

N.Y.B.L. Podcast Ep 188(Chicken Soup for the Broken Soul with Amy Newmark)

[00:00:00] **Rebecca Zung:** [00:01:00] Welcome to another episode of Negotiate Your Best Life. I'm Rebecca Zung and I'm so excited this time to have Amy Newmark back on again. She is the bestselling author, editor-in-chief and publisher of Chicken Soup for The Soul. I mean, who has not heard of Chicken Soup for the Soul, and since 2008 she has published.

[00:01:45] 191. Yeah, you heard that right? 191 Chicken Soup For the Soul titles and most of them national best sellers in the US and Canada. More than doubling the chicken Soup For the soul [00:02:00] titles in print today, she is credited with, credited with VI, revitalizing the Chicken Soup for the Soul brand. Um, she is, Really amazing.

[00:02:11] I'm telling you, I've just been sitting here talking with her before we went on Air Ad. Not only has she done all that she has done with completely revitalizing this brand and doing everything that she's doing, publishing books, running this whole basically con conglomerate, she's also doing it with cancer and I mean really so inspirational and so empowering.

[00:02:39] So welcome back, Amy. I can't believe what you've got in store for us, that you've got a 30th edition of the book coming 30th year edition of the book coming out. So you're gonna be sharing all about that today too. So

[00:02:53] **Amy Newmark:** welcome back. Well, thanks. It is amazing that Chicken Soup for the Soul started 30 whole years [00:03:00] ago.

[00:03:00] That first book that came out that Jack and Mark had such a hard time finding a publisher for. But then sold, you know, a million copies in the first year and a half that they had it out. And now we've sold probably a billion copies of Chicken Soup for the Soul Books worldwide during these 30 years. And I just keep coming up with new topics.

[00:03:23] But as you said, we did put out a 30th anniversary edition of the original Chicken Soup for the Soul, with 30 new stories that we've added to it over the last 10 years.

[00:03:34] **Rebecca Zung:** Yes. Amazing. So it just came out 30 new stories and the 30 new stories have contributors such as Gabrielle Bernstein, mic, Michael Bernard Beckwith, Deepak Chopra, and of course Mark Hanson and Jack Canfield, the originals.

[00:03:52] And you, Amy Newmark, you've got one in there as well. I. And so you've [00:04:00] got a 30 thir, uh, 30th edition out, which, you know, we'll put a link to that in the show notes, but, uh, so bonus stories. Um, but you know, just over the last several years since you've taken it over, you've learned a lot about how to make people feel warm and fuzzy, and you've learned a lot of

[00:04:22] **Amy Newmark:** lessons.

[00:04:24] I have, and I'm a really practical person. So my, you know, my friends and family thought it was really funny when I went from being, you know, a cold-hearted, analytical Wall Street person, uh, to this, you know, warm and fuzzy person putting out chicken soup for the Soul books. But I've approached it in the same way that I approached everything I ever did in business and finance and the telecommunications industry.

[00:04:49] I'm just looking for what works. So it's been a really interesting experience because I've been doing this now for 16 years, and during that [00:05:00] time, I think I've probably read 30,000 personal revealing stories that people have sent into us, and those are stories that we've published and also stories that we haven't published.

[00:05:12] But I got to read in the process of selecting the ones that we did publish. So when you read 30,000 stories from people who are sharing with you, you know, the ups and downs of their lives, their most milestone moments, you have to learn something from it. So I think even though I'm not a psychologist by training, I really have learned what works for people in their lives and, and I've come up with, you know, my own list of 10 keys to happiness that.

[00:05:42] Really worked for me and seem to work for everybody else who I meet and, and who contributes stories to us.

[00:05:49] **Rebecca Zung:** Mm oh. So tell us what are your 10 keys to having Zoya or at least share? Let's, let's share a few.

[00:05:56] **Amy Newmark:** So the most, the most important too, [00:06:00] and by the way, you don't have to do all 10, but there are two that I think are mandatory.

[00:06:04] I don't think you can be happy without these two. So the first one is to use the power of forgiveness. Because I think that's something that so many of us have trouble with because you know, people do stuff to us. There are these slights, these insults, these disappointments, these resentments. And I like to say that you should imagine that you're wearing this cloak and now you've sewn onto the cloak a piece of metal for every bad thing that happened to you that you feel resentful about, and now this cloak is just weighing you down.

[00:06:39] It's so heavy with all those things sewn onto it. But all of those things happened in the past, and here you are dragging them with you into the present and into your future. But they're gone. They happened in the past. Shrug off that cloak. Leave those things behind you. Now. You can't eliminate [00:07:00] them. You know, they happened, but it's interesting.

[00:07:03] I always thought the definition of forgiveness was that you were saying to the person who wronged you, oh, it's okay. Don't worry about it so much. But actually what forgiveness means, and even you can go on the Mayo Clinic's website and they talk about it. Forgiveness just means that you've decided to stop reliving those negative emotions so you can intellectually know that that thing happened, but you don't have to keep reliving those emotions.

[00:07:31] I've read some great stories that have to do with forgiveness, and I can share a couple of them with you, and I think that these will provide everybody with tools they can use to. To use forgiveness themselves to liberate themselves. So one story was from this woman named Lynn Sunday, and she just couldn't get over her divorce and she told everybody about her ex-husband and how mad she was at him.

[00:07:55] And, and even years after her divorce, she was still talking about her ex-husband, even to [00:08:00] strangers. And then her best friend said to her, Lynn, you might as well still be married to the guy. You take him with you wherever you go. And it was such an epiphany for Lynn here. She was carrying her ex-husband around with her in her head and she realized, well, that's ridiculous.

[00:08:14] He's gotten on with his life. What am I doing? So she instantly got him out of her brain and moved forward. And then there was another great story from a woman also following a divorce. And in her case, she went to a divorce

support group and the leader said, Repeat after me in my marriage. I did the best I could.

[00:08:35] So everybody said that. And then the leader said, okay, now say in my marriage, my spouse did the best that he could and nobody would say it. And then leader said, well, if you know that you did the best that you could, why don't you think your spouse also did the best that he or she could? And that was an epiphany for that woman.

[00:08:57] And she realized, of course, He [00:09:00] tried and he failed, and I tried and I failed. And that liberated her and she moved forward. She had been so stuck and she became unstuck. Mm.

[00:09:10] **Rebecca Zung:** Yeah. Beautiful. That reminded me of, there's, there's a story's like a parable or something, uh, of two monks. I, I, have you ever heard of this?

[00:09:23] I, no. I'm going to butcher this, but. There's a story about these two monks or something, and it, it's, you know, they're, they're in China or something, and they're, um, you know, going to down to the stream to get water or something, and they, they come across this woman and the woman is like, you know, needs help and, and they're not supposed to touch women.

[00:09:51] Okay. And, but this woman needs help across the stream or something. So the one monk. Helps the woman by carrying hi [00:10:00] her, you know, um, on his back across the stream. And the, the other monk is like so mad that he touched the woman and, you know, for, for hours and hours or six hours later, he's still mad that the other monk, uh, is, you know, carried the woman across the street and.

[00:10:26] So he says, you know, I can't believe that you did that. I can't believe you carried her across the stream or something like that. And the other monk says to her, uh, the other monk later, he says, I put her down six hours ago. How come you can't put her down?

[00:10:46] **Amy Newmark:** Uhhuh? Yeah, that's exactly the same thing. Yes, you're right.

[00:10:51] **Rebecca Zung:** Something like that.

[00:10:52] **Amy Newmark:** Yeah. So I just feel like you can't really be happy if you're carrying around all those, all those old

[00:10:58] **Rebecca Zung:** resentments. Yeah. Something like, I [00:11:00] let her go six hours ago. How come you can't let her go? Or something

[00:11:03] **Amy Newmark:** like that. Yeah, yeah. That, that, that works. The other key to happiness that I think is essential is the ability to count your blessings and use the power of gratitude, because I think if you can't focus on what you have, then you're gonna focus on what you lack.

[00:11:21] And we all have plenty of things to be grateful for. And I know that sounds kind of sickly sweet, like something you would expect to hear from the chicken soup for this soul lady, but, but gratitude really does. It's true. But gratitude works. Like we have hundreds of stories from people who we're not doing so well in their lives and then decided to actively practice gratitude.

[00:11:42] Cuz half of us probably have that gratitude gene built into us and we just. No. To count our blessings, we know to look for the silver lining no matter what's going on. And then half of us don't really have that ability. But the cool thing about gratitude is it's one of those character traits [00:12:00] that you can actually add on.

[00:12:01] There aren't that many things you can do to change your personality, but this is one you can add on and you can do it really easily. So a lot of people have told us that they write down three things a day to be grateful for, or five things a day, and it could be something like, I picked the right line at the bank this morning, or it could be something major like I just realized how awesome my husband is.

[00:12:23] But what you do is for a month, you write down three things that were good during your day, and by the end of the month you have 90 things you've written down cuz you have to pick different things each day. Oh. But what you find during that month is that you're actively looking for the good things that happen each day, and then it just turns into a habit.

[00:12:46] And it really does work. And people also will use it on their kids. Like I remember one woman had a seventh grader who just always saw every glass as you know, half empty. And she had him do this exercise and it [00:13:00] completely changed his personality. So that's the other essential. So we got forgiveness and we've got gratitude as the two essential keys to happiness.

[00:13:09] Out of my long list of 10,

[00:13:12] **Rebecca Zung:** Hmm. I love that. It's so true. And I actually do, um, have a gratitude list that I add to every single morning. I, I mean, that is something that I do religiously, so. Is right a gratitude list every single morning. And it is absolutely, it, it has changed my life. And you know, one thing I heard Dr.

[00:13:34] Joe Dispenza say is that it, it puts you in receiving mode. You are in receiving mode if you are, um, practicing gratitude every day. And it allows you to say to the universe that you are open to receiving more.

[00:13:51] **Amy Newmark:** That makes a lot of sense. You are open to receiving it, and that's exactly what people have described.

[00:13:56] I just never heard it phrased that way, but that's a perfect way of expressing it. [00:14:00] Yeah.

[00:14:02] **Rebecca Zung:** So, um, for people who are feeling, you know, hopeless for, for, for people who, and you know, a lot of my community, they're in places where they're just. You know, uh, they're in toxic relationships. They're in relationships with high conflict personalities.

[00:14:23] A lot of times they really do need chicken soup for the soul, you know? Where would you say for them that they, they, they

[00:14:34] **Amy Newmark:** could start.[00:15:00] [00:16:00]

[00:16:53] Oh my gosh. Well, I know you talk about this all the time cuz you're talking about narcissists and people who just bring toxicity into [00:17:00] relationships. So I actually have my secret. 11th key to happiness, which is exactly what you're telling people. Anyway. But my secret 11th key to happiness, which I didn't put in this book I wrote called Your 10 Keys to Happiness.

[00:17:13] But my secret 11th key to happiness is about getting rid of toxic people. And I have to tell you, and I'm gonna sound so naive, but I didn't realize until I was 50 that I could get rid of people and, and I actually didn't even know what a narcissist was. And then all of a sudden my eyes were open and I realized, oh, basically every single person in my life who was, who was really bothering me and who was toxic, was also a narcissist.

[00:17:46] I mean, I guess that it just goes together. And so I got rid of a friend, a certain friend who. You know, it was one of those friends where it was always

all about her. And I would be [00:18:00] saying things like, well, I have to go have lunch with so and so. And then I read this Chicken Soup for the Soul story about this woman who realized that she could basically weed the garden of her life and get rid of the, you know, quote friends who weren't really friends, but were really more like passive aggressive frenemies.

[00:18:18] And I realized, oh my gosh, I can do that too. You're kind of stuck with your relatives, but you can. Reduce your exposure to your relatives, but you can just get rid of friends. Or if it's too awkward, you can at least reduce your exposure to them a lot. Like see them once a year, you know, instead of five times a year or every or every week, whatever you were doing.

[00:18:38] So that was a big one for me, but I don't really put it on my official list of 10 keys to happiness because it just seems so snarky to say that you should get rid of people. But of course you should. Oh.

[00:18:51] **Rebecca Zung:** But I think that that is so true. I mean, I think, you know, and I'd love to know more about that story, about weeding the garden of your life, because [00:19:00] I do think that, you know, you know, I, I always say defend your light with your life.

[00:19:07] You know, because, you know, I do think that vibrational energy is, is so important to protect and, you know, we are beings of energy, you know, and we do pick up the vibrational energy of, of people who are around us and you know, you know, you can feel if somebody is bringing you down or, or, or making you feel better and you can feel.

[00:19:35] How you feel after you have left being with somebody you know? Do you feel lighter and more excited after you've left being in somebody's presence? Do you feel uplifted or do you feel like, you know what? I kind of feel icky after I've been with that person, you

[00:19:54] **Amy Newmark:** know? Exactly. I know you should. You should come away from seeing a friend or a relative [00:20:00] feeling energized and empowered and smiling and thinking, oh, that was really fun.

[00:20:04] I can't wait to see them again. So the woman who wrote the story that changed it for me, she actually let this so-called friend drive her to chemo one day. And this woman had had various friends drive her to chemo, and it was the only time that she had a really bad reaction to chemo was after the so-called friend drove her because the friend spent the whole time driving her, telling her

about everybody she knew who had gone through chemo, who had a bad outcome.

[00:20:30] I mean, it was ridiculous. Oh, and that's when she realized that. You only have so much time in your life and you only have so much emotional energy and you can't expend that emotional energy on people who are dragging you down. And so that, that's the story that gave me permission to start cleaning up the garden of my life.

[00:20:50] I think cancer does bring you a certain clarity, but the other thing I do, and this goes back to the forgiveness concept a little bit, is [00:21:00] certain people you just can't get out of your life. But if you use there, there's another thing I do with with the power of forgiveness, and that is you look through to what is causing the person to act.

[00:21:13] That way, you know what is motivating them, and often you can actually realize that they're really unhappy people and they have so many problems of their own. And you could just say, gee, I really shouldn't take it personally because that person just acts out and does that to everybody and it's just, A function of that person's own problems.

[00:21:34] And it almost puts you in a superiority position because you start feeling like you're better than that person because you start thinking, well, I'm glad I'm not her. But that works also. And then the other thing that I've been doing for years, and I've actually, I started doing this when I was in my thirties, is I build what I call the wall of indifference.

[00:21:55] Um, I remember when I was in my mid thirties, I was acting [00:22:00] as an investment banker, and I helped take a company public, and then their stock tanked pretty quickly after they went public. And I was in a, at a meeting at this brokerage firm and the head of trading in a room filled with all the traders, so probably 30 guys in this room.

[00:22:16] And, and this was, you know, 30 years ago. So it was, uh, way more male-oriented. Place at that time, you know, wall Street. But this guy is screaming at me for 20 min, 20 minutes nonstop with all these guys watching, and I'm just standing there at the front, you know, little five foot three me while this guy is screaming at me.

[00:22:35] But he was just really taking out his anger about the stock price going down. And he viewed me as somebody weak who he could scream at. So he was just letting all his frustrations out and I was. The the victim, except that I

didn't get victimized. I just stood there looking at him and thinking, you are a pathetic little man screaming at [00:23:00] me when you're really just mad at the world.

[00:23:02] And I started building what I call the wall of indifference. I put these bricks up in front of me and I was behind my wall of indifference, and he was screaming on the other side of the wall. And I was just thinking about what a, a little idiot he was. And by, by by, you know, thinking of him with utter disdain, he couldn't hurt me.

[00:23:24] You know, because he, he couldn't touch me. It was like he was throwing, you know, missiles at this wall, but the wall was stopping him from actually getting to me. So that works also. And that's a, a really good way to deal with people like that. I mean, I've had other people in business who have had to deal with, Who were, you know, real jerks and I always put that wall of indifference up and I don't let them actually touch me.

[00:23:48] I'm behind that wall. Oh, that

[00:23:51] **Rebecca Zung:** is so powerful. I love that. You know, I mean, I, I, I've always said that I [00:24:00] wanted to actually just have my podcast focus on how powerful people have learned how to overcome. Toxic people in their lives and and become powerful anyway, especially women, you know, because I think that women have had a higher bar, have had a harder time, you know, and, and I love the idea of a wall of indifference.

[00:24:26] I think that that is so powerful and. You know, I, I hope everybody goes back and listens to that over and over again, because there's so many times that I have said to people, you know, look at them as if they're a toddler having a tantrum on the floor. You know, you wouldn't go down and, and have a tantrum on the floor with them.

[00:24:46] You know, like if, you know, you just look at them and you go, okay, are you done now? You know, but that, and that is sort of the same concept, you know, I think that is so, so good. Thank you for sharing that. You also have to look,

[00:24:59] **Amy Newmark:** sure. You have [00:25:00] to look at what motivates them. So this isn't something I got from Chicken Soup for the Soul, but this is just something that I do in general.

[00:25:06] If somebody's giving me a really hard time, I try to figure out what motivates them and how I'm gonna get around them. So it just becomes a challenge. Like I remember one time my husband and my brother and I brother-in-law, and I were visiting. My mother-in-law in the hospital and she was in the I C U and she could only have like two visitors at a time, and she already had two visitors, but we knew she would wanna see us and um, and things were kind of dire, so we really had to see her.

[00:25:39] And so the guy at the front desk, you know, Mr. Mr. Power man himself, he said we couldn't go. We didn't know what room she was in, but if she, if we had known what room she was in, we could have just gone. And so my husband and my brother-in-law were starting to protest and I said, guys, go get out. And then I went up [00:26:00] to the guy, I said, I totally understand your rules.

[00:26:04] Of course, she should only have two people at a time. But, and this was back when you couldn't use a cell phone in a hotel room, which of course is not, I mean, in a hospital room, but that's not the rule anymore. But this was when they did have that rule about cell phones, I said to him, I need to somehow get a message to the people in the room that we're not allowed in.

[00:26:24] So I'm gonna have to just go and tell them in person that we're not allowed in. So could you tell me the room number so that I can go and tell them that, that we're not allowed to come in? And so then he gave me the room number, and then the three of us snuck in and went to her room. You know? So I just had to appeal to his bullying, basically, to get around the rule.

[00:26:45] I mean, It worked so easily, you know? Yeah. Because she's not

[00:26:52] **Rebecca Zung:** gonna go back there and get you after that.

[00:26:54] **Amy Newmark:** Right? No. And I, and he thought I was being compliant, and so it worked out perfectly. [00:27:00] Yeah. And she was thrilled to see us. I mean, she would've been, she, of course, she wanted her five family members to be there.

[00:27:05] She didn't want us to be left out.

[00:27:08] **Rebecca Zung:** Yeah, of course. So, uh, how, um, What is your favorite news story? In the The new book.

[00:27:22] **Amy Newmark:** Oh, okay. In the 30th anniversary edition. Yes. Um, well, I really liked a story by Joan London, so this is a little specialized, but it is something that we all face and it's about what to do if you have elderly parents and how you can prepare ahead of time for those days, and.

[00:27:45] It's such useful advice because so many people all of a sudden realize, oh my gosh, dad has dementia and we didn't know it in time. Or, you know, one parent dies, you have to take care of the other, or both parents are alive, but you need to take care of them and you haven't done all [00:28:00] the stuff you're supposed to do.

[00:28:01] And it's, it's incredibly stressful. It is so stressful having elderly parents who aren't the same as they used to be. And so she wrote a long story for us about. All of the things that you should do ahead of time, and then the things that you should do once you are caring for that elderly parent, including ones with dementia.

[00:28:22] And so I thought that was incredibly helpful and it's something that everybody should read, and she's basically written like a 10 page guidebook for what you should do. And that's in the, that's in the new 30th anniversary edition of Chicken Seed for the Salt.

[00:28:36] **Rebecca Zung:** Oh, beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. Well, thank you for coming on and sharing your wisdom.

[00:28:42] I really love the power of your wisdom and what you shared today. I mean, I don't know if you've ever shared that wall of indifference. Story on any podcast before, but that was really good. Good

[00:28:54] **Amy Newmark:** stuff. I don't think I have, because it's also easier to do it with video, you know? So I haven't done it [00:29:00] on the audio only podcasts.

[00:29:02] **Rebecca Zung:** Yeah. That is so good. Uh, and, um, I, I am assuming that a, anybody can get your, all the books and anywhere that people can buy books and

[00:29:14] **Amy Newmark:** Yeah, yeah. Especially Amazon. Amazon has all of them. We have about 300 different titles that are in print and they're on so many good topics. For example, we have books just about counting your blessings and using the power of gratitude, and we have books just about forgiveness of if you feel like you have a particular need, you can read 101 stories that will help you

get your act together in, in terms of forgiveness or gratitude or the other, the other 10 keys to happiness that I have.

[00:29:46] **Rebecca Zung:** Right, and I will definitely put a link to the new one in the show notes. And where can people find you? Follow you.

[00:29:54] **Amy Newmark:** So you can go to chicken soup.com and see everything that we're doing. Um, you can also [00:30:00] follow me on Twitter, which is at Amy Newmark. Um, Instagram is Amy Newmark. I mean, really good to follow Chicken Soup for the Soul on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook.

[00:30:10] I think we have two and a half million followers. So, um, we're out there for you. We actually, uh, will email you a free story, a free Chicken Soup for the Soul story every day if you want to receive one. So, You just go to chicken soup.com, click on books, and then click on newsletter. Sign up.

[00:30:28] **Rebecca Zung:** Right. So make sure you all do that.

[00:30:31] Check it out, check out the new book, follow Chicken Soup, follow Amy and uh, go pick up a copy of the brand new book. So thank you so much, Amy, for being here and sharing your wisdom. I mean, so powerful. I'm, I'm loving the stories and weeding the garden. Um, and just taking, you know, permission to. To get rid of the people who aren't serving you or [00:31:00] serving your soul.

[00:31:01] **Amy Newmark:** Right. Thanks so much for having me on Rebecca.[00:32:00]