([42:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vgn3LfiuiadNl9NNZurumncemj8yjcQVQFSPdQR9nugCoWxc_L64_msTHRcKk9ZILM8O6BQmknl2f4_SRPs5k247xrc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2524.47)):

Yeah. Thank you for explaining that. I think it's one of those things that, whether it's on a podcast or even in a webinar or something, PERMA will get dropped as if we're supposed to know it. It's like us financial people dropping our comments left and right. It was super helpful to have you define that. I think the word that you've mentioned a few times, that we've talked a lot about, is this notion of flourishing, that when we talk about wealth, we have this conversation of redefining wealth, because if you go back to the old English word, it actually means wellbeing. It isn't money.

Erik Averill ([42:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=t4OTzyABoS0DaM5fnC1X5IZGONNvWFLg1TylEwZXU1EsaDbldq70JnQ5K8pIqBob18shHG_OXxUt3doqfVXZTpwBU0o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2566.78)):

And so, there's this tracing too of essentially saying, how do we set your life up to have the impact to flourish, which is having the energy and the health to show up as the best version of yourself in the projects and the relationships that matter most? It's this really interesting thing that I think consumerism has us so distracted trying to sell us on the good life through our material possessions, and through our hundreds of thousands of followers, but not our friendships of virtue.

Erik Averill ([43:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2JdICXu4RH43lq7aPymHydN7EJxnx9uwQY4ClZdjtocPjVlKHvDdoQ9JxA__obkMS92Sqic_eDZTWaQXuZNWAlaMpe4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2600.67)):

I think it's this really helpful thing and challenging to... We know this, that all of the research, when it goes on the deathbed, it's not that I wish I had a bigger house. It's the few people that can probably fit in your hospital room, of the things that matter most. And so, it's just always good to hear this challenge. It's interesting. One of the things I've learned the most by parenting and the information you've shared here is, what's really good for how we're trying to develop our children's probably really good for us as adults. We're just, as you said, trying to go back to traditional psychology to undo all of the bad stuff.

Erik Averill ([44:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=laHElVSYMb948zfVOm1r-RcaT2QZxO2bfE84rr35sHM3XcleBmpl2fqHQm-whsFz-HZ94W1YtO2fgqC0KJT0uKopTtU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2642.99)):

One thing I want to clarify and just make sure is an affirmative yes is, it's not too late. As adults, you've heard these, I think, hopefully, lies that, "Hey, once you hit 16, you're done. You've baked and you're cooked. I mean, what advice do you have for us as the adults, the professional athlete, the CEO, the mom, the entrepreneur, the people that are listening on this podcast that go, "That's great. I can try and apply this to my kids." But how about if this is stuff that I need today? Is it too late for us the adult to make these changes?

Smaranda Lawrie ([44:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nfIpg3PNaeqojSZFbONwjXeo8CBBivMF7B27Kry793nD1PwWBTC9EV3nxf_6rZxjwhb4hzF-CVPH4RK9j6hDy9FeMzA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2680.48)):

Sure. So many great things in there. First of all, I love that you brought up the deathbed. I think that's a really great exercise that I also do with students, is have them imagine what their deathbed is like. I know that sounds dark and terrible, but it's really, yeah, who's there? What are they saying about you? Who do you want there and what do you want them to be saying about you?

Smaranda Lawrie ([45:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=h14tR1o9UMVaQ2VmI57XHQsJRaCYNw5_KDbv10paC1lC8l45jsrh_DqCF-cB7-PP5_QoOiSvs__nv_IRrCRZdPeZZ8w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2702.01)):

I think that's a really good exercise to realize, it's not about that house. It's not about how much you have in the bank account. That's not who you want there. That's not what you care about at the end of life. In terms of, is it too late? Absolutely not. I think this is probably the most exciting discovery in my field of psychology in the past two, three decades.

Smaranda Lawrie ([45:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WTXTfMlSlExkzzhfl3xQQPlp3xmJ70Xm6IiOiZL9TvYAuucRYAWb3Gh4BGiiaY4q926hAggyRHwAwbHUtjCb8qctw9A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2722.99)):

Until two, three decades ago, we really thought, like Eric said, that most change at the brain level really happen during the first few years of life, that maybe up until puberty, but then afterwards, that was it. You're stuck. This is who you are, and there's no further change. And maybe the only kind of other change that we would admit to would be in later age, like, "Oh, you're getting really old." Like it's a decline, like you've had a stroke and it's going terribly.

Smaranda Lawrie ([45:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=y2lgEytNMyVuf18sBK71p1xaGbjJJCMk7zVp4CqDoU-gQAHPyHt47teEKOR6e9e-ZGfUr4skHg5qwEi6kYYuHyUwVQw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2751.21)):

We now know that that's not true at all. There is change that happens throughout our entire life on a very physical, biological level. I can see change in your brain. What's really exciting about that is you really have so much control over it. Even the foods you eat. We all talk so much about nutrition, and I'm sure you guys as athletes have thought about nutrition, eating things like fish, eating things like blueberries, these are good just for your heart and for your muscles and all that. It's good for your brain.

Smaranda Lawrie ([46:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pJBLoC-e6gJ5UopurB1dFx8j5TR_XtOyQ8A5YxvfC9R5EaWaQ4KcZp45DAs-ofDfLhdeemuo0KxzX9pJKir2NN7WWNg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2784.39)):

There's some really cool studies actually showing that eating crunchy food, so eating crunchy food, as opposed to eating mushy food, has benefits for your brain. There's this early classic studies... You guys seem to know a lot about this. So if you've already heard about it, I apologize. But there's this really great study. I think it came out in the early '90s. This was one of the first neuro-imaging studies that really came to popularity. It was looking at taxi drivers in London. Have you heard of this?

Brandon Averill ([46:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HnKnZuYUakSoWX3dnyBbz5iLqvx7YcmpHzo2Lo5pVFSKW9TwOXBAv-uSJD3_PxV3zKWLM7nRHo3PRETBhFsU5vA-fNg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2810.6)):

No.

Erik Averill ([46:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jwfT2mGN5Ezw96NZ6FBtpARoyG0RaUY8EuKrzkbOWLF4Oi8ZtqcxOYvZer7u4bLEuixi79m6nrWbo4X4SFPiqzDQM64&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2811.45)):

No.

Smaranda Lawrie ([46:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nlri2_X1kyBDmKt5Wchq196DhdfWIekRQTo2w87HhuoA2Z7xv4zJaKcype8Ck2byk8bmIWby5bcH6k_bRnyJvhlL9Q8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2813.37)):

I don't know if you've been to London or not, but London is a very crazy city. There's a lot of streets and they're tingled like a big, messy spiderweb. It's a city that wasn't planned. It evolved organically. It turns out that becoming a taxi driver in London is extremely difficult. I think they go to school for something like three years full-time, something like six hours a day. You have to memorize thousands and thousands and thousands of streets. Again, this is before everyone that had GPSs, that the study was done.

Smaranda Lawrie ([47:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nVNyLhLkM5UXxE2Cc2FZXlPC5WxdaYdbdOPJxfC6JZpPGlOJ0y7A6lYcJtW0M9I0wAbcHBpNuSEILMyz-thbn4Lxag4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2843.58)):

But what they looked at is they looked at people who had been taxi drivers for a really long time, versus new taxi drivers, versus people that weren't taxi drivers. We showed that there's a part of the brain that's really involved with spatial memory and spatial recognition called the hippocampus. That part of the brain was actually larger in taxi drivers. It was larger the longer they had been in the job. That was one of the first studies to really show us in a very concrete way, what we do has very clear impact on our brain.

Smaranda Lawrie ([47:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wAfzazGGIG41V_UWE1g2fcFGINJ4KIBfKYt4JAkOWv0nZ6vl3t3fZnTKwH228yN89Tw3Cw4UBjySlW69S317dfTiNtE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2877.66)):

The same way that you work out your muscles, you can work out your brain. This is this idea of neuroplasticity, that it's flexible, it's changeable. We can do things to change it. Even newer research is coming out showing that there is something called neurogenesis. Neurons or brain cells. We used to think that the neurons you had at birth, there's the neurons you always have. It turns out that that's not true, that we're able to grow new neurons, especially in certain parts of the brain, again, the hippocampus. I read a study recently that by the time you turn 50, you've completely replaced the neurons that you were born with.

Brandon Averill ([48:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MYuHmbctjfu-c2cGjoMvWekZCTcHzJ_8Sv1jL6e7KDl-uQlyqnZIc-yz6cN3Al0_HutNr3AaYkTV50c-3Ed2NRNrivA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2917.01)):

Wow.

Smaranda Lawrie ([48:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TsJsqBI5pu1-eKWYc3D6bnaCj14jrAA88K7IqEsWX2OSJdzb5DXMZJZgxzdpZC-_O4hpuzmq7oXyozAspviZfwMRfso&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2918.14)):

Again, what is really cool about this research is, so much of it is in your hands. So, again, the foods you eat, getting physical exercise, especially cardiovascular exercise, is really helpful. Pushing yourself to constantly learn and exercising things, practicing things, especially things that are really difficult. So repeated practice, but also practice really hard stuff. We all had that subject in high school or college that was really hard and you're like, "Oh, I'm just not good at that." Pushing yourself on those things is really one of the best things you could do for your brain.

Smaranda Lawrie ([49:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0_Z2FKYdotvp8hZ1CPJlmGEhiUyljGAK1Yi37ddYnI_s8w1avSdv0dWMrVeX-rDXQMadtemEcIPT96dcdaGdYxsGvIU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2956.09)):

I was terrible, I called it sadistics back in the day. I have a master's in statistics now, but I was terrified of it. But yeah, working on really complicated things, exposing yourself to new things or travel, whether it's to a foreign country or just to a place in town that you never go to, but exposing yourself to things that make you uncomfortable, that are new. Doing positive psychology exercises, whether it's the gratitude exercise, or practicing mindfulness, or practicing savoring, or just doing yoga.

Smaranda Lawrie ([49:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HwqiL3M3ErKc4S5KtMBFpFtHz2C6lyinq3rPhcCwGXV9tRhyKFyZ7nfr8zkBWwIn8dzhlzgT9yUA7d-FfGg1GtOceU4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2987.04)):

All these things we see have a tremendous impact in a very... Now we know, in a very physical, biological way. I can track change in your brain. That to me is just so exciting.

Erik Averill ([50:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=e5PGrADjERBqCbI3KMw_SsQWto-erVb5z3tAdKwYQvnLx1NAd_eRv18tQclKmlVq-dqGj7CHQzBGN-9OpqlGXDYOFrs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3001.72)):

I love it, and I know Brandon's going to close this out. But I get so excited when you start to talk about these things. I got turned onto the book, This Is Your Brain On Food, from Dr. Uma Naidu, I think is her name, from Harvard, in talking about-

Smaranda Lawrie ([50:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FUFTDxCbCd3Idizmf3WtW3xH62A4EV97vYeJXl-RbtY39g-FbdYprWhkTbmEBZqrA_s2Mc6ygNzrHvtQsU5pW8lOM3o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3019.05)):

I love that you guys are reading and is doing so... I love that you guys know so much about this.

Erik Averill ([50:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oDxKjnBUsLxMRGB0kMPT7NY-h3GXwclJ_0PyOvK9oAVNw7Ihn3sAE0BEBEqtHjig6S1oAcmIzclhHq9UbdbFr56WzFQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3024.04)):

Well, it's fascinating. It's the whole reason we started this podcast. The human capital podcast, or think about, you can invest in yourself through your physical ability, your intellectual ability. And then what we call your social capital, your network of relationships, is to go, we have been created as these fascinating creatures that can grow, and in so many different ways, in food.

Erik Averill ([50:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hH5jtOogov1OCOuwxhlUi695ikVhe5XPSxxVOgp95OMCbsUANcZK-IgrPxHUaI1i9QmXiec7GeZ1FjvgFH6fr76MuVI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3050.81)):

As an athlete, I always just thought about it as macros calories in, calories out, how do I put on some weight, not the impact on my brain, in my emotional health, and depression, and anxiety, and these types of things. And so, just it's so fun to learn that no matter how old you are, you can continue to develop and really unlock it. Then the last thing I'll say and let Brandon close out is just, I think you've hit on a few things and it's why we're also so fascinated by the immigrant story, is it's really hard to understand our own position in life or culture when we've never seen outside of it.

Erik Averill ([51:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CoXNmzAFUBTDlbc3NQ4ADplC3ulZ7owWrOwtRCWuyudyt3vYIWpHHxc5bAqEgS7iPPRmf7ETXTALSPPKiDxZjoRyFsE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3092.94)):

I think it's the Kipling quote of... It says, "And what should they know of England who only England know?" That just hit me in the sense there's a lot of times we don't understand ourselves till we can get outside of ourselves, outside of our culture. And so, that's just a really big challenge. I want to say thank you. Personally, I've loved this conversation. I'll let Brandon close out, but thank you so much.

Smaranda Lawrie ([52:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2a-p6WVjZZFpVyeLwYgPiD9IBh9tv5dPHGN2ZSTip9KN8RhMwD3ArWvRH86sBhzYTnqhbiJL3dxMveiKJhnqp5n8I00&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3121.13)):

All right. Thank you so much for your kind words. I've been so impressed. I love how much you guys know, how much you guys have been reading. Can I just add one little thing about aging?

Brandon Averill ([52:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4_Vjl5BaqULcwc0CywNGsvX87UOlMnejxhv4yH6QtnTlcV6CVWFyJrEH6QqCs9XP84iirXyICyQHYsjIawMy2VUFqwc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3127.13)):

Absolutely.

Erik Averill ([52:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oQIe0k5cm9vTqUTNbb4mpukAsnKAHpku5_d1TSeuPj62q6xh2thKuWvUZ40sWnmXbf_AZ0QEqJGOPE5eRFyC9Hj0Ih4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3127.13)):

Yeah.

Smaranda Lawrie ([52:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HGfk2FrhyZkkUEIO_p-oqqLW0U6ca81yfW_g2Fmskdgh-pWidPZ7rmVINo2mkbWYokZNKA9t8mxREdmE_p5F-XRsxSc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3129.09)):

I know it's been long, but before I was doing this parenting research, a lot of my research was actually looking at aging across cultures of the world, across national cultures. I looked at something like 40 different countries. One of the things that's really interesting is, when you ask people what they want in old age, people have this like, "I want to be sitting back on a beach view, doing as little as possible."

Smaranda Lawrie ([52:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fIGBTWtmhGmVes4XhBOuocRgDLMJYiQzWR-3S6GOiny4q1yVARYICg1s8UYuVR-du9gSF1WfGGhuuUW3zNHnnSsYTJU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3149.51)):

It turns out that the people that are happiest are the ones that work as long as they can. Then, again, not because they have to, but because they want to, and stay engaged, and learning, and pushing themselves as long as possible. The bottom line is that change is possible and growth is possible throughout the entire lifespan. And it contributes a tremendous amount to wellbeing too, and to even putting a smile on your face.

Brandon Averill ([52:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cV_xQJuclDFYAMvFqMFKGZXQG8GQoI2qDtLdE-z3ztHuEgDfUfVXNGDX5TbZBC-eJjFkECi_W1t2oh2fHS1OgzKWs5M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3174.77)):

This has been so fantastic. I was going to ask you if there's anything, parting words, but that, I don't know how you can top that. So yeah. Just, I've appreciated this more than you know. I know this has been a wide-ranging, all-over-the-map discussion, but I think people are just really going to take a lot of gold out of this. Smaranda, we really appreciate you being here, sharing all of your knowledge with us.

Brandon Averill ([53:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dUkTJ9hwvrVuJmihuTOFLvM4TdLlSY8iKBVKSTNEstVs144mlpEP2NWFToDgWuDi0KghMznh0VYtVQw1DLqsZnwhDDw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3201.01)):

Definitely want to throw out to everybody listening. We all need to go on a 30-day gratitude, blessings challenge. That is what you told me that night when we spoke, was the three blessings. I said, "Well, I usually do one with the kids, in prayers at night, what are you thankful for?" It's been up to three ever since. I think it's definitely shown value. So appreciate that first conversation we've had. I appreciate the conversation we've had today. We'll link, in the show notes, to all the resources that were discussed. We'll include some way to get into touch with you, if that's possible.

Smaranda Lawrie ([54:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=k_jUiP2W7MPWfiaQogNAkW7zigk1sc55sD4Nuwcmc5rNJNgdbq0KlPm211rJlU137qz8TpSXJlQliLN9UUmfIYb-AOk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3241.74)):

Appreciate it.

Brandon Averill ([54:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=i_8eG6NAxx6_nW0QCcyoJlr26t8GszFG0Pl0BgS8zDJHMa718M64zVUYlWewlf-jcfQJx5cO1SLEQ_8S_CuBUXd8S3c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3242.38)):

But thank you. Thank you so much. With that, own your wealth, make an impact, and always be a pro.