

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Episode 160:

Millionaire Success Secrets with Ann Marie Sabath

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J: You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast episode number 6.

L: And essentially, I did everything you would do as a mother. I went to parent-teacher conferences, I took her to dentist appointments, I taught her how to drive, I... you know, everything at 18.

Intro: Welcome to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, stories of vibrant women living happy lives. And now, your host, Jen Riday.

J: On our last episode, I spoke with Carrie Hensley about the power of self-love and self-connection to help us live a grounded authentic and happy life. Carrie also shared with us her love of meditation and yoga and I shared with you a free meditation guide that I prepared which you can still get by going to jenriday.com/meditation. This guide explains how you can use a combination of affirmations and meditation to help you achieve goals that have been difficult for you for many years, including weight loss or overcoming a temper or what have you. Today, I'm talking with Laura Ball and she shares a story of how her parents both died while she was a teenager, and making the choice to leave college at age 18 so she could go home and raise her 13 year old sister. She shares her motto that sometimes taking the hard road is the best thing to do because it's the right road. You'll be really inspired by Laura and we'll go ahead and get started.

Welcome, Laura, how are you doing?

L: I'm fine, how are you?

J: I'm doing great, I'm so glad you could be on the show. So I introduced you, tell us more about yourself.

L: So I am originally from Long Island, New York, I moved down to South Florida when I was 19 years old and met my husband. We recently moved to Pittsburgh about 3 and a half, 4 years ago for his job and we've been here ever since. My children are 9 and 7 and Olivia is in 4th grade, Jack is in 1st grade; life's going well!

J: Every show, we love to start off with our guest's personal motto or a favorite quote, would you like to share one with us today?

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L: Yes, absolutely. So one of my favorite quotes is, "One should not take the easy road, but rather the right road, no matter how long you travel." I love that quote and I think because I had somewhat of a challenging childhood, I always took the hard road and it was hard, but it was always the right road and it's brought me to where I am today, so it's something that I really believe in.

J: Awesome, I want to hear more about your hard road so let's jump right in there.

L: Sure. So my father passed away out of a heart attack, a sudden heart attack, and my mother passed away 4 years later of... she was in a car accident. So it was very sudden, very tragic, at that time, I was 18 years old. I have a younger sister, we're 5 years apart, I was away at college, I was having a great time. I was a little nervous leaving to go to college because I felt a little guilty leaving my mom and my younger sister, I thought, you know, they couldn't do it without me, but she was just fine and she encouraged me to go and was very excited. And I remember vividly one night, I had a dream that she died, and the next morning, I woke up in such panic and I called her and she just reassured me, "Laura, I'm fine, I'm fine, nothing is going to happen to me," and a week later, she was killed in a car accident

J: Mm!

L: At that point, I... I needed to make a decision, I felt I needed to be home with my... my sister; my younger sister. She was 13, I was 18, so legally in the State's eyes, I was fine to be on my own; I was independent. So I went home, made funeral arrangements, took care of my sister, and when I met with our lawyer, they determined that my sister needed to move to Florida to be with my aunt. My mother had a will and the will stated that my sister lived with my aunt, god forbid, something happens to her.

J: Mm-hmm.

L: And that did not sit well with me and that was not going to happen; and not that my aunt made for a bad parent, I just couldn't bear the thought of being apart from my sister at that time. She was so young and we each other. So I spoke with our attorney and I said, "I want to become my sister's legal guardian." And I think everybody just thought I was crazy, you know, I'm 18 years old and they're like, "What are you talking about?" you know, "You need to go back to college and that's what your mom would want you to do," and... and it just... it wasn't even on my radar, I didn't think twice. And my aunt waived her right to be my sister's legal guardian and, you know, happily, she was very proud of what I was going to do and knew that, you know, I would have some support to help her. I decided to stay in New York to let my sister finish out that year of school, I don't remember what grade she was in; might have been 8th grade. And at that point when she finished school, she made her communion, we went through, you know, everything she needed to do and we decided, "You know what? We need to move to Florida." My mother had a summer home in Florida and we rented it out for extra income, and I said, "You know what? Let's move in there, at least we'll be near our aunt, my uncle," but we lived alone, and essentially, I did everything you would do as a mother. I went to parent-teacher conferences, I took her to dentist appointments, I taught her how to drive I... you know, everything at 18.

J: Mm.

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L: And I put my college on hold for a little bit until we kind of got settled in Florida and then I started going back to school. So it took me a little bit longer to get through college, but I did it. We lived in Florida and we're still very close. We kind of have a mother-daughter, sister-sister relationship, it's a little bit weird, but I wouldn't have it any other way. I couldn't... I could never be separated from her, not after what we had gone through. So it was, again, one of the tough roads to take, it wasn't the easy way out, but it was the right thing to do and I know my parents are together in heaven and I know that they're proud.

J: Aww, that's great. And so you were a mom at age 18 essentially.

L: Yeah, mm-hmm.

J: Tell us a story or 2 about what that was like for you guys.

L: You know, I would... I could say it was hard, but it wasn't. We... she was a good kid, thank goodness.

[Laughter]

L: She wasn't rebellious, she did what she... you know, she was told. A funny story is I remember going to one of her parents teacher conferences and I walked in and I was this little, you know, bouncy 18 year old. And...

J: (Laughs)

L: ... I think every pair look at me like, "What are you doing here?"

J: (Laughs)

L: And I just... I didn't think anything of it. Looking back, I know that they must have thought I was crazy, but I was... I was there for a reason. I wanted to make sure she was on target and she was, you know, getting good grades and if there was anything and we needed to do to help her. And it was... I look back and I just laugh at... at that because it was just... now, it just seems so funny to me, but it was exactly what I needed to be doing. I knew it was just part of my... my life; it was part of my path. And I think my parents knew that, "Well, Laura can handle it." I was always that kid that kind of took charge and they knew I would... I would be able to handle it; and it's... it's worked out great. You know, we have our dysfunctional moments, but she still looks to me for guidance and I couldn't imagine not having her in my life on a daily basis. So...

J: Do you guys live close together?

L: We did, but she's still in Florida so we're not close distance-wise, so now it's a plane ride to get there; we were in Central Florida. So when she... she was 18, she moved out and she got a... a condo on her

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own. She's always had a great job as a preschool teacher; she loves working with children with special needs. And when I met my husband, I would say maybe about 5 years after Olivia was born, we moved to South Florida just outside of Fort Lauderdale. So at that point, we were a car ride away, and...

J: Nice.

L: ... then I had to break the news to her that we were moving to Pittsburgh, and that did not go over too well (Laughs). That was hard, I think, for her.

J: Yeah.

L: Because she's not married, she doesn't have children, so it's just her. And my children are like our children.

J: Aww, that's sweet.

L: Yeah, it's... she's the wonderful aunt that makes homemade Play Dough (Laughs)...

J: Aww.

L: ... and the stuff that I don't do.

J: Good, maybe she could come be your nanny. (Laughs)

L: Oh, I've mentioned that several times.

[Laughter]

L: She doesn't like the cold though. (Laughs)

J: Aww. So when you were helping your sister... what's her name?

L: Jennifer.

J: Oh, Jennifer. When you were helping to raise Jennifer, were there times you felt really resentful that you were losing your college experience and not having the normal experience?

L: No, honestly. I guess I knew that that's what I needed to be doing at that time that that was just part of my life, and I knew I could always pick up where I left off. And I was proud... I was proud to... to be her legal guardian. I was proud to say that because it... that was just in my nature, I couldn't imagine anything else; I couldn't imagine not doing it. So, no, I... I didn't feel resentful, I felt proud.

J: Nice, I'm glad. You had an identity around it so it made it so much easier for you.

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L: Yeah.

J: Well, so you're the legal guardian for Jennifer and you're obviously still grieving, tell us about how you moved through those stages of grief together.

L: That was hard. I think a lot of therapy.

[Laughter]

L: You know, a lot of family support. And, honestly, I would have to say that I was kind of going through the motions. I think once she moved out was when I kind of could breathe, I could say, "Wow, okay, I did that." I knew it was something that my parents would want... would have wanted me to do or would have been proud of me to... for doing.

J: Mm-hmm.

L: So I went through the motions, we saw a therapists together. We knew that our parents... I have a very strong faith and I knew that God would give me the strength I needed to go through it and he would always put me on the right path. And so as much as I was torn with what was going on in my life and losing a mother, I had a mission and I had... that was my focus and I wasn't going to deviate from that. And I knew that once Jen was on her own and capable of taking care of herself, I would be able to pick up and... and start my life. And that, I think, was when, you know, I essentially started my life my; own personal life. I felt like an empty nester when she left.

J: Mm.

L: I thought, "Oh boy..." (Laughs)

J: Yeah.

L: "... I'm all alone now, what am I going to do?"

J: (Laughs)

L: And I just went full blast and finished college and started working and eventually, then met my husband. So my life was put on hold for a little bit, but it was for the right reason; it was just what we were supposed to do.

J: Yeah, the right thing to do.

L: Right, exactly.

J: "The hard road was the right road,"

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L: Right.

J: ... like your quote said. So you make it sound like kind of easy because you're amazing like that, I can hear it in your voice; you're a strong woman. Was there ever a time, either when you were helping to raise Jen or even now where you hit a low point in your life that you had to work through and...?

L: I think probably when I had my first child.

J: Mm-hmm.

L: I think having Olivia was kind of when things sort of hit me, like I don't have a mother, I don't have a father, they don't have grandparents. Ironically, that... that's when it hit me. It wasn't when I lost... essentially when I lost my parents but when I had children of my own. And it's... it's heartbreaking, you know, I... Jack the other day said, "I miss grandpa," and I said, "Well, Jack, you never met Grandpa."

J: Aww.

[Laughter]

L: But he... he's such a sensitive little boy and he said, "But everybody has a grandpa," and that breaks my heart, it really does.

J: Aww, yeah.

L: But it happened, I don't know what the reason was. I don't know why my parents were taken so young, but it happened and it's changed... it's made me a stronger person and I just try to accept the fact that maybe they needed to be together, maybe my mother couldn't... couldn't survive without my father, and now, they're together in heaven, and they knew that I could pick up the pieces. It is what it is and I try to just focus on, "This is my life, this is the cards I've been dealt and so let's... let's deal with it; let's make it work."

J: Mm-hmm.

L: What I've said to myself is, as Olivia gets a little bit older, I always say, "I am going to be the mom to Olivia that I never had." I won't be the overbearing mom, I will try not to be.

J: Mm-hmm.

L: But I will be the mom that if she calls me and says, you know, her child is crying and I can't get him to sleep, I will be the first one there. It was something that I never had that I longed for, and I still long for that.

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J: Mm-hmm.

L: It's still very hard for me, but I made a promise that I would do that for Olivia and for Jack and... and that's how I can fill that void.

J: Yeah, giving them what you couldn't have.

L: Right.

J: You made it through your low point largely with your faith that your parents were together in heaven and you're doing the right thing to care for your sister, so now today in the present, tell us more about how you're living a vibrant happy life today.

L: Well, I... I married a wonderful husband, a wonderful guy. It took me a long time to meet Steve and I said, "He's got to be in another country," and sure enough, he was; he was in England. And he was here on an assignment for work and I met him in that weekend I met him, I knew instantly that he was the one. That was probably, you know, the start of my... of my happiness of my... my future. I had a college degree, I had a good job, I met Steve and 5 years later after we were married for about 5 years, we had children. And now, I'm starting my own business, I'm giving back to the community where I live. I love to volunteer, I support a lot of different organizations. My children are healthy and they're happy and we travel, so I feel very, very blessed.

J: Great. So, Laura, we've reached the part of the show that is my favorite where we talk about a few of your favorite things. Are you ready?

L: Yes.

J: Great. Share your favorite personal habit that contributes to your success.

L: I would say my work ethic. I love to work and I'm extremely organized and it has made me... it's probably one of my biggest strengths.

J: Excellent, I grew up on a farm, I understand work ethic.

L: (Laughs)

J: A favorite easy meal you like to eat regularly.

L: So this is good, I just lost 25 pounds, 25 pounds on Weight Watchers.

J: Ooh, well done.

L: Ugh, it's... it's so slow and I still have another 15 ago. But... so my favorite go to Weight Watchers meal is an English muffin with avocado.

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J: Mm.

L: It kind of gives me that boost I need in the morning so that's always my go-to; I love avocado.

J: Yum. Favorite household possession.

L: That's my laptop. And I know it's probably so unhealthy. (Laughs)

J: What do you do in your business?

L: So I... I'm just starting out in this business. I actually work... currently, I work for a chiropractor and I handle his marketing and events. He does a lot of philanthropic marketing which is right up my alley and he holds events to support nonprofit organizations and I plan and organize them. And I realized I enjoyed helping him so much that I knew that I could help more people and I really love to help small business owners because I feel that they're the heart of the community. They are so... at least in my community, they are so generous to other businesses and other nonprofit organizations that I... I feel like I want to help them. They don't... they're trying to run a business and they don't have time to handle their marketing or their emails or their social media. And I love marketing, I love to promote events and promotions and so I figured, "I can help more people." So right now, I am only focusing on social media management and I have a couple of different packages that I offer people, but I also do email marketing and event planning and really kind of a 1-stop shop because I love it all and I want to help as many people as I can.

J: Great, it sounds like a lot of fun, especially since you love your laptop, it's perfect.

L: I do.

[Laughter]

J: Well, back to our questions, what is your favorite book that you'd recommend to us?

L: I love the book 'The Power of Vulnerability' by Brené Brown. I love hearing her speak and I love her books. And this book was very good for me to read because I'm kind of a perfectionist and I feel like I'm always... I always need to be on my game, my kids need to be in this... the right sports and the right this, and I feel it's important to realize that it's okay to be vulnerable, it's okay not to be perfect. And this book was really eye-opening for me because it made me realize that you have to be vulnerable, you need to... it helps you to be real and authentic and, you know, down-to-earth. I don't want to pretend I'm somebody I'm not, I make mistakes and I... and it's taught me how to kind of own up for my imperfections; and that's another book that she has, 'The Gifts of Imperfection'. So I love this book very, very much, it's been very eye-opening for me.

J: I love Brené Brown as well, so...

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L: Yeah.

J: ... I'm sure, everyone, you'll love to check that one out for sure. So what's a favorite item on your bucket list?

L: I love to travel, that's always probably on somebody's bucket lists, they want to travel to different places. One other thing though I do want to do is I'd love to write a book. You know, essentially, it would be around my history, but I want... I don't want it to be all about me because I... I don't think anybody would buy a book about Laura Ball; well, maybe, maybe not. But I feel like my story can help people because know there's other people who have lost their parents and/or lost a parent and are struggling, and I feel like I can use my story to give them hope and to know that they're not alone and that there are other people who have gone through this and you can get through it, you can survive and you can have a wonderful life because of it.

J: Yeah. Looking back in your life so far, share your happiest moment.

L: Probably the happiest moment was when I met my husband. I... you know, it's so cliché, you know... you know, you know when you're... when he's the one, and I did; I really, really did. We both knew that something was just different and it was just a very special time for me because I think it was a... it was almost a turning point like, "This is it Laura, you're... you're ready to start your life now."

J: Aww.

L: And it was a very happy time for us.

J: Aww, that's nice, "This is the point to start your life." I'm going to let the listeners know that they can find links to everything we've been chatting about in today's episode by going to jenriday.com/6. And, Laura, now our final, but most important question, if you had to create a 3 to 5 part formula of actions that maximize your happiness, what would that include?

L: I would say learning, education is so important, and never stop learning. Working and helping others and giving back to the community, those are the 3 things that I love the most and make me the happiest. And I enjoy giving back to my community because they gave me a lot of support when my parents died and I'll never forget people coming over with food, just boxes and boxes of food, and I didn't understand why people were giving me food.

[Laughter]

L: Now that I'm older, I'm like, "Okay, I get it, that's what they do." But they gave me a lot of support so I hope to be able to give back to them.

J: (Laughs). I'm giggling because I'm imagining an 18 year old with all the food. (Laughs)

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L: I had a basement full of like government cheese, I...

[Laughter]

L: ... it's just cans of beans and I'm like, "I don't even cook."

[Laughter]

L: "But, okay, thank you for this food."

J: (Laughs). That's great. So... so learning, working, and giving back.

L: Yes.

J: That's a great combo. Well, Laura, I've loved listening to your story of choosing the hard road because it was the right road; so inspiring. So I want to have you give our community here at Vibrant Happy Women one parting challenge; something that's actionable that we can work on in the week ahead.

L: Sure. I would love to challenge your listeners to step out of your comfort zone and do something that scares you, even though it might be hard, I think we'll take you one step closer to your goals, whether they be personal or business related.

J: Thank you, that's great advice. Thank you thanks for being on the show and we've learned so much from you, I appreciate you being here.

L: Thank you so much, Jen, I appreciate it.

J: Take care.

Thank you so much for joining Laura and I for this episode and, again, all references and links we discussed can be found by going to jenriday.com/6. Join me next time when I speak with Melanie Banayat about how she was able to heal from abuse. She's a strong amazing woman and she really has found happiness and you can learn how she did that. I'll talk to you again soon. Take care.

Outro: Thanks for listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast at www.jenriday.com.



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