Average to Awesome

Podcast Interview w Chris Ripka

1. What is your favorite success quote or mantra?

“Today is the best day of my life.” I work to help people have better days, and this is something that consistently helps *me* to have a better day. It comes from my Dad. Whenever I ask him how he’s doing, he always says that “today is the best day of my life.” Finally one day I called bullshit and asked him if this *really* was the best day of his life to which he replied, “It is if you tell yourself it is.” Being a believer in “what we think about we bring about” and our ability to create a more *positive* reality, I decided to try it. I committed to one month. (It is said that it takes between 21 and 28 days to create a habit.) At first, I naturally experienced resistance, and my mind would come up with all sorts of the reasons that it was *not* the best day of my life. I stuck with it. Pretty soon I noticed that as I told myself this, I was beginning to look for reasons why it *was* the best day of my life. It worked. I became less grumpy in the mornings, and others around me noticed ☺ . My attitude improved. My productivity improved. It gave me the ability to shape my day, and I have been practicing it ever since. Now, I get to have the best day of my life *every day*. It makes for a pretty good life.

1. What is one failure or setback you have had in your life that you learned from, and what did you take from that?

I don’t believe in failures. Being a practitioner of NLP, I follow an NLP premise that states, “there is no failure, only feedback”. Thomas Edison said, “I have not failed. I have found 1,000 ways that did not work.” NLP, or Neuro Linguistic Programming, is simply the study of human excellence and achievement. Being guided by this premise, I am in a constant process of learning and growing, and therefore I don’t view failure as a part of my life.

1. What or who inspired you to set out on the path you are on today? Take us back to that ah ha moment?

A long time ago, I learned to trust. Not to trust some*one* or some*thing*, but simply to *trust.* I also made the conscious choice to be open to opportunity. And so, I feel like this was a gift, and I accepted it. It happens to be the best fit for me, and I am very grateful to do the work I do.

1. What is the moment in your life you are most proud of?

It’s hard to think of my life in these terms. The moment I can remember being most proud of, though, is this one. In order to graduate with my masters degree in counseling, one of the requirements was passing a 3 hour oral examination in front of a board. I had the choice of presenting a clinical case or a theory of counseling & human development. Being passionate about the theories that influence my work with people, I chose to present Neuro Linguistic Programming, NLP. NLP is not something I learned through coursework in grad school. Instead, I learned NLP by pursuing advanced, specialized training and seeking my own experience with it.

When I walked into the room, I was advised where to plug in my power point. I responded with “Oh that’s ok, I’m ready. I don’t have a power point presentation.” I was met with a scoff and a rolling of eyes by one of the board members (honestly). At the end of my 3 hour long, hands-on presentation, the same board member that rolled his eyes at me told me how refreshing it was that someone had done something different. He commented that he thought I was brave for taking a risk like this. After deliberation by the board, he also told me that I was receiving the highest marks ever given to a graduate counseling candidate.

When I drove away in my truck, I celebrated. This experience probably boosted my confidence in my ability to offer my work.

1. What are you most passionate about now? What is going on today that is taking you to the next level of your life?

Now, I am most passionate about continuing my education. I love learning and adding to my toolbox to take clients to *their*  next level, which takes *me* to the next level of what I can offer people. Having a lot of training out the way and establishing my practice, I am also excited to give more focus to creative projects, like writing books, painting, and photography.

1. What was holding you back from going after your passion?

Nothing. Nothing has ever held me back.

1. What is the best advice you ever received?

The best advice I ever received is about romantic relationship. It was given to me by my late uncle, Roger Harold, who said, “It is better to cry into your pillow because you didn’t than because you did.” What that meant to me is that it is better to feel sadness and pain because you are *not* with someone than to feel sadness and pain because you *are.* This gave me a positive perspective to work from in determining what I want in a romantic relationship. It set me free to end relationships that were not a compliment to my life.

1. What personal habits do you have that contribute to your success?

When I was developing the concept of my business in 2010, I named my business “Healthy Habits”. There were changes I wanted to make in my own life in order to provide a more congruent example in my work with others. I researched, explored, and experimented with habits and tools to find what worked for me.

Some of my current daily practices include:

* A timed, 5 minute intention-setting journal that also yields my daily to-do list
* Daily physical activity
* Remembering to practice my mantra at the beginning, end, and throughout my day

Other themes that help me live a balanced life and are important to give my attention to are:

* Consistent filing and organization in my office
* Consistent cleaning and organization of my home environment
* Healthy eating habits
* Scheduled time with my romantic partner – both date night *and* checking in together/goal setting
* Taking a nature day to take time to be with myself and spirit

1. What internet resource or app do you use that you can share that makes your life easier?

I am more into natural resources that make my life easier like taking a walk or re-growing chives! But, the simple resources that most people use, like the timer on my phone, are helpful. Podcasts are great for going for a run or listening to while in the shower. My favorite app is “Map My Run” that allows me to map where I’ve gone and keeps track of distance and time for me.

1. If you could recommend a book to our listeners, what would it be and why?

It would depend on what they were seeking. If it were related to romantic relationships, then I would have a few suggestions. If it were regarding creating habits I would have other suggestions. What I *can* share is my own personal favorite book that I can open up at any time and be inspired, grounded, and maybe even laughing. Hugh Prather’s 1970 book Notes to Myself. Here is a random example of opening the book and finding a laugh. “What is the difference between ‘I want food and I want sex? Consent’”.

1. What would you like to share with our listeners that we haven't covered during our time together?

I REALLY, truly believe in people. I believe people can do, have, and be whatever they want. It’s my honor to get to facilitate an experience that people get to start believing in themselves too.

1. And finally we will end this by transforming our lives from average to awesome by you sharing some final piece of guidance and the best way we can connect with you.

Find awe somewhere in your life. To have the experience of awe, all we have to do is start noticing it. It’s all around us. Notice when the clouds are awesome. Take a moment to enjoy and appreciate them. Notice how awesome it is how an engine works or how awesome the flavor of a strawberry is. Whatever you want to have in your life, whether its peace, balance, joy, or fun, start noticing where you already have it.

Brief Bio:

Angelena Plummer is a legally-practicing mental health counselor and certified professional life coach in the Black Hills of Rapid City, SD.  She has additional, specialized training in solution focused therapy, anger management, and neuro linguistic programming.  Her role in her practice is be the bridge to take people from where they are at to where they want to be.  She often works herself out of a job as she empowers clients through providing experiences and teaching techniques for clients to overcome obstacles and create positive change in their lives.  Her favorite kind of clients to work with are people who are stuck in a rut.  She loves her clients, being in nature, and riding her motorcycle.