Happiness@TheSpeedofLife

Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter
March 2004: Speak the Truth
1,603 words of content -- approximate reading time required: **6.4** minutes. And isn't your happiness worth it?
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Welcome to my e-newsletter, which focuses on defining and applying the 13 Principles of Happiness in your life and work. It is a (more or less) monthly communication. I invite your comments, reactions, and ideas. Jim

A special welcome to all who've joined us recently. We are now mailing to over 750 happy people! My goal is to grow to over 1,000 readers, so….

==>If you like what you read here why not share it with a friend?
==>If you received this from someone else you can join in a few seconds. Instructions are at the end of this newsletter. I never rent, sell, or give away my lists.

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I. HAPPINESS PRINCIPLE #11: SPEAK THE TRUTH

Premise: "You can be totally honest and unconditionally constructive at the same time"

First, a distinction. TELLING the truth is about being honest when you communicate. SPEAKING the truth goes a level deeper in that it compels you to actually say what you are thinking, even if what you have to say is unpopular or will be met with resistance.

How often do you have regrets because you did not speak up? Have you ever found yourself in a difficult situation because you had earlier avoided saying what needed to be said?

Part of happiness is accepting where you are at any point in time. It is about telling YOURSELF the truth, as well.

WHO DECIDES WHAT IS TRUTH?

At the time of writing this newsletter, we are surrounded by coverage of the controversy over a movie, The Passion. It is difficult not to feel the pull of multiple truths around us. Depending on what you read, watch, or listen to, the movie is: a religious experience or an example of bloody cinematography run amok; worthy of five stars or only two; an historically accurate retelling or a flawed and biased account; a work of great vision or merely a vehicle for profiteering from the related merchandise sales.

Yikes! What is the truth? We felt the same confusion around us when the US invaded Iraq (justified war or violation of international law?), when a loved one died after a long illness (a tragedy or a blessing?), and when we made our last job change (bold move or insanity?)

Which one is the truth? Fact is, multiple truths can, and always have, existed together. It is possible to hold a thing to be true for you AND simultaneously understand and acknowledge other people's truths. Religion, politics, marriage, entertainment – these are all examples of fields where people believe in their own truth, yet allow that others have their own version.

Speak the Truth does not mean you must personally lay claim to THE "one-and-only" truth. It simply means that you will be happier if you acknowledge what you see to be the truth FOR YOU, and be comfortable saying it to others.

CAVEAT: if your "truth" is harmful to others, then maybe you should start by going back to Principle #2, Live Your Values, and examine what is truly in your heart. The reality is that you will experience more peace and contentment when you speak up and behave in ways that honor your own values versus what others have imposed on you.

How does one speak the truth?

~~ Just do it. My mother always used to quote Mark Twain at me: If you always tell the truth, you never have to remember anything.

~~ "Vote your conscience". Do or don't do something based on your truth, not somebody else's..

~~ Stop playing games. Begin by facing the truth about something YOU are doing. Ask yourself, "What's really behind why I am doing <this>?" When you get to the root issue, you'll be able to address it more effectively than if you keep lying to yourself.

~~ Look beyond the fear. Try to focus less on the embarrassment you might feel if people react to what you say. Instead, remind yourself that if no one speaks up, nothing will improve. Look past your fear to what the situation will be like once you've addressed the issue. You'll be happy you did.

Remember: We don't miss truth because truth is difficult to see. It is quite visible. We miss it because it is more comfortable to pretend it is not there.

~*~*~QUOTES~*~*~

"The greatest enemy of any one of our truths may be the rest of our truths." ~William James

"When I tell any truth, it is not for the sake of convincing those who do not know it, but for the sake of defending those that do." ~William Blake

"Truth only reveals itself when one gives up all preconceived ideas." ~Shoseki

"Truth is tough. It will not break, like a bubble, at a touch; nay, you may kick it about all day, like a football, and it will be round and full at evening." ~Oliver Wendell Holmes

If you'd like to download a 1-page summary of the 13 Principles as a reference, you can do so right now: http://www.1leadercoach.com/happiness/philosophies.cfm

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II. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: MY TRUTH FORMS MY REALITY

"There is no truth. There is only perception." ~Gustave Flaubert

Last year I joined a Mastermind group of entrepreneurs. We meet weekly to help each other grow our businesses thru focusing all our creative energy (aka "the Mastermind") on one member at a time.

In addition to addressing current business challenges, we decided in 2004 to do a group study of the book, "The One Minute Millionaire". This book has challenged me to examine my own myths and beliefs about money. The TRUTH is, I was raised poor, and Catholic. Based on what I was

taught, wealth is something that only vain and selfish people acquire. The TRUTH is that I'm embarrassed to speak of financial success. The TRUTH is that I've always feared that if I acquire wealth, I'll become "like those selfish rich people."

Well, as long as I hold those beliefs, I'm likely to behave in ways that push wealth away. Why would I want to be rich if I think of rich people as undeserving, right? The truth is that to change my behavior I must first change my thinking.

Thus I've made a written commitment to become an Enlightened Millionaire (one who shares rather than hoards). I have no idea how that will happen, but facing the truth about my own thinking has allowed me to take the first step: giving myself permission to think BIG!

A question for you: ***In what ways might you be denying yourself something important in life simply because you haven't told yourself that it's okay? *****

**e.g. to fall in love ** to take on a big project ** to be a leader ** to go on a cruise ** to return to school ** to lose weight ** to be happy.

http://www.emergingleader.com/article21.shtml
Click here for an overview of Mastermind Groups by my colleague Christine Zust

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III. IN THE WORKPLACE

Many years ago I managed an operations team during a period of near-supersonic growth. I was putting in obscenely long hours and was constantly "under water." In the dictionary, the word "stress" had my picture next to it. To top it off, I felt very isolated.

There came a time when we all had to meet at the same time to review a major technology project. As we went thru all the work that was to be done for the rollout, everyone busily took notes and nodded their heads. "Sure. No problem. I can do that." Everyone sounded so confident and competent. "It's just me," I thought. "I'm such a loser!" I could literally feel the air being sucked out of the room.

Then Mary, my accounting manager spoke up: "I'm already so deep in backlog that it will be months before I come up for air. There's simply no way I can manage this!" What happened next was as if a dam burst. The room filled with cries of agreement and wails of despair. I grabbed a marker and started capturing issues on a flip chart. Two hours later we emerged from the meeting laughing and happy.

Did we solve our backlog problems? Not entirely, tho much progress was made. What I learned from the experience was that most of our stress came not from the backlog of work, but from the feeling that each of us believed we were alone in our struggle. It was the proverbial "elephant in the room" – everyone knew it was there, yet as long as we did not say it out loud, we could avoid having to deal with it. Once Mary Spoke the Truth, that elephant lost its power to intimidate.

TRY THIS

What is an important issue plaguing your workplace that no one wants to talk about? How might you bring that issue to light? Be bold, be brave, and be the one to say, "Houston, we have a problem!" Then watch that elephant shrink right before your eyes.

Remember, leadership is not about a title. Anyone can be a leader if they focus on helping others to succeed and grow!

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IV. RANDOM FUN STUFF

IF YOU PROCRASTINATE, this may be for you. A friend of mine is running a contest to find America's Biggest Procrastinator. Do you know anyone? If you spoke the truth, might it be YOU, even? Drop by and enter you or someone you know and you could win the ultimate prize package worth $5,000 to end your procrastination.
http://www.AmericasBiggestProcrastinator.com

GO HERE, HOLD THIS: For those who believe that the internet provides nothing but endless, unproductive distractions, here is proof. My patience expired after just 2 minutes and 4 seconds. What concerns me here is that my college freshman son is the one who sent this link to me. I don't even want to know how long he engaged in this exercise while he should have been studying math or anthropology ☺
www.HoldTheButton.com

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V. INSTRUCTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Jim Smith is a Leadership and Authentic Happiness Coach, Trainer, and Speaker. Jim is a recovering corporate executive who has over a decade of experience helping leaders at all levels to be happier and more successful in their lives and careers. He'd love to help you succeed in a bigger game!

=> P.S. Don't keep us a secret. We grow by referral, so please pass it on! To join our complimentary newsletter, please visit our website or follow the instructions to sign up at the bottom of this message.

Drop me a line anytime with your feedback and questions! Jim mailto:Jim@1LeaderCoach.com

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Happiness is a decision, not an event.
How will YOU decide today?
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