

# 87. Celebrations: How and Why to celebrate your daily wins

**Vanessa** 00:00

Welcome to the Empowered brain, the only podcast using science, psychology and coaching to help you rewire your brain and create a life you love with your host, Dr. Vanessa Calderon, a Harvard grad physician, master coach, and mother of two.

Hello, sweet friends. Welcome. We are talking about all things celebrations today. If you live in my home, you have heard me sing the celebration song. It goes like this. Celebrate. Yes, yes. Celebrate. Oh, yeah. My daughter and my son and I and now my husband join in. Anytime anyone does anything big or anything small we celebrate in our house. Why? Because it's awesome. Why not? But listen, celebrations don't come naturally. In fact, for many of us, it's a struggle. We're so afraid to celebrate the small things, we think we have to wait for something big and massive to happen to celebrate.

So what we are going to talk about today is why celebrations matter why we need to celebrate the daily small things all of the time, not just the big massive things, and how to do it. So first, let's talk about why we don't why don't we celebrate the small things. Usually, they are thought errors. Again, we were not born thinking we shouldn't be celebrating the small things. But somewhere along the lines as we were growing up as we were being raised, we learned that we need to be careful that if something isn't big, it's not worth of self celebrations that if you celebrate, you might get lazy. If you celebrate, you might stop working. If you celebrate, it might be arrogant, you might be conceited. What I want to ask you right now is why don't you celebrate? When I asked you did you celebrate the small things? And you say no. And I asked you why? Be honest with yourself. What thoughts are coming up for you? What is getting in the way of you celebrating yourself? Be honest with yourself.

Now, I know for, one of the biggest reasons I was afraid to celebrate myself is because I was socialized with a thought error that if I celebrate, I will get lazy. And I laziness in my house growing up in an immigrant house where your parents were working their butts off all the time. Laziness brought a lot of shame to the house. So you do not want to appear lazy. And I was so afraid that if I celebrated myself, I would slow down, I would get lazy, and I would stop working. And I laugh now when I think about it. But that's that stuff is real. So what comes up for you Why don't choose to celebrate what thought errors are getting in the way for you?

Okay, so once you start thinking about why it is that you don't celebrate, and maybe you're like me, you will laugh a little bit about what comes up for you. Because for me, once I started doing the work to undo those thought errors, I realized, wow, they're not just deep-seated, some of them are really silly and don't make any sense at all. So when we think about that, here's one thing I want to ask for you

though, if for you I might get lazy. I want to ask you what does that even mean? What does it mean to be lazy? Because for me, you know, here I am like this dual degree, Harvard grad who excelled in medical school physician leader for two decades. And I had that thought or that I'd get lazy like really? Is it even in my DNA to ever, like being lazy? No, it's not. So whatever that thought is for you, I want to I want you to really define it for yourself, because you will start to undo those thought errors that you have in your brain. Another one that I had is I needed to be humble and not arrogant. And again, it's like what is arrogance? What does that mean for you? Because celebrating yourself is not the same thing as being arrogant. being arrogant, again, is fear-based when you think that you have to be better than someone else. And celebrating doesn't take anything away from anyone else. It just celebrates your greatness.

Alright, so why should we celebrate? So if you've been listening to the podcast, you know, I'm a big nerd and a big scientist and I love the science behind why we do the things that we do and don't. So one of the reasons why celebrations are so important is because it's wiring our brains towards positivity. It's tilting our brains towards positivity. Now, one of the things we do in the journey in our program the journey, which by the way, is an awesome coaching program. If you're looking for a really great professional development program, I want you to go check out Vanessa Calderon, md.com backslash join. It's our journey website. You can take a look and read all about it there. But one of the big things that we do there is we start by always celebrating we intentionally create time to celebrate small ones and big ones, because what I want is I want all of my students to have their brains always wired to look for the good. Now I do this with my kids at home.

Every night when we're sitting down for dinner, we talk about celebrations, what are we celebrating? What are we grateful for? It's that same kind of thing that gets, that happens when we're practicing gratitude. It's the same thing, we're secreting dopamine in our brains when we celebrate. And that's what we want, we want our brains to be wired to look for the good, and look for the things that we're going to be celebrating. Because for my students, for example, they know that every week, we are going to celebrate something, so they've got to come prepared for that. So even the process of looking for what I'm going to celebrate or thinking about that is causing you to release those same hormones in your brain, which is all good stuff.

Okay, so rewrites your brain towards positivity. And we know that if you're coming from positivity versus neutral, or negative, you are more creative, you are more innovative, and you are able to problem solve better. And all of that is good stuff. All of that improves your effectiveness in life and improves your productivity. So celebrations are not just good because it releases feel-good hormones in your body. It also makes you more creative and innovative. And here's one more thing. So if you know about the motivational triad, what's a motivational triad, all human beings are wired to avoid pain, seek pleasure, and use as little amount of effort as possible. And now if you think about that, avoid pain, seek pleasure, release as little amount of effort as possible, that doesn't really lend itself to us doing big, audacious things in the world. Because if we want to avoid pain, we want to avoid the pain of hard work. If we want to seek pleasure, we'd rather just like sit on the couch like a sloth as little effort as possible. That's me like lying down, closing my eyes and doing nothing. That's not me going out and always pushing against my limiting beliefs to do more and create more greatness for the world, be more helpful be more in service. So when we celebrate though, what we are doing, especially when we

celebrate the small daily wins, when we're celebrating the process of our achievement, we start associating all of that process all of that work with pleasure. And again, the motivational triad, avoid pain, seek pleasure, now you're associating the work that you're doing with pleasure. And that is huge. That is your brain wanting to do it more.

So for me when I completely reinvented myself and changed careers, one of the things that I was most afraid of is learning a bunch of new stuff, not because I was afraid of learning, I love learning. But because I was afraid of failure. And one of the things I had to do is celebrate all of the small things. Every time they learned a new thing on tech, every time I learned a new way to market every time, I learned a new way to give a webinar that was more helpful. If I was able to teach something in a simpler way. When I released my podcast, I all of those little things I got to celebrate along the way. And now my brain is wired to celebrate the process. And that is a huge step forward for me. Whereas before, I would only celebrate achievements. And it didn't mean that I wouldn't reach my achievement. It just meant that on my way to achievement, it wasn't very pleasant. I was hard on myself. I was mean, I was angry, I was overwhelmed, I was anxious, I was stressed. And now I'm able to not just achieve my goals, but I'm able to enjoy the process along the way.

Okay, so let's quickly summarize the science behind the celebration and why we should celebrate. Number one, when we celebrate, we rewire our brains toward positivity. So that does two things. Number one, it allows us to start associating the process of achieving our goal. With pleasure, which we want to do, we want to associate the process of achieving our goals with pleasure, instead of looking at that work as something we hate doing as just kind of a means to an end. The second thing it does is when we rewire our brains towards positivity, we again are more innovative, we are better able to problem solve and we are more creative, which might support us in achieving our goals a little bit faster because we are now more effective. And the third thing, if you recall, is the motivational triad. Our brains are wired to avoid pain, seek pleasure and expend as little amount of effort as possible. So when we start celebrating we are now improving that motivational triad because it's associating the work with pleasure.

#### **Vanessa 09:48**

And now let's talk about how, how do we celebrate ourselves. So for those of you that are uncomfortable with celebrations like I was before, your first question is Gonna be, but I don't know how, how do I do it? I don't know how. And the first thing I will say is when you are saying you don't know how it's usually a fear-based response, you do know how, but you're afraid to do it. And so you think that causing the confusion by saying, I don't know how is going to help you not feel afraid. But this is what I'll tell you. However, you celebrate the big stuff, try that for the small stuff. However, you celebrate your child when your child comes home and tells you they did something exciting at work, or at school. For example, if when your kid comes home and says, Oh, my gosh, Dad, I cross the entire monkey bars all by myself, what do you say? You're not going to say, that's not good enough, you got to do that 10 times, or you got to do the big kid monkey bars, not just the small kid monkey bars. No, you probably say a great job. But you know, when you give them a big hug. So however you celebrate other people, try that for yourself.

However, you celebrate big things in your life. Try that for yourself. And I can get really nitty gritty and prescriptive here and tell you exactly what to do. But before I do that, I want to make sure that you know that you already have the answer. You don't need me to tell you how to celebrate yourself, you already know how to celebrate yourself. So stop blocking yourself, go into your brain and ask yourself, if I knew how to celebrate myself, what would I do? And then do that. But if you want some more help, here are a few things you can do. Focus on your love languages, what are the things that you like to receive love? So for me, it's words of affirmation, and it's affection. So when I do something awesome, I go into the mirror and give myself a high five because I love affection. I give myself a big hug. Again, words of affirmation are another one for me. So when I do something really big, I'll sit down and I will write myself a letter telling me how proud I am of myself.

Gifts. If gift giving us a big one for you buy yourself a small gift, maybe it's a small flower, maybe it's a really expensive piece of fruit that you normally wouldn't indulge in. I don't know like an out-of-season, mango or something, whatever it is for you. So look at your love languages. Use what it is that you do didn't normally celebrate yourself when you do something big. Or think about how you would celebrate a loved one, a best friend or a child and try that. And it's going to feel uncomfortable. So let me mentally prepare you for the next part of this. When you start to do this, it's going to feel uncomfortable. It's going to feel uncomfortable, because it's new, and it's different. And you are changing the way that your brain works. And that beginning stages of neuroplasticity, when you're rewiring your brain, it's uncomfortable because now you're causing your brain to push against what it knows. And your brain again wants to expend as little effort as possible all of the time. And there's nothing wrong with that.

That's how our brain is so efficient. But because of that when we are causing it to rethink something, or when we are causing it to do something different. It's uncomfortable for our brains, but it gets easier every time you do it. It's like habit-building, do it for 14 or 21 days. And then it becomes easier because now it's more hardwired in your brain. So hardwire your brain for the good stuff hardwire your brain to release positive things in your body and your brain, hardwire your brain to celebrate yourself. And my friends if you want to help do this come and join us in the journey. The journey again is my all-inclusive coaching program, where we take everything that you're learning all of it is science-based space in psychology, neuroplasticity, and neuroscience, we learn it all we study it and we start to apply it to our own lives. It's awesome to hear these things through a podcast, but just imagine how much more amazing it would be to practice it and start applying it to your own life regularly. That's what we do inside the journey. And I would love to welcome you there. All right, my friends. Celebrate yourself all day, all week, and all year, and I will see you next week.

### **Vanessa 14:10**

Hey, sweet friends, if you love what you're learning, then you've got to join us on the journey. It's my all-inclusive program and the best community out there giving you the education you never knew you needed to help you create a life you love. Join us at [Vanessa Calderon md.com](http://VanessaCalderon.md.com) forward slash join. I'll see you there.