

## MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh, August 2025

### Randal Smalls: The BetterLife Course: Loving the Skin You're In



Randal Smalls is “The BetterLife Coach,” an author, speaker, and coach who empowers people to break bad habits and build better ones so they can enjoy life, not just endure it.

Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, Randal is committed to encouraging people into loving the skin they're in. Sometimes life's ups and downs cause us to feel like something's missing or we're in a rut. Randal's BetterLife message can help any listener turn pain into purpose, implement a gratitude adjustment, and go deep in discovering what matters most.

**Winn:** Hey, everybody. Winn Claybaugh here, and welcome to another MASTERS podcast interview. I am sitting here with a wonderful, beautiful, kindhearted man, Randal Smalls, and you're gonna love, love, love this time that we have with him. So, Randal is the BetterLife coach, which, by the way, I love that. BetterLife because who doesn't want a better life? Let me just share with you some information about who Randal is. Well, first of all, Randal, thanks for being here and I truly appreciate it because you immediately said yes to this. So, welcome, and thank you so much.

**Randal:** What an honor, Winn. The amazing people that have sat down with you to have these conversations, I'm blown away to even be in the company. So, thank you very much for the privilege to do this. I so look forward to just chatting with you.

**Winn:** Well, it's my absolute pleasure, and I mean that wholeheartedly because I'm always on the hunt for incredible people who have great stories. And, also, not just a great story but they have the credibility behind it. Because, you know, anybody can quote from somebody else's book but if they're not living the information that they're sharing with our audience, you know, they lose that credibility, and I think credibility is huge. Doesn't mean that any of us have mastered any of this, but we're on the path, we're on the journey. And I heard about you from our very good friend, Tim Storey, and so let's just do a shoutout to the incredible Tim Storey for introducing us. How long have you known Tim?

**Randal:** Winn, I met Tim Storey all the way back in 1988 when he was a guest minister at my father's church. And I'll be honest: a lot of the ministers that came through the church, I was goofing around on the back row with my friends and we would get drug out by our ears by the ushers. I mean, literally, that happened how many times. They would separate us, they'd put one in—anyway, when Tim was speaking, I liked his style. I liked his content. It was powerful and engaging and funny. And then afterwards, he was just as powerful, engaging, and funny and we became friends right out of the gate.

And he took me under his wing as a young man who was a little slightly—my mom would say rebellious. I would say just curious. Depends on who you ask.

Winn: I believe your mom. I'm gonna go with Mom.

Randal: No. No! *[Laughs]* So, then I started working with Tim, and we became the best of friends, since '88. A lot of the countries that I've been to, it was with Tim. And we would take these pictures, Winn, and we would just take—all the way before selfies. I would hold the camera out like this, and we'd take pictures wherever we were. And we're just like, "Somebody's gotta do it." You know, that kind of thing. So, we've been buddies all the way since then, and I've had a wonderful education from that man.

Winn: That's great. That's great. Well, Tim, straight up, thanks for helping make this happen. So, let me share with you all a bit more information on who Randal is. Spanning more than 30 years, 30 countries, 40 states as an author, speaker, and coach, Randal continues to empower people to understand how to break bad habits and build better ones to enjoy life, not endure it. Boy, that's a mouthful and we're gonna jump into that. Randal is the author of two books, including *Builders and Blockers of Life* and his signature curriculum, which is titled the BetterLife Course. With a reputation for simple stories and workable strategies for overcoming obstacles and enhancing the everyday, Randal enjoys doing what he loves in conducting BetterLife sessions with private clients and public groups. Whether through personal coaching, leadership training, church ministry, or addiction counseling, Randal has a knack for connecting with a wide range of ages and backgrounds with infectious humor and practical instruction. So, you know, thanks for sending that over for me to share with our audience. How about if we just jump right into your story? Because you shared with me that you are three generations of ministers prior to you coming along.

Randal: Yeah. It's, you know, that's one of those funny things that, with a dad as a pastor, a grandpa who was a minister and missionary, a great-grandfather who was the same minister and missionary, and people would ask me growing up in and around church and church events, because the church was my playground. They would say, "Are you gonna be a minister like your daddy when you grow up?" And I would say, "Heck, no." That was my standard response, Winn: "Heck, no." And one of the main reasons why, it had nothing to do with my dad or I didn't like church or whatever because it was, it literally was my playground. That's where I met some of my best friends that I still have to this day, including Tim. That I just didn't think that I could do it like my dad did. I knew I couldn't do it like my grandpa. I didn't know my great-grandpa. And I also didn't wanna be like the guys on TV that, you know, with huge hair and rings and teeth and all that sort of stuff. And I was like, "I can't do it like that." Well, when I finally got on track and said, "Okay. I know there's a God, and I know you have a plan for me. So, whatever it is, I'm open to it." I felt like I was impressed with the reality that, *Okay. I'm not asking you to be like others. I want you to be you.* And that was when I said, "Okay. I can be me." Because I think this is a great philosophy for all of us to think about. And

I don't even know where it came from. Well, probably divine inspiration, but I said, "Okay. I can be me because I'm actually really good at being me. Actually, I'm a professional me, and I'll go even one better. I'm the best doggone me that ever walked the face of the earth. So, I'm gonna go ahead and go with that." And I felt like that was the direction to go because then, through the years, Winn, of being in all these different situations of being in service of people, I can't imagine my dad in some of the settings that I've been. I was on tour with a band that I was working with. One of the members was getting sober, and I was working with him. And I was laying in my bunk on the tour bus somewhere in America in the middle of the night, and I remember thinking, *I can't imagine my dad being on tour with a rock band and that being his mission.* You know?

Winn: [Laughs] Right.

Randal: So, I get to be myself. And again, you know, Tim gets referred to a lot because he has had such influence through the years. But that's one of the things that Tim has always done is he's gotten into places that ordinarily ministers wouldn't go. Someone who has a moniker of a minister or that kind of thing, that don't usually end up in those places. And that, by osmosis of being around him for all these years, that's happened to me as well.

Winn: I think that that plays into the message I was sharing earlier about having credibility.

Randal: Yeah.

Winn: Because we all know those ministers, we all know those religious organizations that do not have the credibility. And I have a feeling—I don't know why I have this feeling, maybe because I'm telling my story—that a lot of people listening to this were beat up by organized religion or left to not be very trusting. There was a quote that I loved, and I remember hearing this and it just rang so true for me. And it was this: Preach the word of God, and when necessary, use words.

Randal: Yeah. Right?

Winn: Meaning it should be through our example. It should be the lives that we live. It's how—and you said the word over and over again: being of service to other people. That's true ministry.

Randal: Right. It is. And that—I love to turn a good phrase, and so I've said this. I'm one of those people that felt beat up by religion, Winn, having been around it. And so that apprehension that I had against anything of following what I call the family business, because three generations before me and then, you know, do I go into it? I didn't want it because I saw the religious aspect. So, I've embraced this statement, and I say—I've been known to make up words, just so you know—that I've embraced this phrase: I'm not religious, but I am *relatious*. I'm relatious. A relationship to God, like connection with God. Not like, *Okay, here's your list of dos and here's your list of don'ts. If you do the dos and you don't do the don'ts. And if you venture outside of those dos and*

*those don'ts, then we're gonna beat you over the head like whack-a-mole.* You know, God's up in heaven, like, playing whack-a-mole with people. Like, no. I don't see it that way. I see it as a loving God who has a plan for everybody's life. Why wouldn't you want that? One who sits above the universe and knows everything intimately? Yeah, I'll go ahead and take your intel, your insight into my life. So, that's—I totally agree. I think that listeners that hear this, that have been beat up or have had horrible experiences, there is the possibility that if you'll take time and go, "You know what? Maybe what everybody else has told me, that's been their view." And it's been—whether it's religious or they've got some skewed version of religion or whatever, maybe people that take time and go, "Well, let me find out for myself." And that's what I had to do. Find out for yourself because it's a very, very personal thing. So, in that realization, then you find what we've mentioned before about loving the skin that you're in. That what is in you and being who you are, God designed you that way, so go ahead and be it.

Winn: Do you, by any chance, have any statistics on the generation of today? And I don't really know what age group or generation I'm referring to, but I'll just put that out there. Any statistics on how this generation is embracing or not embracing organized religion? And perhaps maybe there's the swing more towards spirituality, where the worshiping has nothing to do with being at an altar or being inside of a building. I mean, that's the first part of my question. But then the second part is, your experience as a minister. Just wanting to know where has your experience with religion and ministry led you, and what do you find now as your ministry, so to speak?

Randal: Well, thankfully, there are some good statistics that I've heard recently about how—we'll go with Gen Z. Right now, that Gen Z has had a huge uptick in returning to the houses of worship. That there's the largest growing demographic of people going to church these days is this huge uptick of Gen Z going, because what I've read about it, it says that they're kind of tired of, okay, just anything goes. And they actually like some level of structure and pointing to a specific rather than it's all just out there and whatever, but having a point to a specific place and place where they can go to worship. So, that is a new thing in the last couple of years. And one of the things is that I saw some statistics about how youth mental health has really hit a challenging place, and one of the reasons is the pandemic aftermath.

Winn: Right.

Randal: Of all of the stress that was put on younger people to try to navigate. Well, I mean, all of us, the entire world. Nobody knew what in the world was going on to begin with and what the situation was, but especially in youth. And so, one of the ways that that has manifested is in young people going back to church. And so, I think that is a phenomenal situation to see that they're finding, maybe like me, if I can throw my term out there again, the *relatious* aspect of connection to God, which is the most personal aspect. So, my connection into serving people and being in the family business has taken different routes, of course. One of the challenges that I saw is people struggling with addiction

and the heartbreaking challenge of battling—and addiction, not just substances. There's addictive behaviors and, you know, whether it's gambling or sex or shopping or relationship. Just all these different things. The different serial emotions that are in the negative patterns. So, having seen that up close and personal with friends and family members that lost the battle, I'll tell you one that really was one of those things that really shook me was when Tim's brother passed away, and he had battled through the years with addiction. And that was one of those things of seeing someone who was this bright shining light, Randy. That he had, he was the funniest dude. Just always had a quick comment, a quick wit, and he lost his battle. That was something that really obviously hit Tim hard. It hit me hard. I have other family members in seeing that. And one of the aspects about the BetterLife course that I had written that and I'd been teaching that at different leadership seminars and youth camps and church ministries and that sort of thing. I started to see how what we had went hand in glove with the recovery industry. And that pushed me into getting certified as an addiction counselor. Having a background in pastoral counseling and that degree and so forth, it went hand in glove with addiction counseling. So, I went and I became certified in all of that as an addiction specialist and counseling and all that. So, that has led me into a lot of different venues of working with folks that are breaking out of the bad habits. And the book, *Builders and Blockers of Life*, is that, of taking what has been, you know, the old terminology of stumbling block into steppingstone, utilizing where you've been instead of cursing and cussing your story. Like, no. It's your story. You might as well embrace it. Might as well utilize it. Might as well then utilize it to step up on it and see life from a different perspective. And so, that's a God-given gift that I have: to be a great listener to where people are at. And then in the words and the descriptives, then to be able to ask the right questions to help us to find some clarity to break out, break into new.

Winn: So, speaking of embracing one's story.

Randal: Mm-hmm.

Winn: Is some of that your story? Because oftentimes, you find that. That somebody who has struggled with something or gone through some life experience, now all of a sudden, they have a passion for helping others go through that. So, somebody who has experienced a battle with cancer, as they come out on the other side of that, of course they have a huge passion for people going through that and raising money and awareness for cancer research. So, is that part of your story, that you've experienced some of this stuff and therefore you're like, *Okay, not only do I have personal experience but now I really, really can see inside people's hearts and souls, and I wanna be there for them.*

Randal: Yeah. I personally have not been addicted. That has not been my story. I'm what they call, in the circles and 12-step circles, they call me a normie. And a normie means that you didn't have the story of battling a specific substance or that sort of thing. But living and having experience vicariously up close and

personal with different people that gave me a heart. I'll tell you one. Winn, I really felt another tinge of why that population speaks to my heart. One of my close friends, Sonny Arguinzoni Jr., his father founded a ministry called Victory Outreach International. And Victory Outreach International was founded in 1967 in South Central LA where Sonny's father, his name is Sonny as well, Sonny Arguinzoni Sr. He came out of New York and he was a heroin addict and he was on the streets and, of his own admission, would rob old ladies for money to be able to get and feed his habit. Well, he came to Christ because one of his other friends got freed from a life of gangs and drugs and so forth. And so, his friend brought him into this place called Teen Challenge. And so, Sonny Arguinzoni Sr. then had a heart, like, *I'm gonna do the same thing*. So, he was in South Central LA. So, he and his wife started bringing people in off of the street to help them just—they didn't know what to do for them, so guys that wanted to kick habits and women that were coming out of prostitution, they just started bringing them into their home because they didn't know what else to do. So, out of that birthed then private rehabilitation homes and a church and a ministry and so forth. So that, then from 1967 to now, there's in between three and three-fifty of homes, men's and women's homes and churches around the world that bring people off the street. I give you that background to say it was a world conference of all these people from all over the world that came to this Victory Outreach Conference. I was sitting there, and they had this choir, Winn, that of over a thousand voices of former gang members, drug addicts, prostitutes, and every other kind of situation that they had come through the men's and the women's rehabilitation homes. And they ended on the song, "To God be the glory. To God be—" and I felt, like, so impressed at that particular moment. Like, *You're going to help them*. And from that time on, I have gone into those men's and women's recovery homes and worked with them on a weekly basis to challenge them to see beyond where they're at, to love the skin that they're in, and then to think. And this is the question I ask a lot, Winn, when I'm sitting there and you see guys that had just gotten there, like, the day before or something. You know, two days ago. And they had the choice: either go to prison or go to jail or you can go to this home. You choose. They're go, "I'll go to that home." You know? And so, they're sitting there and they're, like, you know, arms folded and, like, mad dogging me down, and I'll go, "Okay. Let me ask everybody a question." You know, they're sitting around in this home. "Let me ask everybody a question. What will it look like—I want you to really go there in your eye. What will it look like when your dreams come true?" And a lot of them look like this. You know? They just have this blank stare on their face like, like, "I don't know. I've never thought about that. What will it look like when my dreams come true? Never thought about it." And my challenge is, "It is your life. Maybe it's time you think about it." And so, to see then, going back week after week, seeing the transformation that takes place in people from, like, hopeless to hopeful to anticipation. And I've heard so many testimonials through the years of people coming back and say, "I had—" Because I would then have them close their eyes. In a lot of sessions, I'll have people close

their eyes. And, like, “Just imagine something you've always thought would be cool. What would it look like if that was reality? How would it feel? Who are you sharing it with? Where are you when it's happening? What are you doing?” So, I've had people come back and say, “I had that idea when I was in the home. I had that idea when I was coaching with you. I had that idea when you challenged me” to see beyond where they're at. And that—there's nothing like hearing people that I saw with hopelessness in their eyes to then have a fire and have a purpose and be headed in a direction that then now it's not just about them, it's about who else can they impact because of what was implanted in them. So, there's nothing like that. There's nothing that this world has that can satisfy, like, seeing your contribution to someone else actually landing and then them running with it.

Winn: I heard you say that our minds are either in rewind or on fast forward. Can you quickly comment on what you mean by that? And then I'm gonna jump into the BetterLife model here.

Randal: Yeah. Well, on the heels of the heart, remember, I know you're an eighties music fan, Winn, as am I.

Winn: Big fan.

Randal: Remember, Roxette? *Listen to your heart when it's calling for you. Listen to—* Remember that one? Okay.

Winn: Oh, yeah. I ain't gonna sing, though, but I remember it.

Randal: Okay. Well, every now and I don't know what comes over me, but I know I can at least carry a tune and I don't murder it too bad, usually. So, I'll just venture out and go ahead and do it. But the “listening to your heart” thing, what's in your heart to help other folks comes out from pain, largely. And when you think about, okay, that your mind goes either rewind or fast forward, I brought that up because of that's cassette-era thoughts. Right? So, you and I are familiar with the cassette era when, you know, people today, you know, younger, like, what is a cassette? Yeah. You wanted to hear your favorite song again. You didn't just hit, you know, skip back. You had to rewind that tape about, you know, 30, 40 seconds to rewind your favorite song, or you can fast forward because you don't like this song. So, your mind, the oversimplification of the most magnificent gray matter, this magnificent thing that's in between our ears, that you're either forward thinking or you're rewinding. You live in the past or imagining the future. And a lot of times, I mean, and that's a valuable thought process to think about, *Okay, I'm either rewinding or I'm fast forwarding*. But a lot of times when people were either living in the past or were living in the future, we forget to live in the present because the only moment that you're in control of is the one that's right now. The ones that are in the rewind, the behind us, can't do anything about it except make peace with it. Decide that it is what it is. Now what? That's in the rewind phase. Fast forward is, where do I wanna go from here? The question I ask so many times, what will it look like when your dreams come true? What does your better life look like? That's fast forward. And the ability to think that

and have a vision for the future is, to me, it's only gonna happen if, in the present, we embrace the now that allows us to set up for the future. So, rewinding or fast forwarding, yeah, a lot of times, we get stuck in rewind. And, like, we've mashed the button down. Like, maybe it happened to you like it happened to me: you mashed the button to rewind down too hard and it gets stuck. And you're in a loop of these old memories. You're in a loop of old thoughts. You're in this rewind, rewind, rewind that, you know, like the refresh on the top of your computer. You keep hitting that, and you're refreshing. And even though it happened 13 years ago, it feels like 13 minutes ago because you've rewound so often there, and it still feels real. U of M did a research, University of Michigan did some research about how the feelings that we have—let's say, if you went through a breakup, went through a loss, went through, you know, an absentee parent or, you know, however you've lost, that they say that that pain of loss that we feel that is just an emotion of, like, rejection or abandonment. We feel like it's just an emotion—it actually has the same sensation affecting our brains as an actual heart attack.

Winn: Wow.

Randal: That when you feel that pain, if you're living in the rewind phase, you're pain, pain, pain over and over again. I'm working with a client of mine now. He and his wife are butting heads largely. He doesn't want to end it. She wants to end it. And I've had these emergency sessions with him over the past little while where he's like, "I think I'm having a heart attack." No, you're not having a heart attack. You're just feeling the pain. You're literally feeling the pain of the emotion of all of that. So, living in that rewind phase, a lot of times, then we forget to obviously live in the present or even think about the future. So, learning to harness the power of your God-given imagination to imagine what is possible. What will your better life look like? How will your dreams come true? That's all within the ability that you and I have to, as the old phrase—and I saw that you interviewed at one point Dr. Daniel Amen, that change your mind, change your life. If you change your mind, you change your life. Nothing happens unless first a thought. So, start there.

Winn: And that idea, unless you change your thoughts, you know, that not only applies to ourselves, that we can't make any of those needed changes without changing our mind first, but that also, means that we can do that for other people. Because sometimes we can hold a thought, we can hold a space for people, a belief system where we see their greatness. Maybe they don't see it yet, but in our minds, we have thoughts, we have belief in them that maybe they don't have for themselves. And as you're talking about this pain, I also, heard you say in an interview that self-discovery is often born through hellish pain. And that reminded me when I heard that, that reminded me of another mentor of mine who said that a nervous breakdown can actually be a very spiritual awakening. You know, something that we think is so tragic: "Oh my God, this is a horrible breakdown." And she's like, "Oh my gosh, but this could be where you're finally on your knees and you're at a



point in life where everything is just gonna get better from here if you make that decision.” See it differently.

Randal: That is—I was gonna say unfortunately, but also, fortunately that this concept of your worst day can become your best day.

Winn: Mm-hmm.

Randal: And that's not something that I've just read, Winn. I've lived it. I have walked through the dark night of the soul with having walked through divorce. I got married young. My wife decided we got married too young. I said, “Yeah, but we're married.” She didn't see it that way. I walked through the pain of that rejection, that abandonment, that separation. I walked through that. And then just in the past few years, I've had to walk through my wife of 20 years, a sudden illness, and losing her.

Winn: Wow.

Randal: At 50 years old.

Winn: Wow.

Randal: Walking through that pain of just unimaginable loss and the weight of the dark night of the soul, the valley of the shadow, literally, of death. And experiencing that, walking through those feelings of grief and mourning and feeling the weight of that. And one of the catalysts of the BetterLife course and the formation of it was initially that, years ago, the walking through divorce. And, I mean, I grew up, I had a good childhood. I really did. I had a mom and dad that were together. It was a wonderful privilege. I know that that's sometimes very out of the ordinary, and people can't relate to that. I had that. My mom and dad were good to me, and I had friends and all of that. It's like, “Oh, well, good for you.” No. I mean, it's my story. I mean, that's what I have. But I didn't really know rejection and abandonment and that level of pain until my wife goes, “Yeah. I'm out.” I'm like, woah. I got a—in one fell swoop, a big fat dose of rejection, abandonment pain like I've never known before all at once. And I thought, at that point, what I was struggling with, I thought, *I know that I know there are other people that are like me that are walking through these pains.* And so I decided back then, one of the ways that I'm different than my father before me was he was very more tight-lipped. I'm still a private guy, but a large portion of life gets lived publicly when you do what we do for—interaction with people. I'm still a pretty private guy, but one thing that I've learned: that the most effective story that you can tell is your own. I'm a reader. I love amazing books. One of the things I heard you and Paul Lambert talking about, which I highly recommend to your listeners to go back and listen to the conversation that you and Paul Lambert had. I so enjoyed that because I so enjoy Paul Lambert personality as I was telling you before. But one of them was, Shawn Achor's book, *The Happiness Advantage*.

Winn: Mm-hmm.

Randal: Of taking what you deal with and then and changing your mind and changing the view of it. So, walking through that pain of divorce years ago, that helped

me formulate, *Okay. I know there are people like me that are walking through these dark nights. How can I help them elevate and get out of that?* And then walking through death. I didn't have a real frame of reference for grief. Like, when someone would lose someone, my heart, you know, "I'm sorry for your loss." And you mean it, but now having walked through that, man, I'll never again in my life will I ever have anyone that say they lost somebody and me be anything less than, "Hey. Can I do anything for you? How can I, you know, I wanna help you," and so forth. Because I feel like walking through stuff like that, I got a—unfortunately or fortunately, depends on how you look at it—I got a quadruple PhD in hurt. You know? That pain and walking through the hellish experiences that allows us to be able to relate to people in their hurt. And dealing with folks in addictions, dealing with folks in crisis, because that's largely in personal coaching that people come to me, that they're in a crisis. Like, I was mentioning the guy that I've had a couple emergency sessions with recently, that he's, you know, trying to figure out this thing, a divorce and so forth, is that helping people realize there is hope on the other side of it. You can walk through this. And my wife that is in heaven now, she was in the medical profession for 27 years, so I wasn't in the hospitals but I heard all the stories every day about the interactions of people in the hospitals. And one thing about doctors and her interaction with the different professionals and stuff, that it cannot be underestimated or overstated the value of hope in somebody's situation. That if someone who, you know, has hope and it looks like a hopeless situation but they have hope, then many times the hope is more powerful than any drug that that can be administered for them to be able to make it through.

Winn: And by the way, all of us can offer that. Right now, we're recording this in the month of June, and it's not gonna be released in June. This will be released later in the year, but June happens to be Men's Health Awareness Month. May was Mental Health Awareness Month. And so, there's a lot of focus. We had an event last month in the month of May during Mental Health Awareness Month, and I brought on, Kevin Hines as a speaker and his whole message of "be here tomorrow." You know, Kevin Hines, his incredible story of jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge in a suicide attempt, and, my gosh, those of you who don't know that story, please look it up and follow him, and gosh, he's traveling the world right now with one intention and that is spreading hope. And I get it that, okay, your credit cards are maxed out, but is your ability to provide hope for somebody, is that maxed out as well? Did that well run dry, or is there something that we could do to offer and to extend that hand, to extend that offer of hope? Back to Tim Storey. I love his message. You know, when you're going through hell, what do you do? Keep going.

Randal: Right.

Winn: Keep going. And Tim jokes about how people, once they're going through hell, they just set up camp. "I'm just gonna stay here in hell for a while and get a whole bunch of people to join me and to agree with me that life is hell." Rather than, "You know what? I'm going through hell. I'm gonna keep going

because there is hope, and I will seek out that hope through mentors and podcasts and friends. And then I will also offer that hope to other people.” So, great message.

Randal: You know, that is the reality. To offer hope to someone else starts by you being hopeful yourself. And there's nobody that can make you do that. You decide to do it. And so, back to the way that walking through the valley of the shadow of death with my wife. I embraced what I call—and I had always recommended this to other people in different situations—and I call it “the one strategy.” The one strategy is, as interaction with recovery for all these years, something that has seeped into our social life and culture is the statement “one day at a time,” right?

Winn: Mm-hmm.

Randal: How do you do it? One day at a time. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Right? So, one day at a time is great. Great. It saved millions of people's lives, I would imagine, by them embracing that philosophy. But you know what? Sometimes a day is a long time

Winn: Mm-hmm.

Randal: Especially when you feel like you really don't have any hope. So, the one strategy backed it down from one day at a time to one choice at a time.

Winn: Mm-hmm.

Randal: One choice at a time. Then—and for me walking through the pain of there were many days where I don't really wanna get out of bed. What's—why? Why should I get up? What difference is it gonna make? And just take one step. Okay? Can you just take a shower? Yeah. I can get up and take a shower. Yeah. I guess I'll make coffee, the elixir that fuels life.

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Randal: I guess I'll take that step. Yeah. I guess I can. And so, one choice at a time. And if you string together one choice plus another choice plus another choice plus another choice, after a while so—and if they're better choices, Winn, better plus better plus better, and then you look back and go, “I'm getting a better life. I'm building a better life course.” Because the life course is the sociological definition of our lives. The stages that you go through from birth until death is life course. So, a better life course is the steps that you take to improve the quality of your life. And how do you do that? One choice at a time.

Winn: I wanna jump into your BetterLife course, and I'm feeling the need to interject. Not that I haven't shared this with my listeners before, but I feel the need to interject that none of this comes natural to me. Happiness does not come naturally to me. It's something that I have to work on every single day. Now, I happen to be one of the happiest people that I know, but it's certainly not by accident. It's because, as you said, there was a choice, and I had hope. Or even when I didn't have hope, I was surrounded by people, whether it was

friends and family members or mentors that I sought out. I'm not following certain influencers who aren't selling hope. I'm not following them for whatever it is that they're selling. I'm following influencers and mentors and teachers and leaders and friends who are there to sell hope. So, when Kevin Hines says, "Be here tomorrow." Okay. I got that. I got it. Be here tomorrow. Be here tomorrow. And I'll replay that in my mind over and over again, and I'll share that wisdom with other people. I get it that you're going through hell right now. I get it that this is painful. Just be here tomorrow. Let's move towards that. And your BetterLife curriculum So, again, it's not just a book. This isn't just in theory. You actually have this course that you're walking people through, and it's a four-tier progressive learning. Correct?

Randal: It is. Yes. And those tiers are in regard to what we talked about: rewind and fast forward. Number one, rewind. Think about making peace with the past. So, when I take that step to make peace with the past, that's the one thing you can do with the past. None of us have a time traveling DeLorean like Doc Brown in *Back to the Future*. We can't go back and do anything about it other than make peace with it. So, deciding to make peace with the past, then it goes into enjoying the present. How do I embrace the life that I have today, even if it sucks? Even if I'm currently living in a house in Suckville, how do I embrace today? And then when we learn to embrace today, then you can start to design your future. And after that, living your dreams.

Winn: So, this is course one, which, again, making peace with the past.

Randal: Yes.

Winn: Asking the question: what's holding you back?

Randal: Yes. Because, honesty? I'll tell you what, Winn. I remember the first time I sat in a circle of an AA meeting and being a part of that. As part of the curriculum of becoming an addiction counselor, you know, you gotta be in it and around it. So, I remember the first time of sitting in there, actually with a friend. I went with her, and she was a part of it. And I sat there, and the stories that they told. I mean, I'm looking around like, *Did they just say that out loud? Did they just tell on themselves of that horrific story that I just heard?* And I was blown away by the level of honesty of people admitting where they've been and what had happened and what they had done and so forth. And I thought, *Wow*. But, you know, as shocking as it was to me initially, it was also extraordinarily refreshing.

Winn: Mm-hmm.

Randal: Because one of the things where, back to what you and I were talking about earlier about religion. Religion is like, *Here. Here's a mask. Put on Mr. Perfect mask and act like you're perfect and do the perfect song and dance and so forth and all of that*. Well, these folks were not trying to put on a mask. They were like, *No. Here I am. Warts and all, flaws, failures, all that sort of stuff*. And I thought, *You know what? If that was the case in a lot of the religious*

*circles, where there was that level of honesty, we'd have a whole other connotation.*

Winn: I agree. Because a lot of people think what can keep people from going there, i.e., sharing the ugliness of it all, is perhaps the judgment or a lot of people have this belief system that people who are addicted are living under some bridge someplace. Several years ago, I interviewed a woman who was Miss America. So, she became Miss America and then a couple of months later was busted for cocaine use. So, there she is. She's sitting in jail. She's Miss America and she's sitting in jail. Of course, I joked with her, and I said, "Were you wearing the crown in jail? Did you wear the crown there?" Right?

Randal: Mm-hmm.

Winn: And she said the reason why she wanted to do that interview with me and why she's so vocal and honest and transparent about her addiction and her recovery was because she wanted to change what people viewed as the face of addiction. Look at this face. This is the face of Miss America, and this was also the face of addiction. I mean, it was just phenomenal, her story, and I just love—I'm so in awe of people who can share about how ugly it got for them because I truly do believe that that offers hope. So, when you talk about this, again, in course one, making peace with the past, you talk about the identity crises, uncovering the fear of being who you really are. That's powerful.

Randal: It really is that the skin that you're in, that's the one that you get. So, embracing that, the fear of being who you really are. Maybe you've never been in an environment where you felt accepted for who you really are. And that has caused you to put up these walls and to put on masks. And the identity that like, *Well, wait. Who am I?* So, many people grew up in situations that in the home that were volatile in varying degrees, whether mom and dad were fighting or there was violence in the home or there was inappropriate behavior of whatever kind in the home, and they didn't feel, like, *I feel comfortable*. So, one of the things that happens is that, especially as little kids, since from zero to six, they say that those are the most formative years of our lives, that we learn more in that period of time than we do the whole rest of our lives combined, which is amazing to think about. But people adopt coping mechanisms for dealing with pain.

Winn: Mm-hmm.

Randal: And the coping mechanisms then become part of their identity, whether it's truly them or not, but they're just trying to find a way to get around. I remember hearing Russell Brand, the actor from all these great movies through the years and who very publicly struggled with addiction. And he was talking about how when he first came into recovery and was attempting to get sober in his life, he said he sat down with a therapist who was helping him work the program, and he described how, at a young age, what had happened to him and then how he started drinking and drugs and all kinds of behaviors at a young age. And he got through telling a large portion of his story to this therapist, and she said, you know, and all the things that resulted

since those things that had happened, and her response to him was, “Good for you. Good for you.” And he was incredulous about it. Like, *Good for good for you, mate*. You know? I’m not gonna try and do his accent. You know? It’s one of a kind, but it’s like, *Good for you? What do you mean good for you?* And she said, “Regardless of all those things that happened to you, you did what you needed to do to survive, and now you’re here.” That’s always stuck with me. You did what you needed to do to survive. So, the journey of self-discovery, of allowing you to be you, is something—nobody can make you do it. But when you decide—and that’s really, I mean, it sounds overly simplistic, Winn, but to the point of what you said about your own life, “I’m not just born with happiness.” And that used to be the school of thought. Before positive psychology came along, they said—you know, about 35 years ago, they said that used to be, like, you’re born with a set point of happiness, and that’s gonna be it for the rest of your life. Either you’ve got it or you don’t. Right? But then positive psychology blew that out of the water. There are things that you can do. There are changes that you can make to your thought process. And then, like, books like James Clear’s book, *Atomic Habits*. And how do you do it? You know, what we’ve just said: one choice at a time. Use frequency and repetition. You’re talking yourself into, you’re working yourself into. *I’m gonna hope at least for right now. I’m gonna not stay in my pain. I’m gonna actually take a look that there could be something further ahead in the future*. And that those things that—sometimes people get stuck in those old behaviors. Well, okay. This is a phrase that I used to think is the dumbest phrase that I’ve ever heard in the history of mankind when I first started to hear it, Winn, and it was, “It is what it is.” People say, “It is what—” and I thought, *Are you freaking kidding me? What do you mean it is what it is? Of course, it is what it is*. But then, upon further review, I thought, *You know what? That’s actually brilliant*. Because that’s putting the past and accepting it. This thing is what it is. It has occurred. But, unfortunately, a lot of times when people say, “It is what it is,” they say it in this tone: “Well, it is what it is.” Like, *What are you gonna do about it? There’s nothing I can do about it*. But I’ve added, instead of a period behind “it is what it is”, I put a comma. It is what it is, comma, now what? Question mark.

Winn: There you go.

Randal: It is what it is, now what? What can I do? What can you do to change it? And the possibilities are limitless.

Winn: I want to jump into course two. I can’t believe this is going so fast for us.

Randal: I know. It’s flying.

Winn: I know. Let’s get through course two, course three, course four.

Randal: Yeah. Good luck.

Winn: Okay. So, course two is enjoying the present. How can you embrace today? And you talk about a gratitude adjustment, and I’m curious to know what your daily routine is, that gratitude adjustment. I mean, you hear it from so many

people, from famous people like Oprah, but, you know, everyday people. *How did you survive that? How are you getting through this? How are you continuing to move forward?* Gratitude. I have this habit. I have this routine of gratitude. Gratitude. Talk to us about that.

Randal: Well, mentioned it a minute ago that the positive psychology aspect. Right? I've read, I don't know how many books about it. You know, Shawn Achor's book being one. We mentioned that earlier. *The Happiness Advantage*, which is a phenomenal one. But in literally every one, like, you know, *The Happiness Project* from Gretchen Rubin or *The How of Happiness* by Sonja Lyubomirsky, however you say her name; I'm not sure. But all of them, every one I've read, they have a lot of different recommendations for different things that you can do for, you know, finding happiness. But in every single one, gratitude is included. Every one has gratitude. So, choosing gratitude is this aspect of the repetitive nature of looking for good things. One of the things that is in the recovery realm that, when I was going through, what was it, my internship in the Newport area down the street from you at one of the facilities there, then it was introduced. Okay. The gratitude practice is, okay, the three G's of today: What's good about today? What's great about today? What am I grateful for today?

Winn: Got it.

Randal: What's good about today? What's great about today? What am I grateful for? And the more the repetition of that, and I've done it myself. That was one of the first times where I was presented with that. You don't have to be in a 12-step program to decide to look for things that you're grateful for. I remember reading about one man that, it was recommended to him that because he was dealing with a severe depression, that he start just three things a day. Three things that you're grateful for today. Look for things. It can be the fact that I'm looking at a MacBook Pro computer right now. I'm glad I have a MacBook. It can be, I'm glad that the sky is blue today. It can be as ambiguous as that or it can be as specific as, *I'm so grateful that, you know, my sister never gave up on me*. I'm so—whatever it may be. And then it was recommended to this particular man, I remember that it always stuck with me from very early on, that he included his daughter. And I know you have a beautiful 13-year-old daughter that, your Taylor Swiftie daughter that—

Winn: Big time.

Randal: But he included her in the practice. And so, they would sit down every night before they went to bed, and they would do the three G's and how, in a very short order amount of time, his depression was no longer even a factor in his life, and it became a part. So, start. Start somewhere. Start today. Start with two, you know, one thing. *Well, Randal, you don't know where I'm at in life. Randal and the Winn, you guys can talk about it all you want, but you don't understand where I'm at in life*. No, I may not know exactly where you're at, but I do know the things that can help you get out of where you're at if you don't like where you're at, and gratitude is a major one.

Winn: Also, in course two of BetterLife, you say the order in the ordinary, the unsexy secret of success. So, real quick on that because I gotta get to two other courses here.

Randal: Yeah. Order in the ordinary is that life is full of maintenance. You gotta change the oil in your car. You gotta, you know, change the filters in your air conditioner. You've gotta pay the bills. You've gotta do the laundry. You've gotta fill the fridge. You've gotta pick up the kids from school. You've gotta pay the bills. All of these ordinary things, right? Well, everything that has ever happened in anybody's life in history, which is a humongous statement, anything that's been extraordinary started out on an ordinary day.

Winn: Hmm.

Randal: An ordinary day. Doing what you're meant to do. Things that are in front of you. Do what's in front of you. Pay attention to the person in front of you. Pay attention to the task in front of you. Do it to the best of your ability. There's a verse in the Bible that says, do what you're doing as unto God, not as unto man, and you'll always be doing—like, okay. This is the best that I can do. Order in the ordinary can lead to extraordinary. If we're not doing what we're meant to do, then you're not gonna be where you're supposed to be and meet who you're supposed to meet. There's just—extraordinary comes out of the ordinary, and it is indeed—I like the terminology, don't you?—the unsexy secret. Disciplines.

Winn: Yeah. I love that. I had a good mentor talk to me about the word *discipline*, and a lot of people hate that word *discipline*. That's a terrible thing. And that mentor is like, gosh, embrace the discipline in your life because that means that you're willing to do the things that you maybe don't enjoy doing, but those things lead you to what you really want. I don't really enjoy going to the gym five days a week, but my gosh, I love the energy that it produces for me because, again, I'm a 66-year-old dad with a 13-year-old daughter. I need energy. So, I need that. And in course three, you talk about watch your mouth. What do you mean by that?

Randal: I call it the power tool that's right under your nose. Everybody has the power tool that's right under our nose, and we can either use it for—one of the famous proverbs—that death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat the fruit of it. So, what does that mean? It means that nothing gets done without communication. And communication that comes out of our mouths, should we be speaking health or unhealth? Should we be speaking life or death? Should we be speaking negative or positive? *Oh, that's, oh, positive thinking and all that.* Yes. Positive is much better than negative. Are there some things that need to be said that you've gotta relay the facts and these are the negative things? Yes. But for the majority of our lives, it's good for us to create our own environment by speaking positive, faith-filled rather than fear-filled types of words and subject matter. You know? That if you can create an environment—because if you think of the



power of your words, that—just the tone. I don't know if you remember the old movie, *Three Men and a Baby*. Remember that with Tom Selleck and—

Winn: Yeah.

Randal: Steve Guttenberg and all that? They were raising this little girl with the three of them, right? And I think it was Tom Selleck. He was putting the little girl to sleep, and he was reading *Sports Illustrated* to her. “And the champ took a right hook to the face, and down he went. And the count was on,” and he's reading *Sports Illustrated* to this little girl, trying to put her to sleep in this lullaby type voice. And the other guy goes—Ted Danson was the other guy. He says, “Are you reading *Sports Illustrated* to her to put her to sleep?” He says, “I am.” He says, “I found out that it's not always just what you say. It's how you say it.”

Winn: That's great.

Randal: And that's the truth! I always remember that example. Watch your mouth. How you say it, you can create an atmosphere that's positively charged or negatively charged. Imagine if I talk like this the whole time [*in a gruff voice*]. People are gonna turn off in droves. But if we talk positively, whole different story.

Winn: Same words, different tone, different purpose.

Randal: Right. Watch your mouth.

Winn: Course four says live your dreams. How do you maintain momentum? And, one of the things that I pulled from there that I really liked, it was called, “What matters most. Without this, having everything means nothing.” What did you mean by that?

Randal: What has been woven through our entire conversation, listening to your heart from the center of who you are. Be yourself. And experiencing freedom to show who you are because the world only has one of you, and the world needs that one. Everybody else is already taken. And when you're true to your identity, your God-given space that you were made with all these gifts and developed talents and skills and abilities, go ahead and embrace it and express it. And that's where we find that satisfaction. That if all the way back to loving the skin that you're in, every place that you go, you enjoy your own company, man, you're set up for a pretty good experience of life. And all of it starts with a decision. And then it stays with a decision, and then it stands with a decision: I'm gonna do it.

Winn: I love these conversations, and, you know, I always just feel so grateful and—that I have the opportunity to stand on stages and to speak these words. And, of course, you have those people after an hour. They raise their hand. “Oh my gosh. This was great. I need more of this.” You know, “What's the next step?” Listen to this conversation again tomorrow and the day after that and the day after that. Meaning, find those mentors, find those friends who are having these kinds of conversations with you. I can't remember which mentor it is. Maybe is it Tony Robbins who uses the example of, you know, you brush

your teeth every day. Even though you brushed them yesterday, why do you brush them again today? And there are people who spend more time brushing their teeth every day than they spend time programming their hearts, their minds, their souls with these types of conversations. And again, because I work on happiness every single day, I need these voices. In 1988, that was the first time that I ever bought a brand-new car, and it was a beautiful car. Let me tell you. It was a BMW convertible, and this was like my dream car. And when I bought that car, because of advice from mentors prior to that, I made a decision right then and there that I would never listen to music in that car. Even though I love music, I'm a musician myself. It's the first thing that I do when I wake up in the morning is I, before I put on coffee, I put on music. I love music, but that was the best advice that I received is that you're gonna be spending hours a day or hours a week in this car. Make sure that that's your learning space where you're only listening to the voices of teachers and mentors. And I follow through with that. And, man, what a difference it has made. So, to have these kinds of conversations with people like you, Randal, just absolutely mean the world to me.

Randal: Same. Oh, me too. Yeah. The car is a classroom, right?

Winn: Yeah.

Randal: Yeah. It's true. Well, to wrap things up here, and then I'll ask you for a final message. I love the promise or the challenge that you give to people when you're talking about the BetterLife course, you ask people to answer, you know, any of these questions. You know, you feeling stuck, lack of joy, carrying grudges, always tired, have moments of rage, wonder if you really can make it, feel inferior or insecure, constantly critical, unable to forgive and forget, always surrounded by drama. There you go. That's a big one. And all of these can be wakeup calls like, "Yeah, I am always surrounded by drama. Yeah, I am constantly critical." Well, maybe you could take a look at that. And maybe there's other influencers. Maybe your scrolling needs to change because you created an algorithm that is just throwing more drama at you on a regular basis. You watch one of those videos, and 30 more are soon to follow. So, we have a choice here to change that influence. Randal, do you have a final message for our listeners?

Randal: In those questions, if anybody relates to questions like that—feeling critical, surrounded by drama, you know, not sure of your future, feeling inferior, depressed, or any of those sorts of things. I would say in four words: uncover, recover, discover, and take over. What do I mean by that? Life is choice-driven and voice activated. That you choose the life that you're going to live. Just like you made the choice that I'm not going to listen to music in this vehicle, I'm going to listen to mentors. I'm gonna take in information. And the uncovering process: why do I behave the way I behave? There are some things in your past that are contributing to your present, and you may wanna uncover those things so you can recover who you really are. And when you recover some of the things that you've lost about yourself or you didn't even know, maybe because you've never fully expressed yourself. allowed you to

be you, then you start to discover some new things that are possible for you. And if you step into those discovery phases, before long, if you keep it up, repetition and frequency, then you take over a new area, your niche, who you're meant to be, experiencing life to the level that you're meant to live it. And that's a good life. That's, I mean, I call it the better life. So, that's why I'm the BetterLife coach. Like, how do we do it? Like I said, and I think you read it in the bio, that I say this all the time. I'm like the Home Depot of self-improvement. You can do it. We can help.

Winn: That's great. I love that. Randal, thank you so much for this. I know that our listeners are gonna gain so much from this. And, by the way, just everybody, repetition is the key here. So, you know, sir, back to those cassette tapes. I could tell you the names of the people who were on those cassette tapes that I wore out. They were on repeat over and over and over and over again, and that absolutely worked for me. Such a great habit that I developed back then, and I'm envious of the person that I was back then, that I was so driven but, thankfully, a lot of that has stayed with me all these years. And, again, it comes because of people like you. So, thank you so much.

Randal: Thank you, Winn. What a privilege.

Winn: Thanks, Randal.