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Melissa Yamaguchi Own Your Energy, Own Your Life



Melissa Yamaguchi is a dynamic energy therapist, speaker, and educator who travels the world teaching lessons on balance through the practice of feng shui, which she has studied for over 20 years. She was the first president of the Professional Beauty Association and the first female president of the Salon Association. Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, this powerful leader, mentor, and healer talks about the daunting task of keeping all plates spinning. Her timely message offers the most effective measures for taking ownership of your energy and your life.

Winn: Hey everybody, Winn Claybaugh here and welcome to another wonderful issue of MASTERS. So, so grateful to have this platform with all of you. Of course, as we are recording this, we are in quarantine. Little by little the country is opening back up; the planet is opening back up [*laughs*] and that's a good thing. But just the fact that we can still move forward and make things happen; none of this has slowed us down with the opportunity that I've had to interview some incredible people and today is absolutely all about that. I am here, virtually, with a very dear friend of many, many years—probably 30 years—Melissa Yamaguchi. And by the way, this is not the first time that I interviewed Melissa. We were trying to figure it out. I think that the first time was probably 20 years ago. Back before there was even the term or the phrase of a podcast, before that even existed, we were still sitting down and recording the voices of amazing leaders and mentors. And I have often said that some of my best mentors and teachers have been women and I have a small handful—maybe not even a small handful, a large handful—but the small handful of wonderful women that I love and I support and I respect them so much, they are my go-to people, you better believe that Melissa is part of that list. And so Melissa, once again, thank you so much and welcome to MASTERS.

Melissa: Thank you, Winn. And I just wanted—as you were regaling like the history and a little bit of how everything started, kept flashing in my head: you've always been on the cutting edge of everything. I remember you walking around and doing these and everyone was like, "What's he up to? What is he doing?" and here you are. You've always pioneered and led the way and so I am honored, for multiple reasons, to be affiliated with you, as a friend with you, but that's certainly not the least of them.

Winn: Thank you, sweetheart. Probably back then I was doing this out of desperation. *[Laughs]*

Melissa: *[Laughs]*

Winn: Tony Robbins says that it's either inspiration or desperation. Back then I was so desperate, I needed some answers, and so I was always stalking and hunting down people who I knew were smarter than I am, which is basically almost the entire planet.

Melissa: No.

Winn: And I'm fine with that because I have great resources and you're one of those people. So I'm just so grateful that this many years later you're still cutting edge, you still have a very strong voice, you have an opinion. I love people who have an opinion and they're fine in sharing that opinion and yet you're inclusive. You're someone who absolutely educates yourself, takes into consideration multiple individuals and people and life experiences as part of your message, and that's what today is going to be about. We've decided that we are going to call this—we're going to theme this interview "Own Your Energy and Own Your Life." So before we get into that, I just want to give our listeners a bit of information about who Melissa is, and of course I'm reading some of this. Melissa is a dynamic energy therapist, feng shui speaker and educator; she travels the world teaching lessons on balance of the individual through the practice of feng shui. She's been a student of feng shui for over 20 years. Her classes and seminars are sold-out venues, thanks to her humorous delivery. I'll vouch for that. Melissa I'm going to quote you here. It says, "Working on your life takes a concerted effort, which may seem a bit daunting to keep all the plates spinning." Boy, can we relate to that *[laughs]* nowadays. Everybody thought that 2020 was going to be their year and I believe that it still can and it absolutely needs to be your year but, boy, are we all keeping a lot of plates spinning. So can you kind of expand on that? What do you mean by that statement?

Melissa: What I mean is, life is going to throw—it's going to seem like it's shooting arrows at you, like you're target practice sometimes, and it feels like—you know, you can either crumble up in the ground like a bad origami and just fold or you can stand up you can take ownership of your life and you can say, "Okay, here's the deal: this is what I need to have happen and even though there's hurdles, I've got to learn how to jump." So yes, 2020 has seemed daunting but it's your year. It depends on how you define it. This year has been challenging for many people. There have been a lot of things: they now work at home, they've got to educate their kids at home and that's overwhelming, and a lot of people are having to realign themselves with what math is again, the way the schools define it. Everything has been daunting for us but this is your life. You don't get to trade it in. You don't get to choose door number three because one didn't work out. This is it so stand up, buck

up, and make it happen and own it. Own it. And when I say “own it”, Winn, what I mean is take an assessment of what’s happening: the good and the bad. It’s not about sugarcoating and just getting your lighting right, making sure you look good in every selfie. You’ve got zits sometimes: you face them, you deal with them. You deal with what’s going on in your life that’s not right and not working so that that is working and is right can expand. We eliminate the flaws so that the greatness can expand.

Winn: Well, I’ve known you long enough to know that when you make statements like that, when you put out challenges like that, it’s not just some platitude; it’s not just something that we’re going to hang on a poster with a picture of an eagle behind it. You actually have somehow, too—because people are listening to you right now and they’re like, “Yeah, Melissa, that’s exactly what I want to do and I have no idea how,” and we’re going to get into that. A little bit more information about who Melissa is. So she served as the first president of the Professional Beauty Association and the first female president of the Salon Association, which comprised of national salon owners. She has spoken at educational and motivational seminars internationally, in the Philippines, South Africa, and Canada; of course, all over the United States. She has twice served as judge on the Global Best Foundation Entrepreneurial Leadership events sponsored by the Anderson School of Business at UCLA. Man, I want to learn more about that. She has served as keynote speaker for large corporations and conferences and presented feng shui for business leaders in the United States. She takes a pragmatic approach of wedding innovative ideas to practical operational applications, which is exactly what we were just talking about: the fact that it’s a great idea; cool, how do we do that? What’s the practical application to what you’re talking about here now? So this theme of “own your energy, own your life,” expand on that a little bit, please.

Melissa: You know, it all started when I, about 10, maybe 10 years ago, when I started realizing working with people and energy, doing energy therapy work, people were feeling overwhelmed as though life was happening to them. And they didn’t have the resources. And to your point earlier, they’d say, “Yeah, Melissa that sounds great but what can I do?” and I’d say, “Well, the very first way you would tackle any elephant is to identify each body part, because the gentleman petting his trunk has a different view than the man combing his tail.” So we have to take a true assessment of what’s in front of us and that means looking at your life. Getting all the bills on the table, getting all of the debt in front of you, understanding what it is instead of saying, “I think I owe about ten thousand right now.” Do you owe ten thousand or if you looked at it do you really owe about fifteen thousand? What do you owe? Where are your relationships standing? In feng shui and in the work of energy, we utilize a blueprint, and in that blueprint are different factions of your life, whether it’s your career, your wealth, your health, your relationships, your love life, your fame (your reputation), your goals and aspirations. And at the center of this blueprint is you. You must look at each aspect of it. You know, when we’re

young we can get away with ignoring a few things. You know, people kind of forgive a little kid if they forget to brush their teeth. That's why mom or dad or auntie or uncle, someone says, "Hey, get in there and make sure you brush your teeth before you go to bed," because we forgive them. But as we get older and we become—the government expects us to pay taxes and there's a possibility, if there's a draft started up again, that we could be enlisted. Whatever the marker of any society is for adulthood—responsibility, true responsibility—once that takes place, you can't lean or expect to anyone else to ride in on a white horse and save you because it ain't happening. I've been around long enough to know that ain't happening. And so you have to do it. You have to line out your debt, understand what you owe, look at your relationships honestly: which are serving, which are depleting, which are draining but you're okay with that? What does your job look like? Is it a job? Is it a career? What are you doing? How much money are you saving, Winn, also in addition to that debt? How are you taking care of your health? What choices are you making with your food? I mean, the list goes on and on. But this is taking inventory of your life. That's owning it; not just saying, "Well, it's not my fault." This is—

Winn: Well, I want to get into that list and really detail that list, but you know what? We do live in a society of not taking responsibility. "I am the way I am and it's not my fault, it's somebody else's fault."

Melissa: Mm hm.

Winn: We don't take responsibility. "I'm not guilty, I'm the victim here." My gosh, how do we start taking responsibility for that? Oh, and by the way, some people think that feng shui has only to do with rearranging the furniture but you just rattled off a whole list of areas of our lives that we need to take inventory of, and I want to get into that list, as well.

Melissa: You know, I'm not a student of blaming other people because when I was younger I discovered, very quickly, that even if my room wasn't clean and my mother and father came in to question me about it, I didn't get out of the chore just by saying that one of my brothers' rooms wasn't clean also. It didn't matter. "Well, it's not my fault. Corey or Doug," one of my brothers, "left his toy in my room." My mother and father taught me very early on that this is still your room; this is still your responsibility. This is your real estate right here and you are responsible for it. So to the remark that most people believe that feng shui belongs with the home or the garden or your office space, that is true. That comprises over 80 percent of the people who initially hire me. They don't understand that I'm walking in to feng shui them. So if your room, as a child, is your real estate, then as you grow, as your world gets larger, that real estate includes a lot of things but if you say, "Melissa, I don't own a home. I just rent." Okay, that's still your real estate and you can make that look great. You can make your office cubicle or your office suite look amazing but if you're messed up then it's all for naught. So it behooves us all to step back

and say, “How am I contributing to my life?” I told my children their entire lives—I mean, they were little kids, would say things like, “Well, Johnny says this” or “Sally said this,” and I told my children, from the time they were little, that not one of your friends is going to agree to step into that coffin in your place. No one is willing to die for you so why are you allowing people to live for you? And I hold that same mentality as—

Winn: Wow!

Melissa: —an adult. Nobody, nobody is going to pay my bills. I mean, yes, there are things that happen; there’s great things. You know, Oprah’s, “You win a car and you win a car.” Yes, that’s great, that happens every once in a blue moon for people, but by and large we’re all sitting here trying to figure out how we’re going to make it happen. Some people are waiting for the stimulus check. It may come and if it does come, God bless. If not, what are you going to do? There’s no white horse here so the rule of thumb is this: My life, my choices, my thought processes all contribute to my path. Yes, there are things that come in my life and I’ve had people say, “That’s great Melissa. My husband left me, cheated on me with my neighbor, and you’re telling me I brought that upon myself?” No, what I’m telling you is that your reaction from here on out contributes to your path. Life throws some really gnarly, nasty garbage at us and it’s not that it doesn’t have to be. It doesn’t have to be, but it is sometimes. You cannot control that, necessarily, but you can control your reaction and the choices you make from there. From there. You’re driving down the road and you get a flat tire. It’s dark, it’s late at night, WiFi’s bad, what do you do? Did you ask for that to happen? No. Did you bring it upon yourself? I don’t necessarily believe that, but now what? Now what? What are your choices that you make? So, in the process of understanding your life, taking ownership of it gives you an incredible freedom. There’s something very powerful of knowing, “This is my life, I’m here, and what do I do next?” You know, Winn, you know this about me, and many people who’ve known me for years know this, and some of your listeners who’ve heard me speak before may know this, but the world at large doesn’t necessarily. Prior to having my daughter Seiji, who’s now 20, and my son Nobu, who’s now 18, I had seven miscarriages so I really didn’t think that I could have children from my body and I was fine with that because I knew children, they could come to me, not through me; I just wanted children. I love babies and children and I love people. But when I finally had my children, surprisingly enough, I raised them to understand that they chose to be here; they fought through. I said, “So you guys made it. The other seven decided that your mom was too crazy to hang around. You guys stuck around. Why are you here? You don’t have the right to take up oxygen. You don’t have the right to sit back and expect someone to spoon feed you or nurse off the teat until you hit the grave. What are you going to do? Figure it out. Make your mark and own it.” And I believe that that’s true for all of us. And I know that life hits at you hard. I’ve had some tragedies in my life, as if the seven miscarriages weren’t enough. I’ve had some horrific tragedies, and you and I have shared many of them. But you

stand up because if you don't stand up, then someone else is going to be making the choices for you. Now, I am not running sideways or broad stroking depression, anxiety, and true, true fear. I know that that takes place for all of us but as I mentioned to you before, in the movie *A Beautiful Life*—and I also had the pleasure in working with TSA to go on to lobby in D.C. and I had the opportunity to meet Senator John McCain. As he was held as a prisoner of war and beaten unmercifully, he came back to this country and he went on to work and serve the country in the Senate to the best of his knowledge, to the best of his ability. Whether or not you agree with any of his political views is irrelevant at this point. The conversation is this: in spite of tragedy, he soldiered on. In spite of tragedy for—the list is—Nelson Mandela; let's keep going, the list is infinite. People soldier on. Are they touched by God on their head? Were they given a special place in life that you don't have? No. You are no different than any great person that you can conjure up in your head or in historical books. You are no different. You have within you what it takes to stand up. And when I say "stand up," I mean toughen up, really. Get your back straight, get your eyes clear, look forward and say, "What am I going to do? What can I do?" And sometimes what I can do is to call on someone who knows more than I. You said something earlier about you leaned on the genius and the experience and the expertise of others when you needed answers. Now, that's owning your life, Winn. You took ownership. You said, "I don't know, I'll find someone who does."

Winn: I have so many questions right now *[laughs]*.

Melissa: *[Laughs]*.

Winn: I'm like sitting here writing the whole time you're talking. And, everybody, we're going to get into the how-to but I just love this foundation that Melissa is building. But you're exactly right, especially going through what's happening right now with the civil unrest in this country.

Melissa: Yes!

Winn: The whole opportunity that we have to learn about Black Lives Matter.

Melissa: Yes!

Winn: I'll tell you, I was very uneducated, as open as I feel that I am and that I have been, I realized through all of this I have a long way to go and I'm thrilled to embrace that. I feel fortunate that this is happening in my lifetime, but you're exactly right. I don't have the answers and people like—and they want me to have the answers. Why? Because they feel desperate and they see me as a leader. I have the title, I have the power, I have the influence, so "Well, Winn has the answer." And through a lot of this I don't have the answer and I'm fine with that so I want to reach outside of myself. A couple of things here—so I'm going to be all over the map here because that's how my brain works; you

know that by now. So this morning Sofia wakes up and I'm already awake and I'm sitting by the fire, reading and getting my day going, and she comes in and she was just—I could tell she was just in a bit of a mood, right? And so I kind of put everything aside and it probably took me a good 20 minutes to kind of talk her off the ledge; not that there was a ledge, there was no tantrum or anything, but I could just see that her energy and her focus and the direction of her day was not in alignment so I knew that I need to spend some time here. I need to ask some questions, I need to hug her, I need to get her closer to me, I need to surrender a little bit. And as I was going through this I was thinking, my gosh, I'm doing this a hundred times a day with grown adults.

Melissa: Yes.

Winn: So the stuff you're talking about of how you raise your children, and what a beautiful way to raise your children. What beautiful advice and influence and mentoring and parenting that your parents gave to you but there are grown adults that haven't learned this stuff.

Melissa: Right.

Winn: So again, I have all kinds of questions here. So what do you have to say about what I just said? *[Laughs]*

Melissa: That is true but my grandparents, in spite of their best intentions and gentle hearts and driven purpose, didn't educate my parents in the way that they educated me. And I'm educating my children slightly different than my parents did me. So it is within each of us to evolve to a higher standard. I remember when I was younger, you would always hear people say, "Well," I'm from Oklahoma and so they'd say, "*Well*, you know that boy's going to be taller than his daddy, that girl's going to be taller than her mama; that's just how it works." So that whole philosophy of the younger generation is supposed to be better, stronger, more evolved, more aware, holds true for me because if we're not getting better, then what the hell are we doing? God knows we can't regress. We don't need to. And you talked about this need to understand. I am so incredibly grateful for the youth, and I don't see myself as old and sometimes the mirror laughs at me and that's okay. I know how to give it the finger and keep moving.

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Melissa: I don't consider myself old because my mindset isn't old. I'm open, but if I'm going to be really honest—and part of approaching the energy of your life is being honest; if not with anyone else, at least yourself. My daughter and my son have been challenging me on some of my concepts and the way that I view the world and the way I view—and the protesting and the subsequent looting and rioting that has been taking place that, in many, many, many, if

not all situations, are entirely separate from the cause of the protest, no doubt. But whatever this backend hook-on is and where's that coming from. And so I found myself making some remarks, kind of off the cuff. You know, something would come on the news and I would say something. And my children really challenging me, and my daughter challenging my notion of some of the forefathers of this country and not necessarily—there wasn't a fight over it. It was really, *"But Mom, are you aware of this?"* And, *"Mom, did you know this?"* And I'd think, *No, I didn't know any of this stuff.* So the more I am open and honest with who I am, about who I am, sometimes in spite of myself, right? Sometimes, in spite of yourself, you're raised with some ignorance and it's not chosen ignorance. It may be because of our educational system, because of a church you were raised in, or a family you were raised in, right? So understanding all of that and being open to that notion that I don't know is as freeing as holding a book of knowledge that you do know. I don't—

Winn: I have to interject here because what you're saying right now is so powerful. I think it's such a sad belief that people can't change and people will say that: "Well, you can't change people." Of course you can!

Melissa: Yes.

Winn: My gosh, if I can't change, well, then I should still be a drug addict. I just—

Melissa: Right.

Winn: I could still be a jerk. I should still be a victim, right? People can change and I have changed because there have been people in my life that believed in me even when I couldn't believe in myself. And the fact that what you're talking about right now, that you're open to that. To think that we have to have the answers and when we don't have the answers, *Oh my gosh, I'm 60 years old, I should have all the answers.* No! There's nothing wrong—and I love what you're saying, there's nothing wrong with saying, "I don't have the answer to this. I'm open to what my children can teach me. I'm grateful," as you said, "I'm grateful for the youth because they are helping us navigate through all of this." And I feel the same way and I want to embrace—we just put together this council, it's called Equity and Opportunity Council, and everybody that's involved in that was very, very adamant in making sure that we had a younger generation, those voices as part of that, because they're bringing insight that we didn't have and that's so important. But people can change. And by the way, if you believe that people can't change, then why are you listening to this podcast right *[laughs]* now?

Melissa: Right. And on the same hand, on the flip side of that youth, I do want to—I would be remiss if I didn't share this one experience I had with you that I think is vital. There's a gentleman at our gym, where Billy and I work out, and he's an older Japanese man and he saw me—let's see, where are we? I'm going

to say about five years ago. Billy and I'd walked in one morning at the gym and I got on the treadmill and Billy went on to do the weights or whatever he was doing, and this gentleman came over to me. And he, at the time, is about 96 and he said, "So I see you have a thing for Asians." As you know, my husband Billy is part Japanese. And I said, "Yeah." He said, "Well, if he ever mistreats you, you know where to find me," and which I thought—

Winn: [Laughs]

Melissa: —was so funny. So then he and I became friends and his name is Francis and at the age of 97, 98, Francis learned how to swim. I'd see him in the pool and when I saw him coming out of the locker room one day, I said, "Hey, I miss you over in the weights." He said, "Well, Melissa, I can't keep doing weights and riding the bike every day. You've got to shake things up." I said, "So now you're swimming." He said, "Well, I'm learning how to swim." And I said, "Time out. You're 98 and you're learning how to swim?" He turned around and looked at me and he said, "Don't ever let them lie to you and tell you that you can't teach an old dog new tricks." When Francis was younger, he was in the internment camps and he and his family were held in Montana. When Francis was 13, both of his parents died; independently and for different reasons. So he was now an orphan. He put himself through school, he put himself through USC, and he went on to become a very successful farmer. During his time in the internment camp, he was run over. Something happened, he got sick, and one of his legs is very withered and he wears a special shoe. So Francis, at the age of now 101, walks into the gym every day with his prosthetic shoe, his small leg, but he comes in and he swims every day and he works out and he still flirts with me like crazy. At the age of 101 he still flirts and he still works out but his mentality is, *I want to still learn, I'm still here*. And so young and old, I think it's a mindset, Winn, that we just cannot erase; we can't walk away from ever.

Winn: So you mentioned the story of Francis, which is great. You also mentioned earlier John McCain. I'm hoping the listeners right now—and Melissa, I'm going to ask you to put a challenge out there. I'm hoping that the listeners have those types of people in their lives.

Melissa: Yes.

Winn: That you have the mentors like a John McCain. You don't have to meet your mentors to actually have the opportunity to learn from them, but to have people in like Francis in your life, to have other people in your life that are giving you a different perspective rather than—it's amazing the time and energy that people will put into celebrities that really don't have much good to say about anything and yet people invest so much time and energy into knowing everything about that celebrity, knowing everything about that individual, even though they really aren't contributing anything worthy. Can

you put a challenge out there about the importance of having people like Francis and John McCain in your life?

Melissa: Absolutely. So my challenge to the listeners and continually to myself and to you, Winn, and everybody we love is that we don't settle for what's being fed to us but instead we stand up and we seek the answers from people who can teach us, who know better. If your goal in life is to live to be 100 and you want to know how to do it in a healthy way, seek out the people who are living in a way that you think you can learn from. If you want to learn more about philosophy, seek out the people who are teaching it. You want to learn more about our government, seek out the people whose ideas are similar to yours but may challenge your ideas a little bit. Expand your brain, expand your mind. Trust me, there are millions of people who have worthy, worthy knowledge to share with you and they're not necessarily sitting in front of a camera taking a selfie all day, making sure the lighting looks right. We keep seeing this exposure of our celebrities, out in real life, without makeup and some of them look wildly different and that's okay; that's okay. Drag has its place in all society. The challenge is this: there's nothing wrong with being celebrity but there is something wrong if you're using it as an escape to face your life. In order to own your life, look at your debt, look at your health, look at your relationships, and determine where you are and who's going to make each one of those kinks in that hose straighten out.

Winn: Okay, so let's get into this then because I like what you said earlier: that people hire you as a speaker to come in and they think that your only purpose is to help them rearrange the furniture in their home or in their office. And that's important, too, because all of us—I'm very energy sensitive. When I walk into my home and there's clutter, when it's not tidy, when it's not clean, that absolutely has an impact on me. When the lighting is off, you know, lighting has a big impact on me for some reason. I light candles all the time because that creates some type of energy for me and soothes me and makes me a better person, so it's my job to make sure that I have candles lit, fresh flowers. All those things are really important and I don't think there's anybody listening to this who wouldn't agree with that, but you said that people hire you for that information and your intention is to come in to, I think you said, "feng shui them."

Melissa: That's right.

Winn: And you keep on mentioning these other areas, from health and relationships and all that so let's jump into this because you're huge on harmony. And by the way, my first tattoo on my arm is harmony; it's the symbol for harmony. I need to live with harmony.

Melissa: I love that. I love that! Well, there are different facets of our lives that, when a feng shui master will come into your home, or an educator will come into your home or your office space and help you get it fixed—you know, fix it up right

energetically—they look at different facets of your life and it's, the first one is always your reputation or what's known as your fame: how you're known. And that is how do you present yourself? And that doesn't only mean having a mirror by the front door to check the vitals before you walk out. It's how are you presenting yourself with your speech? How are you presenting yourself and how do you carry yourself when you're out and you're seen in public? People don't like when they've read that other people say "you are your brand." They're like, "You need to be yourself." Well, I disagree because you are a brand. You are representing yourself each time you step out of your home, each time you answer your phone. So it doesn't mean that you can't slip and make a mistake but then you recover. You have to be aware of your reputation and for what it is you're known. If you have—

Winn: Okay, can I ask you a question about that then?

Melissa: Absolutely.

Winn: What do you say to people who say, "Well, I don't really care what people think about me"?

Melissa: Well, unless you are the Unabomber, hide away in some hermetic seal, then carry on, soldier. But my dispute to that is this: we are all one. I am you and you are me and there is only one way to get through this thing that we call life because we are not ants, just moving away. We are energetic energies, energetic souls. And human beings are the greatest conduits of energy. And the way that I present myself to you then bounces back and affects me. If I treat you horribly and if I walk around disparagingly and I throw litter on the ground, I take the mask and I throw it on the ground, or whatever it is I'm doing, I will then get that energy returning back to me. And listen, being kind and good and great and being cognizant of how you affect everyone and everything around you has a selfish return on your investment. There's a great return on the investment when you are happy and good, when you care about the environment, when you care about your neighbor, when you care about people. You know, happiness is the highest form of good health but it's fueled by gratitude.

Winn: Wait, say that again. That was powerful.

Melissa: Happiness is the highest form of good health and it is fueled by gratitude.

Winn: Wow.

Melissa: So when you walk around life caring and having gratitude and being happy, then it returns to you tenfold. It has a definite effect on your health. It has a definite effect on how you sleep. It has a definite effect on your psychological and emotional and mental wellbeing. So it pays to care what—not be ruled by what others think about you, but to care enough to say, "I am going to be my best self." That's caring. Now if the person says, "Well, I don't care how nice

little Pollyanna Melissa is, I still don't like her," I'm not talking about that. Because, look, I'm scrappy and I've been known to say things that I shouldn't say; I'll admit to that. I don't walk on water. I'm talking about ruling your day by being your best and highest self: by being kind and good and happy and grateful. That is determining your reputation. That's fueling how you're known. If someone decides she doesn't like you in spite of your best efforts, you don't stop your day; you continue to move forward in your best, happiest, greatest and happiest. You have to, you have to. That is the fuel that propels your life; not the toxicity of negativity. It never will.

Winn: Well, I'm going to bring you back to this but you just said something that I kind of want to ask you about: that you just kind of, you say things sometimes and you're like, *Oops there it goes*. [Laughs]

Melissa: [Laughs]

Winn: Meaning you just kind of put yourself out there. You don't always get it right but you kind of put yourself out there. And can you just talk about why that is so important? Because I know people, they just—I use the term *ready, fire, aim*. And usually it's *ready, aim, fire*, and my thought is people are just like, "Ready, aim, aim, aim, aim," and they never fire. They never stand for anything, they never put out who they are or have an opinion, and they're so afraid that it's not the perfect lighting for their selfie—

Melissa: [Laughs]

Winn: —that they don't ever put anything out there. And you just put yourself out there and sometimes you have to go back and retract and make apologies but for the most part you're living your authentic life and that's valuable, that's important to you.

Melissa: This is the only one I get. This is the only life I'm going to get and so if all great causes are fueled by a deep-rooted fear—see, Black Lives Matter started because there's this incredible, insufferable fear that what's happening to the people of African-American descent doesn't matter. So there's this fear that, "Is my son going to be able to leave the house? Is my daughter going to be pulled over for a parking ticket? What's going to happen? What's going to happen to my children, to my babies, to our future?" So it's fueled by fear and then when there's enough fear, people stand up and they say, "No, no." They turn that fear into anger and they say, "Not again." So I am not paralleling my decisions in life with anything as noble a cause as that, but I do know that my responsibility while walking this planet is to own this one life that I get. And my fear is that I will have wasted it. And the fact that I had seven miscarriages, seven opportunities for a soul to be here that isn't, and I realized how fleeting this life is. I realized at an early age when my best friend was killed by a drunk driver, when I was 16, 17. And you know, at that age you think you're going to live to be forever and 30 seems old. When I

began to realize how fleeting, how precious, how amazing this life is, and not just because I heard it at church and not because I heard some grandma or somebody say it. When I realized it, when it resonated deep in my cells, I started realizing that I don't know how much time I have. I'm not so arrogant as to assume I'm going to wake up tomorrow. I'm grateful every morning my eyes pop open. Every single flipping morning I think, *Oh thank you. Thank you for giving me another chance to do even better than yesterday.*

Winn: Wait, how did you develop that habit, such a good habit? How do you keep that going?

Melissa: I'm gonna tell you. So I stole an idea from my husband. And I think that when we got married, I had the right to steal a few things from him, but I had to give him credit. Billy takes those whiteout markers and he writes on the mirrors of my children's bathrooms and on our bathroom mirror or in the shower door, he'll write positive affirmations. When Nobu was going to be playing a game, Billy would write on the bathroom door, "I'm a champion, I'm going to score points, I'm going to defend, I'm going to be a good teammate." He would put these positive affirmations on our children's doors when they had competitions or they had a test or something they were concerned about; in addition to the previous night, saying something positive, putting it out into the universe to God or the Source or whatever your belief system is to accept. So I took that idea of the positive affirmation and I began studying the effects of gratitude on the body. on the physical self. On your mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual self. What happens when you demand, of yourself, to understand the fuel and the power of gratitude? What happens to you? So I began studying it for a long time. And I thought, well, just for kicks and giggles, I'm going to say thank you every morning when I open my eyes. I'm not going to recite some Psalms, I'm not going to recite some profound poetry. I'm just going to say thank you every morning when I wake up. And I'm not going to even attach anything to it; just thank you and see what it feels like. So every morning I would wake up and sometimes I would say it out loud, "Thank you," and really kind of move on. Candidly, I didn't put a lot of depth to it. It was kind of superficial; just trying it out. But I began to realize how good it made me feel to say thank you. Then I start attaching the true meaning to it, like, "Oh my gosh, I've been given a second chance; I've been given another chance and another chance." For whole years, I had 365 chances to open my eyes and to do something today. Now, I'm not going to set the world on fire but I am going to do something. I'm going to be kind to my neighbor. I'm going to be good to this body that I was given. I'm going to treat my children with respect and love. I'm going to treat my husband with respect and love. I'm going to call my mother. I'm going to check in on my dad; these types of things. I started realizing that the simple act of saying thank you started settling. If it were sitting on the top of my body like a sponge; top of my mind, like a sponge, I started watching it slowly sink in to the bottom and come and permeate every ounce of my being that I started recognizing, with this simple practice of saying thank you every morning, that

I was able to see people who loved me more clearly. I was able to take ownership of my actions more readily. I was able to make choices that benefited me and those that loved me quicker. So that was the simple step I did for the very first; that was the very first move I did. It's just saying thank you.

Winn: I want to ask you about that because I have a feeling that this has happened to you, Melissa, where you could be on stage teaching a class about this information for eight hours. You can be talking about step one: affirmations, step two: gratitude. You could spend all this time and then somebody will raise their hand and say, "Hey, how do I live a happier life?"

Melissa: That's right.

Winn: You're like, "Wait, I just spent eight hours talking about that," meaning people think that there's some other answer. They think that you're withholding the secret of really what it's going to take for them to live a happier, more fulfilling life. It's like they want the results without the work. I don't want to go to the gym but I still want to have the perfect body. I don't want—

Melissa: Yeah.

Winn: —to take my spouse on a date but I want the perfect marriage. They want all the results but they don't want to do the work.

Melissa: That's right. Well, I get it. When you're starving, you don't go home and cook cordon bleu or something that is going to take you some time to prepare. You run by and grab an In-N-Out burger. I get it, I do get it. And people do want a fast injection because they're starving and they're hungry. And sometimes when you're at your hungriest and the only coupons that are honored at the grocery store for welfare, for WIC, is the junk food. You don't have time to go home and prepare the spinach and all the other meats. I get it, I do. So the fastest answer I can tell people is your first step in understanding that you own your life is to say, "I own my life. I own my life. You may beat me, you may disparage me, you may turn your back on me. You may not like what I've done. You may judge me, based on my religion, on the way I love, on the color of my skin. You may judge me on a myriad of things, because you know what? It doesn't take any talent to judge." In spite of the fact that they hired me to do judging at the—that's a whole different thing; at the business thing *[laughs]*. It doesn't take any talent to critique and to demean people; it takes zero talent. My mother and my grandmother taught me that you do everything with excellence because that's how you were raised.

Winn: I love that message; takes zero talent.

Melissa: Yeah.

Winn: Takes zero talent to be a critic, because you hear that. Employees just love—“Oh my gosh, this place is just—the way it is, it’s such a mess. It’s this, it’s—.” You know, that just took no talent to find what is not working.

Melissa: That’s right. Winn, I went to a salon one time and I met with the team with the owners and the managers out of the room and they walked into the room and I watched them walking into the room and I had one gal say to me, “Well, you know what I don’t like about this place? It’s dirty.” And I said, “But I saw you walk by a piece of paper on the floor and you didn’t pick it up.” And she said, “It’s not my job; I’m not paid to pick up the trash—”

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Melissa: “I’m an artist.” And I said, “Well, I’ll tell you what. A pig isn’t paid to produce bacon and a pig isn’t paid to clean up its slop and so there we are.” There’s an old saying in the South that pigs go to feed and hogs go to slaughter. In that, if you have a desire in life and you barely do enough—you don’t complain, you contribute a little bit, you can get fed through life. But when you get greedy and you start demanding things of life without contributing anything, that’s when you go to slaughter; that’s when life starts crumbling under you. The greedier you are and the less you contribute, the greater your chances of the crumble.

Winn: Wow!

Melissa: What I believe, more than anything, is that if you make a declaration to yourself—you don’t have to say it out loud. Sometimes saying out loud what you’re doing to other people has an energetic interference that stymies it, that slows it down, because other people start putting their, “Huh, I wish it were happening to me,” or “She’s not going to do that. I’ve seen her try that four times, it didn’t work.” “Oh great, here’s another guy she’s dating that’s a jerk.” Whatever the energy is they put around you, even if the words don’t escape their mouth but it ruminates in their brain, that energy is still coming out to affect you. If you want real change in your life, to yourself, in the privacy of your own brain, you say, “I own my life, I’m making a change. I’m doing this for me and ultimately for everyone I love.” When I was saying thank you I didn’t say it so that my husband would think I was cool or that my kids would think it was another thing Mom was trying. I did it for me, because I know that I’m only as good for you as I am to myself. I have to respect and honor the higher spirit that resides inside this shell of a body that I landed in. I landed in this body, right? This is a spirit. There’s a soul inside this shell and I have to take care of it as well as I take care of my car. I don’t put corn syrup in my car. I go and I try to get the best gas I can. I take my car in for oil changes; I’m always taking care of my car. I always take care of this body because it’s what I landed in. The soul that resides within vibrates on a higher level.

Winn: As we start to get into these things and we're talking about some real step-by-step, this is what you need to do, what I'm feeling from you is that this really is simple. It doesn't mean that it's easy but it really is; it's simple and I think that people are just looking for some complicated—because my life is a mess and it's complicated, that the answer, that the solution, also has to be complicated.

Melissa: Right. I'll tell you what's easy to do, Winn. It's easy to stay in bed instead of going to the gym. It's easy to grab a hamburger instead of going home and doing the work to prepare the meal. It's easy. It's easy to take the shortcut. It always has been but it doesn't have a good return on the investment.

Winn: I had a friend recently tell me that she was 10 years sober but only two years into recovery.

Melissa: Oh, wow!

Winn: And what I got from that was, even though she wasn't drinking, even though she wasn't using, she still wasn't doing the work.

Melissa: Yep.

Winn: The work came two years ago. "Now I'm in recovery. Now I have to take the steps. Now I have to do the work." And I thought that that was just such a powerful—I took it as a powerful message to me.

Melissa: That's profound.

Winn: That just—it was profound and I had to do the work. Something as simple as your lists of gratitude or Billy's writing affirmations on the doors of your children. That's so simple. That's so simple but that's doing the work.

Melissa: It is. I want to piggyback on something you said where we just think that it's going to be—it's not easy. Anything worth having is worth fighting for. Anything worth having is worth pushing for. Status quo would have kept us back in 1950 and I wouldn't be married to my husband, who isn't of the same race as me; you wouldn't be married to your husband. None of us would be progressing in a way that is meant to progress on a higher spiritual level. If the message in any belief system is the intrinsic message and the recurring motif is love, and happiness and love and gratitude all germinate from the same seed, then that's the work we need to be doing consistently. Love yourself enough to work out. Love yourself enough to not put junk in your body. Love yourself enough to not watch a lot of crap on TV. Love yourself enough to not read negativity. And I'm not saying stay away from the news. Keep yourself informed because an educated mind is one that can progress and evolve faster. But you've got to love; you've got to be happy. These are terms that you have to infiltrate into your vocabulary and utilize every chance you can. The "like" button on any kind of social media platform is fine but to

me it's like the lower case m-e-h, *meh*. It's just kind of there; it's lukewarm. I know that people think that I abuse the love button on things and say "I love this" but it's authentic. When I'm vibrating from a place of happiness and gratitude and love, then I see the world that way and it's easier to move ahead. That's your first step. I love this life. I'm going to own my life. I'm going to make use of my time here. I'm not going to let life just happen to me.

Winn: Wow. Okay, I think that we were on this journey here of steps, and I think you said that the first one was reputation?

Melissa: Yes. It's your reputation for how you're known.

Winn: Okay.

Melissa: And the very next step from that is the factor of love, and it's not, "Oh I love my puppy or I love my children." No. It's intimacy. It's the love you have for a life partner. It's a love you have for a mate. It's a love you have for a lover. It is a love that courses the blood through your vein at an exciting level, at a warming level, at a sustaining, supporting level. I recently was contacted by a client of mine whose son, she described him as an *incel*, and I wasn't really sure what the hell that was; my daughter had to describe it for me. So *involuntarily celibate*. So it's this young man and I met him and he's a good-looking kid but that was only external, right? Externally he was check, check, check. He hit all the markers. But internally he had a lot of garbage and so my work with him, my feng shui work with him is working on the interior: cleaning out the interior of who he is and how he presents his energy to the world. He says, "I've never had a girlfriend," and he is 26. "I've never had a girlfriend. I tried to date girls in high school; I tried to date girls when I was in college. I've never had a girlfriend; never had anyone interested in me. I've gone on dating sites." Now like I said, no lie, and I'm picky: this kid hit all the markers. He's a good-looking boy, young man, but this position of not having love in his life has soured him and it's to the point where he only sees what the mirror is showing him. He doesn't see what everyone else is seeing, beyond the façade. So that's something that we're working on. Love is a fuel of your life. And you mentioned earlier, taking your spouse on a date; absolutely. Leaving love notes: "I love you just because." We hear about these things and people think, *Uh that's corny*. Okay, then text it. Text, "Hey, when you walked out of the house today, I forgot to tell you, you looked so great. You just looked so happy and beautiful. I just want you to know." My husband Billy does something that's—he started, I can't even remember how long ago; I want to give it proper homage but I can't—I'm going to say about eight years ago, he started saying, "I love you and I'm in love with you." And it seemed like such a simple thing, like me opening my eyes and saying thank you every day seems like such a simple task. Him putting that little prepositional phrase "in love" in front of "I love you, I'm in love with you." Shifting it just slightly—

Winn: Wow!

Melissa: —changed it; it changed something. It shifted something just gently enough to make me turn and see him. Like oh my gosh, we've been together all these years; we've been together 30 years, married 30 years, but we've been together for, oh my gosh, well, I'm not going to go through those numbers; that's a long time. Just say it's a long time, Winn.

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Melissa: We've been together a long time. So the two of us, to be able to maintain this "I love you and I'm still in love with you." Because people say, "Ah the honeymoon phase is over; you lose it after a while and then they're just roommates." Just a roommate! Oh God, please don't let me just have a roommate. This is my life partner and we're in love, and that takes work and effort. So this aspect of love in your life, intimacy, sexual love, holding hands, stroking the cheek of your lover, noticing the beauty of their neck or the one thing that always caught your eye when you saw them, when you were falling in love. Maintaining that and reminding them and yourself of it is a way to keep that energy in alignment.

Winn: What do you say to those people who haven't found that one and only? You know, "Tinder hasn't sent them to me yet."

Melissa: Yeah, you know, and they keep saying, "I'm waiting for my soulmate." I don't even know what that means. Let me tell you something. By all checkmarks deemed by the society in which I grew up and even my husband's, he and I should not be together. He was raised in a military family; I wasn't. His family voted one way politically; mine the opposite. His family grew up focusing on one format of prayer; mine was totally separate. If you tried to align us, your train would go off the track; it just wouldn't work. And yet energetically everything about us clicks and it has taken work. I don't try to fool people and say, "Well, it just matched and from there it's been all peachy creamy." It has not been. It has been a challenge and an evolution and a concerted, focused effort on this life that brought the two of us together. And because the two of us came together because we have things that we have to accomplish together as a team in this life and because by golly my daughter Seiji and my son Nobu had to be born and they had to be born if Melissa and Billy got together. So we have this life that we recognize is larger than this little singular myopic view that one of us has on life. We come together, we're powerful. And so we nurture and we love it and we support that together, constantly. And it's work. And it's not easy but it's work.

Winn: Reputation, love; what's the third one?

Melissa: Your family and your creativity. Now, when I say family, it's more children, so forgive me; it's children and creativity. Children obviously makes sense why they're lumped in with the knowledge of creativity. Creativity and children are keeping that spark alive: that wide-eyed wonder of what's next, and I can

learn a new thing and I can learn a new way of exercising and I can learn a new way of speaking and I can learn a new way of living and I can understand a new way that another person has lived his or her life that I never was aware of before. So it's this wide-eyed wonder and forcing yourself to not say, "I know, I know." In the salon world, I remember when I would be training guys and gals for the front desk and I would show something that was new to—it was certainly new to this person because he or she had never worked in my location before—so I would be saying it and I used to have this little pet peeve when someone would say, "I know, I know, I know." I remember one time, after hearing this a couple times from this one gal in particular, I said, "How could you know?" She said, "Because I understand how computers work," and I said, "Have you worked on this system before?" She said, "Yeah but it's all basically the same." I said, "Have you worked in this salon before?" She said, "No." I said, "Have you worked for me before?" She said, "No." I said, "Let's pretend we don't know and just see what happens; just for fun."

Winn: Wow!

Melissa: "Let's pretend you don't know and see what happens."

Winn: [Laughs]

Melissa: It's this "I know" that shuts the door: "I know."

Winn: Right.

Melissa: "I already know that." I could easily say that to my kids because I'm a lot older than they are. I didn't have my children until I was in my 30s so I could easily say, "I've been walking this planet a lot longer than you. Sit down. I know." But my kids are teaching me stuff that I had no idea. "Mom did you know this? Did you know this about this person who was one of the leaders of our country and there's a statue? Did you know this?" No, I didn't know because I was never taught that. I never knew it and I didn't even think to look, to research it. These kids know. So.

Winn: I like this because I know some 18-year-olds who already know it all, and to me there's nothing more unattractive than a know-it-all.

Melissa: That's right.

Winn: But I've been to seminars where there's a 90-year-old person sitting on the front row. I remember going to seminars—Yosh, who is such a prominent name in the beauty industry: this famous, famous, incredible hairdresser and educator and artist and everything else. I remember running into him at major, major hair shows thinking, *Oh my gosh, Yosh, why are you—where's your classroom? Where are you teaching?* He's like, "I'm not teaching today." I'm like, "Well then, what are you doing here?" He's like, "Well, I'm here to learn. I'm a student today." My brother, who I think he just turned 70 maybe—oh

gosh, I hope he turned 70 and he's not younger than that—he has this mind, this attitude of curiosity. He's just so curious and that, to me, is just so attractive. You talked about that wide-eyed wonder; it's so, so attractive.

Melissa: It is. And all of our greats, if we look back at all the greats, whoever he or she is, they never stopped learning. I mean, even Gandhi, on his bed when he was doing a self-proclaimed cease of eating and drinking in protest, was still having stories and Sanskrit read to him so he could learn. He wanted to keep learning. It is this need, this insatiable desire to learn more: to learn more about gardening or to learn about the surroundings or your neighbor or different religions. Whatever it is you're learning about is what will fuel your life. It's part of that owning your life. This is my life. Am I only relegated to the address or the chair I'm sitting in? Am I only relegated to my backyard? Can I not travel, and if we can't travel, can I not read about it and do a virtual tour? Can I not find out: try the food, try the—it's this curiosity, insatiable curiosity like you said, is so attractive and it fuels for harmony and balance in your life.

Winn: Wow, I think that could be a great to-do thing for a group of people.

Melissa: Yes.

Winn: Whether it's a family or a team. Cool that we can sit around and brag about all the things that we're good at but what aren't we good at? For them to sit around and say, "How we are weak? Where do we lack knowledge and experience? Let's make that list," because that's the list. Not why you're so brilliant and amazing. Let's talk about what you don't know because that's the list that provides opportunities for us.

Melissa: Winn, I went to a dinner party one time where I was surrounded with people who had, by all societal measures, had achieved quite a lot. If you were to judge them by their wallets and their financial success, certainly. I remember there was this one guy across from me who was just ranting on and on about something that he had designed that is utilized worldwide. And I won't say what it is so I won't give it away, in the event that he is listening. But he was going on and on and really patting himself on the back about how great things were and what he had accomplished and what he had done and the heads of state that he had met with around the world and on and on and on. When it got quiet, he turned and looked at me and he said, "You're staring at me rather intently, Melissa." And I said, "I am." And he said, "What is it?" I said, "I'm wondering what it is you don't know." And he said, "What kind of a smart aleck—"

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Melissa: "—question is that?" I said—

Winn: Oh my gosh.

Melissa: “Well, I know what you know. I think we all are apprised of what you know. I’m wildly curious on what it is you don’t know.” He was furious with me but his wife, who was sitting two people down from me on my side of the table, leaned over to me and said, “Would you like for me to start?” *[Laughs]*

Winn: Oh my gosh, that’s great. That’s great. And we’ve been around people who are the opposite of that. I was fortunate enough to spend time with Vidal Sassoon and he was never, ever the person to talk about his knowledge and his experience and his wealth and his accolades and his accomplishments. He was genuinely curious to know more about the person that he was standing in front of.

Melissa: You mentioning his name even makes me—brought a huge smile to my face and warmed my heart because I—every single time, without fail, when I would see Vidal, or my husband Billy would, he was so gracious and so loving and so welcoming and he always was the first person to break the ice, always broke the ice. “Hello Billy, hello Melissa,” and would talk to us. And when he saw my children, spoke to them as though they were eye-level to him even when they were three and five, or five and seven, or wherever time he saw them. He would look at them and treat them with the utmost respect. We could talk about him for the rest of the show and I’d be happy. There are not enough good things that I could say about him, but you’re right, you’re absolutely right.

Winn: Okay, we talked about reputation, love, children, and creativity. Is there a number four?

Melissa: There is. It’s mentors and goals. You’ve alluded to this, and we’ve both been talking about this: the need for having a mentor. The need for learning from someone who you know and you recognize knows more than you on any subject; could just be one subject, it doesn’t matter. Having a mentor. If you decide, “You know what? I’m going to establish a victory garden. I want to start growing my own vegetables. I don’t want to have to travel; we’re all on lockdown. Wouldn’t it have been great if I could have even an herb box at my house, but I want to learn about it?” Then find someone who knows about it and utilize a mentor to learn more from in that particular subject; whatever it is. But having a mentor—the list of all the things that we’re going through are nothing more than the different spinning plates of your life that you keep moving and keep paying attention to, to create a more balanced, harmonious you and a life of yours that you can own. Having a mentor and having goals. If your goals—some people say, “By the time I’m 30 I want to buy a house.” And how old are you now? “I’m 22.” So what are you going to do for the next eight years? “Well, I’m going to be saving to buy the house.” And how much money do you need? “I don’t know.” So the more succinct you can be with your goals—I want to get a Tesla, if that’s somebody’s goal. How much does it cost? How much will your insurance cost to cover you on it? How much fuel will it cost? How far do you drive to and from? How many miles do you drive

on average a month? How much will your fuel cost be? I know that it's electric so I'm not completely blowing myself out of the water here.

Winn: [Laughs]

Melissa: But you must know 100 percent of everything that you are investing in. What are your goals? And then once you have that very broken down, to the sediment at the bottom of the barrel, understanding of what that goal is, put that on your mirror. If you don't want to write on your mirror with a marker, like my husband does, then write it on a piece of paper and tape it to a side; even if it's on the inside of your medicine mirror, whatever it is. Put it on—or the inside of your closet. Someplace you are going to see every day to remind you. And put it in the terms of present. "I am grateful for my Tesla. I am grateful for my home." Because, you see, time is irrelevant when it comes to goals unless you place a marker on it. The Universe, God, the Source, Allah: to whomever, to whatever you pray. The trees, whatever it is. The nature,. There is no concept of time; it's manmade. Man has determined time. So when someone says, "I hate my life," the Universe—which I don't—the Universe then says, "Oh my gosh, I love Melissa so much. This is what she keeps saying. Give her more reasons to say it," because there's no judgment. So you must put positive affirmations: goals that are completely broken down that you understand so you know what you are moving towards. People say to me, "Oh, I wish I had this like—" let me make up a "—Kylie Jenner." And I say, "Do you know what it takes to be Kylie Jenner? Do you know what it takes to be Taylor Swift? Do you know what it takes: the thousands of hours that are put into the culmination of that?" There's no pill; there's no Daddy Warbucks going to walk in and hand you something. There's no white horse riding in to save you. You have to do the work. You have to understand the goal. So that fourth spot is understanding mentors, seeking out those who know more than you, and putting out your goals but understanding them and breaking them down so you know exactly what you're getting involved in.

Winn: Hm, I like your message there about what it takes: the hours, the work that it takes to move in that direction. I recently interviewed Peter Vidmar, who I believe is still the most decorated male gymnast in the U.S., winning more gold medals than anybody else in gymnastics. And he talked about 10,000 hours.

Melissa: Yes.

Winn: It took a minimum of 10,000 hours. People hit one tennis ball and think they are ready for Wimbledon.

Melissa: [Laughs] It's true. Malcolm Gladwell did a whole book on that 10,000 hours notion and he talked about the Beatles and how they just played in these just sloppy joints and they would just get up—every minute they had to get up and come up with a really quick song and get up so it perfected this ability.

Everyone kept saying, “How did the Beatles, why were they so prolific, how did they put out all that music?” They got over 10,000 hours of practice and having beer thrown at them and dodging and getting off the stage and writing another one and coming back up and trying to get better the second time, or the hundredth time. So, yeah, the hours and then what it takes to achieve that goal so that you’re not just flippantly saying, “I want this.” Okay, what does it take? Oh, I don’t know. Well, you’re not five and if you are we’ll work on that goal. But I mean, you’ve got to know what you’re working towards. And then the next step in this list—

Winn: Can I interject there? *[Laughs]* One of my good mentors, Marianne Williamson, used to say that we give our shopping list to God, we give our shopping list to the Universe. “I would like a Tesla, please.”

Melissa: *[Laughs]*

Winn: And then we sit back and wonder why it’s not coming our way. I’ve got to add the humor in all of this, you know. We have to be able to find the humor and laugh at ourselves. It’s like, oh my gosh, that’s what we do. “Well, I read that book on the law of attraction so all I have to do is just write it down on my bathroom mirror. I want a Tesla and then I’ll just sit back and it’s going to come my way.”

Melissa: *[Laughs]* It’s true. Meanwhile, that message is going out to God or the Universe and they’re saying, “What are we supposed to do with this?” Yeah, so you’ve got to do the work and then when you make that commitment, then you see things start to—you’ve heard this before: that when someone says, “Oh, I want a Tesla,” they see a bunch of them on the road. You are drawing that to you but that serves as nothing more than the fuel. When you start moving obstacles by understanding what it takes: “I want this house, and I know this house is going to cost \$750,000. How much will I have to put down? How much will my monthly payments be? What will be the property taxes that are due on it? Am I going to amortize that in with the payment,” whatever. Once you do the work, then you start understanding what life takes. And then those obstacles move and then it starts coming towards you a little bit faster. That’s how—

Winn: Okay, what’s the next area?

Melissa: Your career. And it’s not a job, it’s your career. Now, some people have jobs: Monday through Friday, clock in, clock out, and they really do their living on the weekends. And I work with a lot of people who do that and they’ll say, “Melissa, this is just a means to an end. I’m really a frustrated artist but Monday through Friday I do x, y and z just to pay the bills.” I got it, I got it. But what is your career? How do you spend your time away from family or with family earning income to satisfy the need of bill paying? And if you’re completely off the grid, how do you earn income to buy your food or to buy

your necessities? Your career and the choices you make towards that career—I don't care if it is the Monday through Friday job. And let's say you're waitressing: that's your career at the moment. It may shift and change later, but that is your career. What energy are you placing towards it? Are you walking in, like the young gal that I had that said, "This place is dirty," but she didn't offer to bend down and pick up the trash? Are you putting energy towards that, so that it's more than just a J-O-B but it really is someplace that's fueling you? See, what we do at the Yamaguchi household is we give gratitude to everything so when my bills come in, instead of throwing out, "Crud man, look how high the electricity bill is," forgetting that it's summer and it always goes up every summer because it gets a little bit warmer and the air conditioner may be on, we write "thank you" on the top of the bill. So every bill that comes in, I thank it. And the reason I say thank you is because I thank that electricity bill for allowing my house to have lights and to have the air conditioner run. And I thank the gas bill for allowing me to fire up the stove and cook for my children. And I thank the mortgage payment for allowing us to stay under a roof. Every aspect of your life, if you show gratitude towards, you'll see how things start to shift and change and that certainly goes for your bill. I mean for your—

Winn: What a powerful message because we think we're supposed to show gratitude only to the good things that come our way.

Melissa: That's right.

Winn: And what you're saying, I remember Louise Hay teaching that to me many years ago when I read her book. And believe it or not, we had bill-paying parties. There was a couple of friends, we would all get together and bring our bills and we would sit there and order pizza and have fun music and we would all write out checks and kiss—

Melissa: *[Laughs]*

Winn: —the check as we stuck it into the envelope because what Louise taught me was that a bill is actually a good thing. A bill means that there is a company that trusts you enough to provide you services or product before you even pay for them. So you used up that electricity and lived in a nice cool air-conditioned home and they provided that to you before you even paid for it.

Melissa: That's right. That's right. I love that.

Winn: That's a good thing.

Melissa: I love that bill paying party; that's cool. So when you're going into your work, instead of going, "Oh gosh, I've got this boss that's a jerk. I've got to work with this guy next to me who breathes through his mouth and I can't stand to be around him." Whatever it is, whatever the complaint is, right? Again, it taking no talent to critique. Instead, just challenging yourself to say, "You know

what? I'm going to have a good time today at work. I'm going to do my best. I'm going to be grateful that this job gives me a check on Friday, or once a month—however you're paid—bimonthly. I get paid, which in turn allows me to do x, y, z." Right? So, if you shift your focus and you shift the internal narrative of, "Ugh." But, "You know what? I get to go to work. There are so many people who are out of work. I get to work. I get to do something. I get to provide for my babies. I get to provide for my mom. I get to provide for my lover. I get to provide for myself. I'm here. Why am I here? While I'm here, let me make use of my time." So, I think a career—you have to shift your focus towards it. And people say, "Well, it's not really what I want to be doing; it's just a job." Well, then love it while you're there and refocus; re-shift your energy towards it.

Winn: Beautiful. What's the next area?

Melissa: The next aspect is self-education, and that kind of heralds back to what you and I were talking about on "you can teach an old dog new tricks." What are you doing to better yourself? You must educate yourself. You must, and set goals for that. You know, "By this year I'd like to learn a new language. By this year I'd like to learn how to do day trading. By this year I'd like to learn how to take care of my yard. By this year I'd like to learn how to paint." Whatever it is, whatever it is. This month I'd like to learn how to do burpees; whatever it is. Set yourself goals and educate yourself on them; constantly educating yourself. It keeps the brain supple. It keeps your brain elastic and it keeps it nimble so that you can think quickly, you can move. I have met men and women in their 80s and older who are very fast on their feet. Mentally, if not physically; certainly mentally. And by self-educating yourself and keeping the brain flexible and moving and limber, you're able to grow. It's a huge component of having a balanced life.

Winn: Beautiful. What's the next area?

Melissa: The next area is health and family. When your family is sick, whether that's mentally, emotionally, physically, or spiritually, it affects your health. And the family could be as large as you deem it. It could be as small as the people that are closest to you on the family tree. It could be as close as the roommates and the people with whom you share a home. It could be as large as your neighborhood. It could be as large as the planet. But the health of the family affects the health of the individual, which is why it is so important that we all understand what's happening to everyone around us and take compassion on those who have lost family members to the coronavirus and take compassion for those who have suffered through any racial, sexual, or religious injustice because it affects our health. So the focus on this area is, in addition to being concerned about the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional wellness of those around us and ourselves, it is truly taking pause to think, *What am I eating?* Keep a journal. What are you eating every day. What are you consuming when you drink? Are you drinking good water? Are

you drinking a Diet Coke? I have a friend who almost brags about the fact that she doesn't drink water, that she only drinks Diet Coke and coffee. And that's—

Winn: [Laughs]

Melissa: —no lie. She doesn't even like tea. And I keep thinking we're the same age and I keep thinking, and I finally said, "Are you bragging?" She said, "No, it's just a matter of fact; I don't drink water." You know, I'm never stuck for words, really. I mean, I'm pretty verbose but I don't even know how to respond to that without being disparaging because I think it's such an affront to the body. Like I told you, I landed in this body. So there's a girl that worked for us years ago at the salon who, by the Victoria's Secret angels standards, fell very short: not very tall, muscular as all get out. She would do a solo kayak in the ocean before she would come to work every morning. I was so enthralled by this. Just super muscular, very flat chested, very small frame from the hip bones to the shoulders but from the hip bones to the ground, to the ankles, very solid. I mean solid, like she would not move if you pushed her. But she was built so phenomenally because she was so incredibly muscular and there was a beauty to the way she carried herself. I remember one time a girl was saying something about how, "I need to lose this weight," and this young gal said, "I don't know why you don't learn to love the body that you're in. As for me I'll never be tall, I'll never be skinny, I'll never have a large chest and the things that you're saying are beautiful unless I went out and bought them. But for me, I take what I have and make it the best I can make it." It always struck me on how beautiful that was. And so with health there's this focus of "what am I putting in my body physically?" What am I drinking, what am I ingesting that affects my physical health, and then taking ownership of that. But on the flip side of that coin, it's understanding that what you are watching on television, what you are listening to on the radio, what you're listening to on podcasts, for better and for worse, affects you. Are you ingesting positivity? Are you ingesting it with your eyes, with your ears, and the people with whom you surround yourself? Now, if you are in a situation where you're like, "Melissa, I live with this person," whether it's a mom, a dad, a brother, a sister, an aunt, an uncle, a lover, a husband, a wife, "I'm living with this person who's negative and it is hard and it's affecting me." I understand. I do. I understand. Then what you must do is decide what you can do to make a shift. If you can do nothing, if you cannot leave the home because you don't have money; if you cannot turn away from this person because it's your mother, God forbid, and she's sick and she's living with you and what are you going to do, just shut the door? You're taking care of her. Whatever that is. Then the work becomes twice as focused and necessary for you to feed back to yourself the positivity. You wake up with gratitude; you demand yourself. If you have to write it in Sharpie on your palm so that when you wake up in the morning, before you grab your cell phone, put a sticky note on the cover of that that says, SAY THANK YOU. Start working on you. Put it everywhere you go and put notes to yourself: I AM BEAUTIFUL, I AM AMAZING, I AM POSITIVE, I AM LOVE, I AM

HAPPY; I'M GRATEFUL. If you start focusing, it's ten times more important and vital that you do that, that you save the light within in spite of the darkness surrounding you. Just like that gentleman in the true story of *A Beautiful Life*, who in spite of being in the internment camps, marched his way and chose to smile and tell happy stories because it is your life and you must push through.

Winn: I love it that you're not letting people off the hook. You're not just saying, "Well, you live with that person. Oh well, you're right, your life sucks; good luck." What you're saying is, "Okay. Well, then you have to work ten times as hard. Oh well."

Melissa: That's right.

Winn: You would do the same thing if you had a looming cold. You would have to take ten times the amount of vitamin C. You got to do what you got to do to combat whatever it is that life is throwing at you.

Melissa: There was a gentleman that worked in our operations—the answering of the phone and booking of the clients in the booking department—and I always loved this guy. He was from Tennessee and he had the greatest sense of humor and he was diagnosed with AIDS and he came to me and told me and we cried together and we hugged each other and this was before really an understanding of what it all was. This was, gosh, over 20 years ago. And he and I sat there talking about what this meant and I said, "Tell me what you want to do; I'm here for you. Tell me what I can do," and he said, "Well, I'd like for you to allow me to keep working," and I said, "Of course." And he said, "And I'm asking right now that you not say anything. I won't put anybody at risk but I need to keep working because, you see, I identify with who I am by the beauty of this place and how we make people feel. I've seen women walk out of here who came in with their shoulders slumped and they walked out standing up. I see the work we do for women and children and shelters and I have a sense of purpose here. And as long as I'm here, I want to fuel my purpose and I'm going to live the best life I can." He said, "See, I just know what's taking me out; not everybody does." That was before we knew that you can live with, right, that you can continue a life. And I said something to the effect of him having courage and I admired him and he said, "No I don't. I'm scared as hell, Melissa. I'm so scared that I'm clinging onto the beauty as hard as I can; white knuckled, I'm holding on. I'm not going to let it go and if you'll let me hold on to it, I'd be honored to stay." So he stayed with us and worked with us until his passing, God rest his soul. And I learned from him so much about fighting for the beauty in your life. Of knowing that this is it: there's only one life. I mean, I personally don't believe in reincarnation; I think I'd come back as like a dung beetle or something if I did. I just don't believe in it so I work very hard on making sure that this life that I'm living is the best it can be and that I'm doing the best I can for everyone around me and in turn then it reverberates, right? It vibrates off of me so everyone benefits on some level.

Winn: I like what you just said. That could almost be the theme of this entire podcast as well: fighting for the beauty. I love that. Wow.

Melissa: So the last and final step on the list is money, and I always leave it last because we think—there are all these phrases that we've utilized throughout time and a lot of cultures use them: that money is evil and that money is only an ends to a mean, and it's not true. I want you to understand that money—and I want all of our listeners to understand—that money is nothing more than a vibration. It is an energetic understanding that is a form of receiving and gaining. You receive this format of money for the efforts that you've put forth, whatever your career is, whatever your vocation, whatever it is you're selling. You then take that form of energy—it used to be gold, used to be these big heavy bars. Can you imagine what those guys in the Wild West thought when they saw the paper that was going to be replacing it? "I don't trust that thing, it's too light weight." So whatever the format is, whether it's a coin, whether it's a shell, a conch shell, whether it's a bar of gold, dollar bills, or bitcoin, it's all a format of energy. And I'm not telling you to worship the energy, I'm telling you to respect it. So much so, that when I'm tipping a waiter or waitress who's taken care of me, if that 20 percent—if that person earned the 20 percent and that 20 percent is \$20, let's say—as I'm putting that down on the table I'm saying, "Thank you for taking care of me." And then if I'm lucky enough to hand it to him, I don't just look down and say, "Yeah, yeah, keep the change," and keep talking to my companion at the dinner table. I look him in the eye and I say, "The balance is for you and thank you so much," because they served you, they took the time to serve you. So with every shift in form of money, if we understand the respect that this vibrational piece of paper, or coin, or check, or credit card slide, or bitcoin currency has, then we start to value our efforts that we put towards it and the need to preserve it, if we need it, instead of just running through it. If, on our goals—and if you tie it back over to the goals, if your goal is to save \$10,000 to pay towards something or to pay off something or just to have as emergency money, and you understand that each dollar represents a vibration of energy, then you won't be so flippant as to walk by a quarter on the ground, a penny on the ground. You won't be so flippant as to throw a couple dollars towards a crap magazine that's going to infuse your brain with negative gossip and lies about some celebrity. You won't be so quick as to waste and expend the energy of money and it will permeate throughout all aspects. You won't be wasting vibration of energy on your food choices, your reading choices, your energetic exchanges with people. Everything will start to vibrate. See, all of these plates, from your reputation all the way back to here to money, are all the plates and aspects that comprise your table, your life, your blueprint. And when you give respect to each one of these spinning plates, each one of these facets of your life, your life is in harmony and balance. And is it easy? No, it is not. But losing the weight after I had each one of my children was not easy, either, but I worked my rear off in order to lose the weight so I could be strong and healthy for my children because the reward of having these spirits in my life was so worth it. The effort that you put forth in your life towards

each of these components is what creates a harmonious life. This is what I mean by owing your life. You take ownership of every aspect of your life because it is yours and you drive that stake in the land. My great-grandparents were Sooners and my great-grandmother was native. She drove that stake in the land because she knew this was her forefathers' and her mother's land, in spite of the fact that my grandfather, her husband, my great-grandfather, was charging forward to drive a stake in the land as a Sooner; it was authentically hers. She drove that stake in the land and she laid claim to that land because it was her forefathers and mothers' and she took ownership of that land and she harvested it and she had victory gardens and she was a midwife and she helped all the women in the community birth their babies and she made homemade medicines. She owned the land, she owned her life. And I'm saying this blueprint that I've laid out for you today, with your help, is your blueprint, it's your real estate. You must own it. Stake ownership of it and be involved in every aspect of it. Don't let it happen to you but own it.

Winn: Melissa, thank you for that. Have you checked the time? Look how long we've been talking. I can't believe this. I have no idea how I'm going to edit this to fit within the time frame that we are allowed to use here but just to wrap things up I have to tell you, as deep and profound your message is and what you have to share, to know that you share all of this and that you live your life in just this light, humorous, approachable way just makes it that much more meaningful, makes it that much more doable. You draw people in with this energy that you have and then you come at them with this incredible, incredible wisdom. Man, just so valuable. I just cannot thank you enough for this time today.

Melissa: Winn, it's always a treat. I always used to get excited when I knew I was going to physically see you and get a hug from you. I've always had this resonance with you that I have tremendous respect and admiration for who you are, so I want to thank you. It's really, I promise you from my heart, an honor to be a part of anything you do, even if you want me to come down and fold towels with you, I would be honored to do that.

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Melissa: I just love you and adore you. Thank you, Winn, I appreciate it.

Winn: Sweetheart, thank you so much and give Billy my best but just anything I can do for you, I know that you're going to get a lot of hits on his one because what you have shared today is so powerful.

Melissa: Thank you, Winn. I love you. Give my love to everybody and thank you.

Winn: Thank you, sweetheart. Love you.

Melissa: Love you, too.

