

# Maria Baltazzi's "Take a Shot at Happiness: How to Write, Direct & Produce the Life You Want" to Light Up Times Square

*Nine-time-award-winner "Take a Shot at Happiness" takes a creative approach to helping readers reshape their perspectives and take control of their destinies.*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES,  
December 20, 2024 /

[EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- Just as the Times Square billboard draws attention to the heart of New York City, Baltazzi's "Take a Shot at Happiness: How to Write, Direct & Produce the Life You Want" helps readers focus on personal growth and well-being.

Happiness Explorer and Emmy Award-winning producer Maria Baltazzi's "Take a Shot at Happiness: How to Write, Direct & Produce the Life You Want" is a timely and fitting choice for Manhattan's Times Square billboard this month. Winner of nine prestigious awards, the book offers readers a fresh, creative, and practical approach to transforming their perspectives and taking control of their personal narratives as the writer, director, and producer of their story.

Through a blend of science, spirituality, and creativity, "Take a Shot at Happiness: How to Write, Direct & Produce the Life You Want" introduces camera phone photo-journaling and reflective prompts to empower readers to explore and reshape their happiness and well-being. Each chapter highlights one of Baltazzi's eight acclaimed Happiness Essentials—virtues embraced by happy people—brought to life through stories inspired by blockbuster films, global events, and a wholebeing approach (mind, body, and spirit).

The "U.S. Review of Books" calls it a "dynamic treatise" that fosters self-reflection and personal transformation. Baltazzi's perspective, strongly influenced by her Emmy-winning television career and extensive travels to all seven continents twice, has earned the book recognition for its



creativity and innovation.

## NYC Times Square Billboard Showcase

On December 21, "Take a Shot at Happiness" will be featured on a Times Square billboard as part of an exclusive program curated by publisher Ted Olczak of the "Independent Press Award and NYC Big Book Award" magazine, ISSN 2836-9149. This celebration of literary excellence will highlight Baltazzi's book alongside works from other distinguished authors, giving them a platform to inspire audiences worldwide.

From 12:11 a.m. to 11:12 p.m., the strategically placed billboard on Broadway, just north of 46th Street, will feature a couple of minutes of content from award-winning authors every hour. The initiative promises unprecedented exposure for literary talents in one of the world's most iconic locations.



Author Maria Baltazzi, PhD, MFA

“

[L]ike being back on the island with Maria! heartfelt...It was a great reminder of how quickly you can change your state of mind and the powerful impact that intention can have on your life.”

*Jeff Probst, Emmy award-winning "Survivor" Host and Executive Producer*

Mr. Olczak expressed his enthusiasm for the program, stating, "It's so important to support literacy and the arts. This year, I have the opportunity to celebrate great authors' books making a difference as they chose to be featured on a billboard by the TKTS Broadway ticket booth in the heart of New York City's Times Square. I recommend others to think about when they are purchasing a book, I'm not just giving a gift to myself and the knowledge it brings, but I'm also supporting authors, illustrators, publishers, and the entire literary community."

With its unique approach and universal message, "Take a Shot at Happiness" offers readers meaningful insights into

self-discovery. This Times Square showcase celebrates the book's universal appeal and reinforces its timeless relevance for anyone seeking a more meaningful life.

Book Summary: "Take a Shot at Happiness: How to Write, Direct & Produce the Life You Want" On a steamy jungle island in the middle of the South China Sea, a groundbreaking television show is about to reach its shocking conclusion. A dimly lit stage surrounded by flickering tiki

torches illuminates the host, a jury of seven contestants sitting on tree stumps, and the final two contenders vying for a million-dollar prize. It was season one of CBS' "Survivor," a competition show that would become one of the longest-running—and most beloved—unscripted series. Among the original supervising producers of this iconic show was Maria Baltazzi.

"Survivor" strips its contestants of everything except their wits, challenging them to adapt, strategize, and persevere to win a life-changing prize. As Maria observed this intense competition, she noticed something profound: contestants oftentimes revealed hidden personality traits they had never confronted, including surprising negative aspects of themselves. Inspired by this revelation, Maria recognized that she, too, needed to strip away the negativity clouding her life. Focusing on self-affirming actions, she began to create the life she truly wanted to lead.

"Take a Shot at Happiness" is Maria's collection of insights into self-discovery and happiness, shaped by her career in the entertainment industry, observations of people and events, extensive travels, and deep study of well-being. Within these pages is a practical and creative guide to happiness, inviting readers to explore their inner world through thoughtful journaling and camera phone photography focused on what matters most.

**SEE ME**

MARIA BALTAZZI, PhD, MFA  
THREE AWARDS-WINNING PRODUCER

TAKE A SHOT AT  
HAPPINESS

HOW TO WRITE, DIRECT & PRODUCE THE LIFE YOU WANT

**WINNER**  
Well-being

at the AWARDS DINNER, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025

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Book CAMP  
2025  
MAY 2-4, 2025

The NYC Big Book Award will be presented to Maria Baltazzi, PhD, MFA in person at the dinner on May 3rd



NYC Big Book Award

Even when life feels overwhelming or uncertain, you have the power to rewrite your story. "Take



a Shot at Happiness" empowers readers to be the writer, director, and producer of the life they want—while enjoying the journey along the way.

## Reviews

"Baltazzi's recollections—her early frustrations, her aspirations, her impressive career trajectory, and her life-changing discoveries—are deftly interwoven into this dynamic treatise... [Her] foray into the world of words and wisdom will doubtless find a large base of grateful followers whose efforts will be rewarded with the promise of new, exhilarating life directions."

— The "U.S. Review of Books," RECOMMENDED Book List

"Captivating and uplifting, 'Take a Shot at Happiness' feels like a conversation with a trusted friend. It's a heartfelt and inspiring guide that reminds us of the power we all have within to create a more fulfilling and authentic life. Maria's unique perspective, tips, and engaging creative exercises will encourage you to tap into your inner creativity to uncover your own path to happiness. This is a must-read if you're ready to start your own journey of self-discovery or want a fresh perspective."

— Roma Downey, OBE, Emmy-nominated Actress, Producer, New York Times Bestselling Author

"I recommend that you take a shot at reading this practical and accessible book on happiness. Maria Baltazzi offers a creative approach that combines journaling and phone photography activities that help you integrate the concepts she writes about."

— Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar, New York Times Bestselling Author of "Happier," Former Harvard Lecturer, and Founder of the Happiness Studies Academy

"Reading 'Take a Shot at Happiness' was like being back on the island with Maria! The same heartfelt approach she took as a producer on Survivor can be felt on every page. It's presented in a way that lets you choose to read it cover to cover or go specifically to sections that are speaking to you right now. It was a great reminder of how quickly you can change your state of mind and the powerful impact that intention can have on your life."

— Jeff Probst, Emmy Award-winning "Survivor" Host and Executive Producer

"From the moment I met and worked with Maria, I quickly understood her to be a deep thinker. A soulful reflective person who is constantly on a path of discovery. I share Maria's enthusiasm for making the most of every precious moment we are alive. Focusing on what's right instead of

WELL-BEING

**Take a Shot at Happiness: How to Write, Direct & Produce the Life You Want**  
Maria Baltazzi, PhD, MFA

Discover this nine-time award-winning guide to living with intention and joy, honored as the NYC Big Book Award Winner in Wellbeing. Written by Emmy Award-winning Producer and Happiness Explorer Maria Baltazzi, this transformative book invites you to reflect on what truly matters and step into the role of writer, director, and producer of the life you want.



Maria shares a creative approach to crafting a meaningful life. Using camera phone photo journaling and reflective prompts, you'll explore what happiness means to you. Each chapter delves into one of Maria's eight acclaimed Happiness Essentials—the virtues and qualities embraced by happy people, brought to life through stories inspired by blockbuster movies, world events, and a wholebeing approach (mind, body, and spirit).

**\*The U.S. Review of Books calls it a "dynamic treatise."**

**Make this holiday season one of gratitude, purpose, and joy.** "Take a Shot at Happiness" is more than a book—it's the perfect gift for anyone ready to embark on their own happiness journey.

**Available now wherever books are sold online. Download the companion Take a Shot at Happiness App to deepen your journey.**

**ISBN: 978-1637588604 • \$18.99**  
Available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and online bookstores.  
**www.mariabaltazzi.com**

AS SEEN IN the Last Minute Gifts 2024 Issue

what's wrong, being grateful, forgiving, and being surrounded by love. While there is no sure-fire method to happiness, Maria's book will give you a good shot at getting there with entertaining life lessons on how to live, love, and learn."

— Phil Keoghan, MNZM, Emmy Award-winning Producer and Host of "Amazing Race"

"As a TV show creator and producer, I understand the power of storytelling to inspire and transform lives—and so does Maria Baltazzi as a seasoned producer. Her book is a compelling inner journey that offers insights from the production trenches and the films and shows we love. Maria offers practical tools and insights to help you achieve a life of happiness and purpose. I highly recommend this book to anyone looking to create positive change in their life from a creative approach."

— Mark Burnett, Executive Producer, "Survivor" and Former Chairman of MGM Worldwide Television Group

"I'm not an especially spiritual person, but always believed in 'trusting the process.' Maria Baltazzi's brilliant roadmap creates a clear, concise process for anyone looking to improve their balance of mind, body, and spirit. As someone in professional transition, I found this book both incredibly instructive and inspiring."

— Kelly Kahl, Former President of CBS Entertainment

"This book is an invaluable tool, so effectively laying out multiple cases and methods for 'taking a shot at happiness.' Impressive work and applicable to so many facets of our lives. Maria offers fact-based reasoning to get to the change or changes we may want or need and also, integrated calls to action that help get us to taking that shot. She makes the case so effectively for the changes toward happiness we need to make (and can make). And Maria takes us there, toward those changes, without the scary upheaval often preventing us from taking that shot."

— Mark Thompson, Two-time Emmy Award-winning Newscaster and Writer, Specials Host and Producer for the Fox Broadcasting Company Stations

"This is a remarkable book from a new author with a unique point of view. Baltazzi started her personal journey by working in the world's most intense pressure cooker of human behavior. It wasn't in a university or a science lab—she was out in a jungle directing the TV show "Survivor." There she saw people under enormous stress behaving badly—and sometimes beautifully. That prompted her journey to discover how people facing enormous obstacles can choose to be happy. So, one Ph.D. later, she has compiled her years of observation, research and critical thinking into the most unique guide to happiness that I have read. So, what's with the 'Directing' metaphor? Like on a TV show, the Director makes decisions and the Crew follows them. What are you going to be in your life? The Director or the Crew? This book is a step-by-step guide on how to take control of your future happiness."

— Michael J. Miller, Emmy Award-winner, Executive Producer of Specials for Networks including Discovery and National Geographic

About the Author

Maria Baltazzi is a Happiness Explorer. Her calling is to help others become happier and live more intentionally. As an Emmy-winning TV producer, well-being advocate and teacher, world traveler, and luxury travel designer specializing in transformative adventures, Maria brings a unique lens into conscious living.

Like all of us, Maria has faced challenges both personally and professionally. Rather than letting life's setbacks defeat her, she embarked on a life-changing journey of self-discovery. Along the way, she identified, researched, and explored eight Happiness Essential—the virtues that most happy people embody. Today, Maria helps others discover their own path to happiness through fun, creative practices that combine camera phone photography and reflective journaling.

Maria holds an MFA in film from ArtCenter College of Design and a PhD in Conscious-Centered Living from the University of Sedona. Her extensive studies include Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training with Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach, Primordial Sound Meditation Teacher Training from The Chopra Center, Happiness Studies with Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar, Neural Plasticity Training with Dr. Rick Hanson, Spiritual Psychology with Drs. Ron and Mary Hulnick at the University of Santa Monica, Positive Psychology through the University of Pennsylvania, the Science of Happiness through the University of Berkeley, and an Inner MBA from MindfulNYU.

In her own life, Maria finds joy in giving back. She has walked over 9,500 miles to raise funds for charity, including marathons on all seven continents—and is still going. Her adventurous spirit has led her to climb the 15,000-foot trail to Machu Picchu, summit Mt. Kilimanjaro twice, trek to Everest Base Camp, lead African safaris, and make pilgrimages along the Camino de Santiago.

Professionally, Maria has developed and produced shows throughout the world, including contributing as one of the original supervising producers of CBS's mega-hit "Survivor." She is a member of both the Directors Guild of America and the Producers Guild of America, a Fellow National Member of The Explorers Club, and an Advisor for the Transformational Travel Council.

Maria's diverse experiences, expertise, and infectious enthusiasm, makes her a true inspiration for those seeking to live their best lives.

Ted Olczak, Publisher

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