



## Transcript: Wake Up Happy with Mark Fernandes

### HOST

Kym Yancey

### SPEAKER

Mark Fernandes

### PRESENTATION

Kym Hello, good morning. It's time to wake up happy. I'm Kym Yancey, I am the co-founder and CEO of *Live Happy* magazine. It's great to have you on board with us this morning. We have a very, very special guest, we have Mark Fernandes, and our topic is on flourishing at home and in the work place. I want to also remind you that at any point during this, if you've got questions, or if you want to chime in and get social with us, you can easily do that by, our tag is Wake Up Happy, for Twitter it's Live Happy, for Facebook it's Live Happy, Pinterest it's Live Happy. We're just really focused on all the science, and all the research and academic proof around happiness and giving you strategies that are going to allow you to have your greatest expression of happiness for yourself.

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So let's get started. Let me introduce you to our fantastic guest, Mark Fernandes. He has a passion for inspiring people to believe in themselves and become everything they are capable of becoming. Mark is charged with transforming Luck Companies into a global values-based leadership organization.

Now, in his role as chief leadership officer, he serves as a thought leader for the ongoing development of the values-based leadership etiology and model, and is responsible for the integration of values-based leadership within Luck Companies. Mark's work also extends beyond Luck Company's doors and includes sharing the value-based leadership model through mentoring, speaking, teaching, and consulting with organizations of all sizes across all industries and all geographies.

Mark is an active member of the Mason Center for Social Entrepreneurship and was recently selected as 1 of the 100 Top Thought Leaders in Trustworthy Business in 2014 by Trust Across America, and Switch and Shift's Top 75 Human Business Champions and League of Extraordinary Thinkers. His general interest in helping people flourish is fueled by his deep-held belief in the extraordinary potential of all human beings and people's ability to experience an exceptional quality of life, once their potential is actualized.

So, Mark, it's great to have you as a part of *Wake Up Happy* this morning.

Mark Thanks, Kym, it's great to be here.

Kym Hey, Mark, let's delve right into flourishing. I'd like to settle a level set around what does flourishing mean, scientifically?

Mark Scientifically? It depends on who you read, Kym, but it does really start getting at that idea of best self. There's a lot of science behind the fact that we have all of this extraordinary potential. All human beings do, quite frankly. And, once that potential is actualized, we find ourselves in place of happiness, joy, [indiscernible], we perform at our peak, and then what's interesting is we will also turn around and direct our energy toward helping those around us flourish, too.

So, flourishing is this idea of becoming the best version of yourself and then helping others do the same.

Kym Let's talk about values-based leadership. So define that, obviously there's a lot of talk around people living their values, but it's interesting how there is such a strong focus, and justifiably so, but, talk to us a little bit about values-based leadership and what that means.

Mark Sure. Well, Kym, in its simplest form, values-based leadership is really about who you are and why you're here. Let's just put it that way. We define it, values-based

leadership, as living, working, and leading in alignment with your personal core values, principles, beliefs and purpose to in turn ignite the extraordinary potential in those around you. And, when you think about values, principles, and beliefs, those that are personal and core to us, that's who we are. That's who we are on the inside, and then when you think about purpose, that's why we're here. It's the difference we're supposed to make in the world, and what always comes to mind for me when we think about purpose, is that great quote from Mark Twain where he said that "the two most important days of our lives is the day we were born, and the day we found out why."

Kym Why, yes.

Mark So, that's how we look at values-based leadership.

Kym Do you find, I mean obviously, you lead organizations around this, what are the challenges that people have in getting in touch with their values and applying them to their life and working their purpose? It really seems that we struggle with this as humans.

Mark Ha. We do. Especially these days, right? I think, Kym, we all are so busy becoming who we think society wants us to be, or who we think our friends want us to be, or

even our significant others want us to be versus just being ourselves. There's a lot of good research out there that says, how we were born enough.

Just this morning, Seth Godin, his blog this morning, was about how we're so creative at birth, and then over time you become afraid. So, it's this idea of how do we really focus on who we are, who we truly are on the inside, and embrace that, and then find the places and spaces in the world that celebrate that who we are, not who the world thinks we should be.

And, I think that's probably the biggest struggle. We have all these influences, when the answer is actually right inside.

Kym And, you help organizations. You help people with this. Have you unlocked really, what you see to be the single biggest or the top two or three things that seem to blocking people that seem come up over and over again that get in their way?

Mark That's a great question. I think it's different for different people in terms of what gets in the way. When we think about what are a couple of really, really important elements to this, step one and step two for us, and it's probably step two might be one of those things we need to unlock. Unlock. We say values-based leaders, first and foremost, understand who they are. Who they are on the inside deeply, so we really get inside and we understand who we are.

But then step two is what we call, "finding your dance floor." And what that means, Kym, is it's in alignment with Maslow's great line. Maslow said, "If the environment is right, people will grow straight and beautiful, actualizing the extraordinary potential they have inherited." The key point to that is, if the environment is right, finding your dance floor is for us to know ourselves deeply and then go out and find the places and spaces; its soul, its core, what it believes in, what it values, whether it's a place or whether it's a person, aligned with ours.

And then guess what, could we get to be every day? Ourselves. And so, a lot of times, we'll just take any job, or we'll hang out with a group of people, just because, versus this idea of finding your dance floor. And, we believe that that is one of the keys to the kingdom.

And then the second, we would say, even once you get there, you still have to invest in yourself, which is attend to your mind, body, spirit, and emotion in your heart. And, all of that is jet fuel in, and we're so busy today, there's a chapter in a book someday that needs to be written about the selfish side of leadership in life. And it is, you have to tend to yourself first, before you can attend to others.

So, probably those two things; finding your dance floor and explore and investing in yourself.

Kym Yes. That's really strong. The whole notion that self-care isn't selfish.

Mark That's a great line, Kym.

Kym To break through it. Mark, give us some examples of how you've seen values-based leadership transform peoples' lives, both at home and at work.

Mark You know, Kym, actually this just happened. Funny you should ask. It was probably a few weeks back, and I don't know how many folks know us. We're predominately an aggregate company, meaning we have aggregate quarries, our work force is predominately blue collar, and we have what are called "surface miners." And, they're our heroes. These guys and gals are the salt of the earth.

I was at one of our mines recently talking with the team, just having a conversation about this stuff, and in the end, this gentleman walked up and I only knew him a little bit, and he clearly had been around for a while. And he told me a story. And I didn't know this story, but he had said eight years ago he was with another company, and the company he was with had a very, very toxic work environment.

That classic profit before people, do as I say, find a way to like it, it was just one of those really tough, tough environments to work in.

And, what we know, what we're starting to understand, Kym, is we bring those toxic environments home with us. This is some of the newest research. And, he was bringing it home, and he was not the best version of himself. He was admitting this to me, how he was acting, and sure enough, he ended up in divorce. And now, his life is really spiraling.

Well, he still had that job, he met another woman, and he decided to leave that job and come to work for us, for less money. And so he joins us, he's been with us for eight years, and he will tell you the story about how values-based leadership has transformed him as a human being and his life. And he said, just a couple of weeks ago, as he's getting close to retirement, he sat down with his wife, and he said, "You know, what we might want to think about is how to get more money for retirement." And he said, "What would you think about me going back to work for that old company for a few years, just to kind of raise our savings?"

She looked him, dead in the eye and she said, "I'll tell you what, if you go back to that company, and you're going to be divorced twice." And that was the story. And I was like, well that's a good one.



Kym Yes, because that was out of integrity with who he is in his values, and taking him down a path that was going to create destruction for him.

Mark That's right, because she knew him then, and she knows him now. And she said, "I will take this beautiful version of you long before I will take a bigger bank account." That was her message.

Kym Mark, walk us through some simple ideas for how to show up and to flourish. To apply these principles around your values. What would be some of the simple ideas, some things that you can share with us to get us thinking in the right way, moving in the right way.

Mark Yes, Kym, when we're having conversations like this, or on a stage, we really try to think about what are a couple of things that we can leave folks with? And, if I go back to what I was saying this first two steps of what values-based leaders do, know and understand themselves deeply, find their dance floor. Number three, invest in self. Number four, we say edit your life, do a few things exceptionally well. But, what I want to talk about is number five. And, that's extend grace. And, we find that this is one of the most powerful tools, in terms of how to show up well.

And, grace, Kym, is an ethic of kindness. If you think about we love Plato's quote, "Be kind for everyone you meet along the way is fighting a hard battle." When we

talk to folks about this, they get it. They're like, boy, they sure are. But then you ask them buddy, well let me ask you, who's your worst enemy? And what do 100% of people say? Can they say themselves? You say exactly right, we have no worse enemies than our mind untrained.

So we say, how about this? Why don't you extend that grace back to yourself first? Give yourself a break. You were born enough. And you get people to start doing that, believing in themselves, knowing they were born enough, that's when they become inspired. You can't inspire or breathe life into another human being, until you are first inspired yourself.

So, grace is a great thing to think about. It's something that we all could certainly extend to others more often, but, let's start with ourselves.

Kym Yes you know –

Mark Go ahead.

Kym No, I was saying, we had another conversation on *Wake Up Happy* around self-compassion, which is extending good grace. I love that. I love the kindness. Would you repeat the one quote, too, you said to be kind to everyone you meet –

Mark It was Plato, "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle."

Kym You know, for me, that creates a different feeling. I've heard that quote before, but you've reminded me of it. It's been years. But, the notion that every person you meet is fighting a hard battle, be kind, that we have no idea where someone else is coming from. What they're experiencing. What they left. It's just extraordinary. I just want to share this, because you made me think of this, and I remember Stephen Covey in the story about father on the train. Do you remember that story about the rowdy kids on the train with the father? Do you recall that one?

Mark Keep going, [indiscernible] —

Kym Okay, so the way it works, everybody, is he was on the train, like a subway, his kid's pretty rowdy, and they were just acting up like crazy, and the other passengers were looking like, why is this guy not paying attention to his kids? This is crazy. Finally, this guy looks over to them and just says, "Your kids are kind of out of control here." And, the father says, "You're so right, you're so right. We just left the hospital, my wife just died of cancer."

Mark Oh –

Kym        And, immediately, immediately it transformed the train. All of a sudden, that became so insignificant and that was the thing. Your statement about kindness just, you know what, honestly it's going to help me a lot and I hope that for everyone else listening, that today, as we go about our day, and the people you meet, and extending that kindness; but I think going deeper and understanding as you look at them, and that your eyes connect with them, that their carrying their own stuff. You know what I mean? Their own challenges.

Mark        And you know, Kym, a great add on to that is another famous, but really simple quote. "Seek first to understand, then be understood."

Kym        Yes.

Mark        Because you never know what you're going to find out. What if they'd had asked instead of saying, can you get control of your kids, can you tell me why your kids, and all of a sudden that changes that conversation, doesn't it?

Kym        It does. It totally, totally does. I've got to ask you, Mark, in your own life and applying these principles in your own life, what brought you to this? Obviously, along the way, was there a tipping point for you in your life, and you said, I'm making some changes, and here's what I'm going to do?

Mark Wow. That's a whole other phone call. That really is. The reasons I [discernible] is that I am actually a true-to-life recovering jerk, and when you're a jerk, and you're in a state of recovery, you're always in recovery because it's really easy to go home. Right, go back.

I did have, after going to many as a young executive in my early 30s, these executive shrink places, and laying in dark rooms with Yanni playing over the stereo, and shrinks whispering in my ear, none of that was working for me, and I came back and my brand was I'd leave a trail of dead bodies everywhere I went.

Well, finally my momma, who's in heaven, had one of her lessons to us, a very strong lesson, was to respect our elders. Well, I went down to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, still early 30s, and visited a gentleman named Dr. Bell, and when I met Dr. Bell, Kym, he looked like Yoda. He looked like he was 110 years old, and he also looked really wise. And so my propensity was to listen to him. But I was not a nice person, people were a means to an end to me. Classic, young, bright executive for the times.

And, after spending two days with him, Dr. Bell sat me down, and I was getting ready to leave and he said, "Son, I want to tell you how this is all going to end for you." I was like, okay. And again, I had a tendency to listen to him because he was old and wise. And he started telling me, Kym, that I was going to have a really big house, up on a

hill someday. And, I started smiling. And he said I was going to have three cars in the garage and that my house was going to be overlooking all of the other houses in the area. And he said, "Mark, look at me," and I looked over at him. He said, "There's something else you need to know," he said, "There's not going to be a soul in that house with you." And right then, I don't know why that moment, because I had others, Kym, but for some reason that one hit home pretty hard. Little bit of a wake up.

Kym That was a tipping point for you.

Mark That was one. I've had many.

Kym What do you want us, you know, we have people all over the country that are tuning in for this. I know that you're going to also be at George Mason for that Well-Being conference that is going to be coming up and I'll share with a few people about that because it's really great, but what are some things. We've got here about another eight minutes, but I want you to just pour into our audience right now, as they're listening, and they're coming from all different places, but they've come because of *Live Happy* magazine and what we're about, we're all about that happiness and getting in touch with the science behind that and really having a richer emotional experience, positive emotions and all that.

I want you to share, Mark, in this time, just your wisdom, your thoughts, some things you want people to take with them. They're going to have about eight minutes with you. Would you, for lack of a better word, I want to freestyle with this and just give you the mic to share with us just insights that you know can make a difference for them today.

Think about this, they're going to hang up, and that will make a difference for them today. Some things that they can apply can apply to their life.

Mark Okay. Wow. Let's see, Kym. I think that some of the things that, some of the really, really, the low hanging fruit, if we spend one more minute on in this idea of invest in self, and sort of that selfish side of leadership in life, and we spoke real quickly to mind, body, spirit and emotion of heart, and we've already touched on mind a little bit, and how untrained it can be our own worst enemy. We really have to pay attention to that. So, investing in self is the practice of mindfulness and consciousness and being aware, and a lot of folks now are going to meditation and finding other ways just to quiet that thing down.

We talk to each other in 200 words a minute, and we talk to ourselves in like 600 to 800 words a minute. So, when we're sitting there, thinking we're not enough, it's like being in a car with three or four of our best friends and all of them at the same time, telling us we're not enough.

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Just remember, 9,999 out of 10,000 of us were born geniuses and we spend the rest of our lives with people convincing us we're not. Yes, you are. So there's the mind thing. The body thing is it's very real. Eat, sleep, and move in whatever proportion gets you where you wake up in the morning feeling good. That's how that works, and we can pretend all day long that it's something else, but without attention to our own bodies none of this will work. Spirit, is that idea of giving back. Being part of something greater than ourselves.

You ask audiences anywhere in the world, if they've done Habitat for Humanity, or if they've given out food [indiscernible] and who's done it? People raise their hand. You ask them how they feel, and they say great. Then do it more. Do it more. And then the last thing is emotion or heart. The number one thing we want, Kym, is human connection. It's about loving and being loved. And, unfortunately, for adults, most of us when we go dark, what do we do? We go in a hole versus run towards somebody else. So, that's that part of emotion, human connections. So, that's one.

And, the second, I would say, I don't know if you saw it, Kym, but over last weekend, somebody took a picture of a guy sitting on a sailboat and he's texting. You see him texting, and clearly this boat is a whale-watching boat, because the guy who took the picture—did you see this?

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Kym No, I didn't.

Mark Oh, it was amazing. The guy who took the picture of the guy on the boat texting saw the other people on the boat taking pictures of a momma and a baby whale that are right in front of the dude that's texting, and he never looked up, Kym.

So, the guy describing this story, where I'm going with this is this, there's data that says 90% of us now wake up in the morning, and within the first ten minutes of waking up we fire up something that begins with an I or has a screen and boom, it's hair on fire. Yes, we've got an MT, an RT, and tell you what I'm I having for lunch, and, and, and, and it goes on all day. We miss the whale, we go to bed at night, our head is smoldering, we get up the next day lather, rinse, repeat, lather, rinse, repeat.

I promise you, Kym, if I sat down with those same people for 15 minutes, they could tell me the life that they wanted. Well, I don't know if you've read anything by Nepo but he has this wonderful book called *Awakenings, And*, on the cover of that book is this extraordinary quote that says, "Have the life you want, by being present in the life you have."

Kym Oh wow. Have the life you want, by being present in the life you have. Man. Yes, yes, yes.

Mark Because life, guess what? It's a glorious thing. We're just missing it. So, that would probably be one other that I would leave you with.

Kym Yes, you know what is so beautiful about your words and powerful about you words, is we don't have a platform where we get to hear this and hear the reminders over and over again. In other words, we're doing it on *Wake Up Happy*. We're doing it right now. This is a five-day series, everybody. Five days, every month, we do this. Unlike, Mark, if you were a national recording artist, you'd be on the radio and we'd hear your message over and over and over again. Therefore, having control of those messages, what you put in, what you allow to seep in, I have to say that that is one up for me. On a personal level, I wonder how many others, on this that are listening, that challenge of being in the moment, being in this time, not the past, not the future, but the life that I've got now, the appreciation that I've got now, having that grace, extending that grace, and that self-compassion, giving yourself a break, is you are so right, Mark, we do a real good job at tearing ourselves down. You know, with no one helping us. Just tearing ourselves down.

Mark, I so appreciate this. I want to remind everybody that the thing we've been talking about is mentioning to everybody, is one of the spotlight events that *Live Happy* is proud to promote and showcase and that is the George Mason University is hosting its sixth annual conference in Washington D.C., March 26th through March 27th, and it's called, "Leading to Well-Being Conference in Workplaces, Organizations, and Communities." Mark is one of the top speakers they have at that event, and you can find out more and all about it and everything that's going on at [wellbeing.onmason.com](http://wellbeing.onmason.com). That's [wellbeing.onmason.com](http://wellbeing.onmason.com). You can find out all about it there and there is also a link on the *Live Happy* website.

So, I just want to make sure you're aware of that. Tomorrow, we have the incredible Christine Carter. We're going to be talking about raising happiness. And, that's steps for more joyful kids and happier parents with Christine Carter tomorrow, so I want to make sure you know about that.

Mark, this is really great, and I, just as we leave, as we wrap this up, I just want to, and Mark, if you've got any last parting statement you want to make, but I want to give everybody a few stats that you'll find interesting.

One of the big things is, and I had a friend of mine say this to me, and they put the word happiness in as in that happiness does not get the respect that it deserves, meaning that like Rodney Dangerfield, he never got any respect, and I thought

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you're kind of right, because it feels to me like so many people dance around happiness. They'll say they're doing, in organizations, and they'll say we're doing satisfaction studies, or the average norm this, the average norm that, but they talk about a lot of things and at the end of all the conversations, ultimately, what everyone's seeking, is happiness. It's really what they want to be.

But, I just want to give you something that is fuel for thought for you, I want you to be aware of this, but this is all science ,academic research has been conducted on this, and Shawn Achor has a lot of this in his book, *The Happiness Advantage*, but, I just want to let you know that science shows that happiness and a positive brain create, first of all, 23% less stress, 39% better health, you're 31% more productive, you have 34% more positive social interactions, you have 23% more energy, three times the creativity and 37% more sales with happiness and a positive brain. It's not just a good thing to do, it's a smart thing to do.

Mark, any last statement, ten seconds, anything you want to share, before we call it a day?

Mark Well, Kym, just want to thank you, and all the work you're doing, and thank you for the difference that you're making in the lives of so many people, as you said, around the country. Good for you.

Kym        You're so kind. Thank you, Mark, and thank you for what you delivered for us. It made a major difference for us. Remember, livehappy.com, everything's there, subscribe, be a part, let's spread happiness everybody. Until tomorrow, have a fantastic day, a happy day. Smile first, bye, bye for now.