

Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter
November 2002, Vol 1, Issue #1: Paying Attention

989 words of content -- approximate reading time required: 3.95 minutes. And isn't your happiness worth it?

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Welcome! This is the premier issue of my e-newsletter. Yes, this is the one I've been intending to birth for nearly nine months (how ironic, that timing...). I've gotten past obsessing, and thanks to the assistance of my saint of a wife and several coaching colleagues, I am ready to throw myself out there for feedback. This will be a monthly (or nearly so) communication. I invite your comments, reactions, and ideas. Thank you, in advance. Jim

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I. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS - ORIGIN OF THE 13 PRINCIPLES

All the marketing/networking training I've taken over the past four years has stressed the need to define "my unique message." I've struggled with who I am, how I describe what I do, and how to say it all in a 30-second "elevator speech." Reflection, discussion, reading, and research have exhausted me. "What is my message supposed to be?" I have wondered.

Way back in 1983 I took a course on defining my values. Shortly thereafter I coined a phrase, which became my personal motto: "Happiness is a decision, not an event!" Those who've known me for awhile know that for years I've placed that motto on personal and business note cards, emails, and literature. Meanwhile, I looked other places for my "message."

RISK AND INSANITY COLLIDE: About three months ago, a client asked me to think about doing a fun, non-tech program for a technical conference. At the moment she asked the question, I had up on my computer screen a blank email with my signature & motto on it. Struck by insanity and clarity at the same moment, I tossed out a proposal: "what about a program on the principles of happiness?" (keep in mind I had no idea what those were, exactly). She said yes. Yikes!

So I began to think, and read, and write, and create, and during October I delivered a program on the Principles of Happiness. It turned out to be the most successful speaking program I've delivered in four years. It was like coaching 115 people simultaneously. Very interactive, great reviews, and the feedback overwhelmingly proclaimed that "this helped me" and "I'd like to put all my employees thru this workshop!" Well, the universe continued to send signals. I'm already booked three more times, with yet another proposal awaiting approval.

It was as I was writing up my third proposal that it hit me -- THIS is my "unique message." The 'decision to be happy' is a theme and a tool I have used in coaching and training and LIVING for many years, but always as a subtext. Mine was a classic case of being too close to the problem to see that the answer was staring me in the face. Once I got that concept, it was an easy

