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Week 32: WFL

Randy Robison and Sheila Walsh

Jennifer Rothschild

Randy: Welcome to LIFE Today! I'm Randy Robison!

Sheila: I'm Sheila Walsh and welcome! We're so glad that you're with us today and I am really thrilled that we have someone I've loved and admired and had the opportunity to share on a platform with but she has so much wisdom to share with us. And her new book is called, "Me, Myself, and Lies." Would you please welcome Jennifer Rothschild?

[Applause]

Jennifer: Thank you! Thank you!

Sheila: I love this book.

Randy: Yes, this is a fun book and there's two parts in it. We're in a really fun part today because you have a thing called a "thought closet" which I just have to laugh at because you don't want to see in my thought closet. It's a strange place indeed.

But you give us a peek into other people's thought closet. How did that process work? First of all, I'm sure it's not like, "Here's so-and-so's thought closet."

Jennifer: Well, so here's your thought closet. Your thought closet is this place in your mind where you store everything you've ever said to yourself, good and bad. "You're such an idiot!" or "You can do it!" Right? Whatever it is you say to yourself you store in thought closet and then you wardrobe your life with all that stuff, right? So, that's what a thought closet is. I asked some of my friends who a lot of our friends know about, like Lysa TerKeurst and Laura Story and Stormie Omartian. I said, "So tell me what you say when you talk to yourself and how do you deal with some of these hard things, like rejection or calling yourself names." So, yeah! I have these sneak peeks into women's thought closets.

Randy: I know we want to hear those but I have one question before we get to the juicy stuff: how do you clean out your closet?

Jennifer: Me?

Randy: No. Anybody? How do we clean out that thought closet because you say we're going to wear these things. I know a lot of thoughts I don't want to wear.

Jennifer: I know. Okay. There's a quote by John Stott. He was an Anglican pastor. Wasn't he fantastic?

Sheila: I loved him! Yeah!

Jennifer: Wasn't he fantastic?

Sheila: I used to go hear him every Sunday night when I was a student in London.

Jennifer: Oh! I'm so jealous, in a Godly sort of way! [Laughing]

Oh, yes, he's brilliant. Okay, then you will love this quote. He said that if you sow, as in plant, if you sow a thought you will reap an action. If you sow an action you will reap a habit. If you sow a habit you will reap character. And if you sow character you reap your destiny.

So, in other words, look at your destiny, look at the life you're living today and you can trace it back to the way you think or, in other words, to what you've put in your thought closet. So how you start cleaning out your thought closet is that you begin to recognize what it is you say to yourself and if it's not true, then you don't say it to yourself anymore. You refuse that lie entry. You bar the door of your thought closet and you do not let that lie in there until it begins to agree with the truth and then you replace it with the truth so that your thought closet is full of truth.

Randy: One thing I know, because you talked about thoughts as seeds, how do you get a seed to die or to grow? You water the one you want to grow.

Jennifer: That's right! And you starve the one you want to die.

Randy: That's exactly right!

Sheila: One of the things I thought was really insightful, because if you're not familiar with Jennifer's story, at 15 you discovered that you were losing you were losing your eyesight and you have this really interesting thing, when you talk about what it's like to be blind and a control freak. But the thing that you said that I think is so brilliant is you finally came to the realization you were never in control anyway. It's nothing to do with being blind or having anything else that's not working, because the truth is we're not in control of everything in our lives.

Jennifer: Yeah. Whoever can say that they chose the day that they were going to be born, and the family that they were born into, if you have control over that, then yes! You've got control. But there's not one of us that can control that. We do not ultimately control. But there are some choices that we can make, of course. And we can yield, rest in the sovereignty of God, who does have ultimate control over everything. And that's a better way to live anyway. I would much rather he be in control than me.

Randy: Yeah, I've tried the first way. It didn't work out so well.

Jennifer: No, it doesn't work out so well.

Sheila: The second half of your book is *Seven Things You Say to Your Soul*. And I found this so helpful, so practical. One of the things you say is look up. You talk about like interviewing your own soul. You tell a very moving story about an adopted girl that really made me pause because this girl, there was a lot that she could have complained about, but she wrote a list of something else.

Jennifer: Yeah, because she was born – her name was Minda – and she was born with no arms and no legs -- India. And when her mom adopted her it took forever to get her over here because the sweet baby didn't even have a fingerprint because she had no hands. So her mom described how, when Minda was in the fourth grade, she found this list of everything she would do if she had arms and legs. And she said she would jump for joy. She would make the sign of the cross. And it was such a – and the list went on with things that you and I would just take for granted.

And it was such a beautiful picture of recognizing that when you're really looking up, when you're telling your soul to have hope and to hope in God, then you're really able to see much more broadly. Your problem is no longer the biggest thing on your horizon. You're able to see something bigger, something more hopeful, and so that's why one of the chapters is *Learning to Tell our Souls to Have Hope*. Or, as I call it, to Look Up.

Sheila: But one of the things I found really helpful, you talk about calm down, speaking shalom to your soul. And you talk about the difference between gasoline words and water words. Unpack that a little. I love that.

Randy: That's real good.

Jennifer: All of us, I believe, have these little tiny embers in our thought closets. You know, some of us are really peaceful and easy going all the time. But you still have little teeny weenie flames in your thought closet. And they can, with just the right conditions [puhhhhhh] ignite.

Right? So we have to be mindful when we talk to ourselves, the difference between gasoline and water words. So gasoline words, right, for me because I was a notorious name-caller, by word was idiot. “You’re such an idiot!” That’s a gasoline word. Okay?

Randy: You’re telling yourself that.

Jennifer: If I call myself an idiot, that’s gasoline. I am throwing gasoline into my thought closet and [puhhhhhh] an inferno of anger at myself because I’m so dumb! You know? That’s gasoline. So what’s the difference? Instead of throwing in gasoline words, and they’re not just names you call yourself. They could be “You should have done this!” “You could’ve done that!”

You throw water, the water of the word of God. And when you throw water onto a fire, what happens?

Sheila: It goes out.

Jennifer: It goes out. And then your thought closet is full of peace. And it really is speaking shalom to your soul. We have a whole book full of water words [laughing] that we can speak to ourselves.

Randy: Maybe it’s not just true in speaking to yourself, it’s very true when speaking to others because I’m pretty good at throwing water on the words in my own thought closet, pretty bad at throwing gasoline on other people. So I really like the wisdom of that, weigh every word you say, to others and to yourself. It’s good.

Sheila: To me it’s the difference too between reacting and responding. I think that we’re so tempted to react. Like I was driving up here, and I’m in the middle lane. I’m not in the fast lane. And this dude is sitting right on my tail. And I’m like, “I’m in the middle lane, dummy you.” And he won’t go away. So I think okay. So I go into the slow lane, and he gets behind me. And then he eventually he overtakes me and brings a gesture.

Jennifer: That wasn’t Randy.

Sheila: Yeah! It’s like you want to react but I’m learning, you know what, Sheila Walsh? If you call yourself a daughter of the King you had better learn this is not your home, you do not belong here, you are part of the bigger kingdom. So we don’t react. We respond.

Randy: That’s where I would throw gasoline on that fire a lot of times. And in the past especially, and honestly, God has taught me how to throw water on the fire, not just on like the other guy, but on myself.

Jennifer: Right! Right, to calm things.

Randy: To calm down because I – Oh! That is gasoline on my fire right there.

Sheila: Yeah! But Christ promised peace. He said, “My peace I give. My peace I leave you. Not as the world gives.” So honestly, the peace that Christ’s word offers is not something that makes sense to anybody unless they know the presence of Christ. And then –

Jennifer: And then he says he will keep our minds quieted and at rest, at peace, when our minds are fixed on him. I think that’s the thing. When we act according to our identity rather than the situations, we’re more capable of responding, rather than just reacting.

Randy: That’s actually huge. I don’t know if you guys deal with this, but have you ever had a point in your life where your mind was not at peace? Not at rest? That is exhausting. And it’s not fun for you. And it’s not fun for those close to you. I’ve been there. So those are huge words. That’s big, big stuff, Jennifer.

Sheila: But one of the things – I would think this is the thing in the book that helped me the most and, honestly, it kind of convicted me. You talk about little things you can do, and I think you quote, actually, Rick Warren. It says, “Divert-” and this is about our time, “Divert daily, withdraw weekly, abandon annually.”

Jennifer: Don’t you love that?

Sheila: I do, but explain what those mean.

Jennifer: So the psalmist, he told his soul to be at rest. And I can tell myself that all day long and I don’t do it because I don’t know what it means. So I learned from Rick Warren this very practical way to speak rest to your soul, because it really is a discipline, just like a car, if you don’t ever put gas in it, it runs out. Right? We need to refuel ourselves and we do that through rest. So the first is to divert daily. That means you take ten minutes, 15 minutes, whatever you can afford, every day and you do something that’s a diversion. You take a walk, you go sit out on the deck and listen to an audio book. You can tell what I do for my daily diversion. You may call a friend. You may sit and have a cup of coffee. Daily divert. Do something that brings you rest, mentally and physically.

Once a week you withdraw. Now, time is like money. Some of us have a lot in our accounts. Some of us have a little. So you might be able to do a weekly withdraw of a day, or five or seven hours of time. You may only be able to afford two hours of time a week. But whatever you can

afford, you need to take that and withdraw from work, cease striving. Do something that brings you joy.

For me, when I'm in town, I have Fun Friday with my girlfriends and we go to boutiques and to lunch and it is my weekly withdrawal.

And then, once a year, you abandon. Abandon annually. In other words, take a vacay. Right? You might be able to go to Europe. Good for you! You don't have to go to Europe. You can just stay home, order pizza, take yourself offline. Sleep in sleeping bags on the floor with the kids. Do something that is an abandonment from your normal routine. And it brings rest to our souls.

And here's the thing: y'all fly a lot. You know this. Whenever a flight attendant gets up, they will always say, "In case of an emergency an oxygen mask will drop. Place it on your mouth and nose first, and then help the person sitting next to you."

When we don't speak rest to our souls we cannot help the person sitting next to us. If we don't put our mask on we're going to run out of air and we're not going to be able to do all the things that God has called us to do.

Sheila: But it's so good, Jennifer, because I'm so guilty of just doing the next thing, and the next thing, and the next thing. Sometimes you can't go away on a vacation but do you know what my husband's new idea is? He wants us to put a tent up in our bedroom.

Jennifer: Oh! That's awesome!

Sheila: And I'm like, "Why would I put a tent up in the bedroom?"

He said, "Because it will be so cool. We can just be in there with dogs, and we'll be in a tent!"

Jennifer: It's air conditioning!

[Laughter]

Sheila: So I'm like, "I'm all in, Dude! I'm all in!"

Those are very – there's so many spiritual disciplines we're called to but that is such a practical thing. Could you even say that back when the land, in the Old Testament, the land got to rest every seven years. And you say dirt needs a rest! But we do too!

[Laughter]

Jennifer: Exactly!

Randy: It's a good idea but I don't want to let the show get away because – Alright, we've got some people here, and I want to hear about their closets. You've got Lisa Whelchel (actress, speaker, author), Meredith Andrews, my friend Margaret Fienberg, Stormie Omartian, Lysa TerKeurst, Liz Curtis Higs (I can't even imagine what's in her thought closet), and Chonda Pierce. I mean, between those two, I know them both! Right! Who in there, whose closet stands out in there?

Jennifer: Oh my goodness! They all stand out for different reasons. I think one of them that impacted me the most was Lisa Whelchel. She was a child actor. You know she was Blair on The Facts of Life. And then when she grew up she was on Survivor and she's an author and speaker. She talked about how she would rehearse because she so wanted to please everyone. She wanted to make sure she always was accepted by everybody so she would rehearse everything she said. And then, when she was done, she'd rewind and then judge and condemn and shame and reassess. And she talked about how when she really stopped being the center of her own thought closet and allowed the Lord to become the center of her thought closet and allowed him to assign value to her and give her the correct, right estimate of herself and self-esteem she stopped rehearsing. And I loved it because I thought that is so cool that she was an actress who no longer rehearses because she is governed by the grace of God.

Randy: That is very interesting. Having done some theater in college, what you're talking about, that process, is actually exactly what you do when you're on stage performing. I can see how that would naturally translate –

Jennifer: Well, we live by that.

Randy: Yeah, but when it becomes a performance it's not real. So, that's great if you're going to be onstage or going to be doing a TV show or movie or something. But not so good in life for us to perform and fake it. That's really good.

Sheila: I said there are some things we're not going to get to all of them, which means you'll just have to get the book. Ha! Ha! I'll tell you how in a little bit.

But the last one you talk about, you talk about lift up. Has that to do with worship?

Jennifer: Yes, it does. I base that on, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me." You know that's what the psalmist was doing. He was talking to his own soul which is what we do when we talk to ourselves. And he said, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul." He didn't say, "Bless

my soul, oh Lord!” Right?

[Laughter]

Randy: That’s good!

Jennifer: He said, “Bless the Lord, oh my soul.” And I have learned that when we truly lift up the Lord, then our problems feel lighter. When we are really lifting up the Lord, when his light is the brightest thing in our thought closets, when he is right there in the middle of everything, then we have the happiness that we long for, that we don't get by striving. But we receive it by making God first.

And here’s the thing, when we’re the center of our thought closets, it’s very lonely in there. But when we say, “Bless the Lord, oh my soul,” then our whole lives become blessed.

Sheila: I think one of the powerful things is, as I got to the end of your book, was realizing that – it’s like if you're looking at Philippians, Paul’s letter to the church of Philippi, every single page is dripping with joy, even though he’s in prison. I think part of that is because he has this assurance that God is good, God is in control, and we’re not home yet. There’s a day when, we are promised, Revelation 21 says there’s a day when the final tear will be wiped off our face by God himself. And I think that gives us the strength to keep pressing through in difficult seasons.

Jennifer: Amen! To tell our souls march on. March on.

Randy: I want to point out that you did do a version of “Me, Myself, and Lies” for young women. And as a father of two young women I greatly appreciate that. Why did you feel there was a need to really speak to the younger generation?

Jennifer: I have some nieces. I am a mom of sons, but I have nieces and I recognize the pressure they're under with social media defining who they are. I figured if I can get this message into the heart of a teenage girl so that she can live according to her identity, instead of having to undo all the lies she tells herself, then we’re going to have a generation of women that will be changed and can change our world.

Randy: Social media tends to be a very fake stage. So I totally get that. I appreciate you doing that.

Sheila: One of the things, I think one of the greatest lies that perhaps any of us can believe is that there is so much heartache, so much trouble in the world, and there's nothing we can do. I don't believe that anymore. I believe that you and I can make a huge difference in the world and

we're going to show you one life-changing way right now. Would you watch this?

On the mission field

Tammy: So this is their water source, I'm assuming?

This is my first encounter here in India and I can already tell that there is so much to be done. This is where they have to come every day, all the way down here to get their water. This is his only source of water.

James: Well, you see this. It's a nice little flow of water right here but upstream there's horses and cows and pigs. And right up the hill eight children died from contaminated water here.

There is so much here in Central America and in the poverty stricken nation, it just touches your heart. It's endless.

Randy: Weena here lost her older brother and a year later her older sister, both of them victims of water-borne illness.

I want to look at this water. Aww! It smells horrible. I would never make a child drink this but these children have no choice. It's this or nothing. It's not enough to tell them don't drink the water. We have to say here's water you can drink.

Ralph: You know, we're drilling wells. We're providing water for God's creation. He knows them. He knows them by name and he wants them to have clean, fresh water.

Betty: Please help us! I know this would be a desire of your heart too, just as James and I do. We desire to pass on the blessings. We've been so mightily blessed ourselves and we want to bless these families. So join with us, please! Will you?

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: It's one of the most moving things I've ever experienced in my life, is to actually see with my own eyes what it looks like for so many moms who are no different than me, who love their children the way I love my son, but who are born in a very different part of the world, where the very basics are not available.

When my son comes home from college, the week before he comes home I'm thinking about how can I get all of his favorite foods in, how can I stock the pantry with all the things he loves. And there is a certain kind of bottled water he loves. Ridiculous, but I get it for him because he's my boy.

And then I think of these moms. All they want is to be able to give one cup of clean water to their children, because every single mother I met on my last trip to Angola, every single mother had lost a child, because they have this choice. It's like a Sophie's choice. Do I give them no water, so they die that agonizing death of thirst, or do I give them this contaminated water knowing the very gift I give them might take their life?

But we can do something about it now. We can change this, Randy, for so little we can make a difference.

Randy: Yeah, you know most of us, if we've had the opportunity we would say yeah, I'll give a cup of water. You can give a cup of water, not just to one person, but to ten people; and not just one time but for a lifetime, for \$48, which seems unbelievable.

But let me tell you how it works. The average well costs \$4800, for us to go in and dig that well and put it in. It's going to serve, on average, about a thousand people. It's going to last, on average, for seventy years. When you do the math on that, that's how we can say \$48 will give water for a lifetime, clean water for a lifetime, to ten people. \$144 will give that same gift to 30 people.

Some of you, you can outright drill a well. You can give that gift of \$4800. I want you to pray about that. And if God has given you the means to do that, then do that. Others of you might want to partner with three other people. A gift of \$1200 times 4, there's a well right there.

Some of you, you're just going to have to pray and say, "God, do you want me to participate in this and if so, how much?" And then do it. Do it at God's direction.

I don't want to lean on you too hard and show you the images to guilt you. I want you to experience the joy of giving, the joy of reaching out, the joy of saying to others,

“Here’s clean water.” And not just in the water’s name, but in Jesus’ name.

Will you share the life and love of Christ with people around the world for a lifetime by giving them that clean water? I hope that God will lead you to do it. Go online, go to the phones, make the best gift you can.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day children living in extreme poverty are forced to make a dreadful choice: Drink polluted water filled with deadly disease or perhaps die of thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

The good news is there is a solution. **Mission:** Water for Life is one of the most proven and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything!

With your gift today you can help drill 400 water wells in remote villages in 15 nations. A gift of \$48 will provide disease-free water for ten people, \$72 will provide for 15 people, and \$144 will help provide clean water straight from the ground for 30 people.

Please also consider an additional gift of \$100 to help provide three families with water filtration kits in emergency areas where our drilling rigs are unable to reach. As our thank you, we'll send you the books, *Words of Jesus* and *Words of Healing*. One contains only the words of Jesus and the other scriptures for healing in your body, mind, and soul. With your \$100 gift you can receive both hardbound and softbound editions of these scripture promise books.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people. Or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well and you may request our beautiful hand sculpted "Determined Eagle" bronze. Please call, write, or make your gift online.

End of clip

On the mission field

James: Let me show you a water source that these kids are drinking from and it's

really literally, with no exaggeration, contaminated water. And they let this bucket down and they get the water but it's not sealed and controlled and capped.

Betty: They are making do with what they have but that's not good enough. It's not going to help them to be healthy. They've got this dirty, filthy, contaminated water to work with. They have to drink it to even survive a day. I know that there couldn't be a greater joy from the parents of these children, James, to be able to watch their children grow up. Well, they won't be able to do that if they don't have some fresh water because after a while the disease is going to kill them.

James: And we're the answer to that problem, all of us working together, each person doing what they can because we know the need is very real. We want you to see it up close in person. But the thing we really want you to hear and know, you're really the answer. You're the way to provide hope and help to people who deserve it and drilling fresh water wells, that's love indeed. Help us do it! Dial that telephone number and make the very best gift you can. Please do it and do it now. Please make the gift. Or you can go on lifetoday.org and make that gift online.

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: Thank you so much. And if the phones are busy, please stay committed. We can do this! One of the things we would love to send is Jennifer's book. It's called "Me, Myself, and Lies – What to Say When You Talk to Yourself" and you know we all do!

I'm so grateful for you being here, Jennifer. This is just a wonderful book, and I know it's going to help so many people.

Randy: We do appreciate it! Please, ask for the book when you make that best gift you can. And we appreciate you joining with us, and the water well outreach, changing lives. And today we want to say thank you to Jennifer for being here with us, blessing us with your words and really, just showing us how to speak the right words.

Thank you so much, Jennifer.