



# Happiness@TheSpeedofLife

## Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter Edition 14: The Skill of Savoring

1762 words of content -- approximate reading time required: **7.05** minutes\*\*. And isn't your happiness worth it?

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

Welcome to my e-newsletter, which focuses on defining and applying the Principles of Happiness in your life and work. It is a (more or less) monthly communication. I invite your comments, reactions, and ideas. Jim

Yes, dear readers, it has been a LONG time since you last saw an edition of this newsletter. For a very significant reason I stopped writing, and I've not known how to get "unstuck" and moving forward again. Then, over a couple of recent weeks, I shared my frustration with several friends. They each responded with an outpouring of support and ideas and as a result, I know how to begin again. I need to start by telling you a story. It is a sad story. Once you read it, I hope you will understand...

A special welcome to all who've joined us over the past few months (and who have yet to receive an issue!). We are mailing to over 1100 happy people! My new goal is to grow to over 1,500 readers, so....

==>If you like what you read, why not share it with a friend?

==>If you received this from someone else you can join in a few seconds. Just send an email to [Subscribe@1LeaderCoach.com](mailto:Subscribe@1LeaderCoach.com). I do not rent, sell, or give away my lists.

### IN THIS ISSUE

=====

- I. The Skill of Savoring
- II. Personal Reflection: Savoring Kara
- III. Four Techniques for Savoring
- IV. Next Month: Gratitude – A powerful tool for building Happiness
- V. Instructions and contact info

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

### I. THE SKILL OF SAVORING

Have you ever had an experience that was so positive and powerful that you wanted it to last forever? Did you find yourself basking in the moment, soaking it in, noticing every aspect of the moment? Did you feel like you could not wait to tell others about it? Did you bring your pictures, and tell your story to an eager audience, reliving the experience over and again?

If you answer "yes" to any of the above, you have engaged in the skill of Savoring. Savoring is a powerful way to build your positive emotion (aka happiness) muscle. Savoring is essentially the conscious act of slowing down to notice and enjoy a part of life.

What happens when we use the skill of savoring? We fill up our own tank for the next part of the trip. We create a tool (memory) we can use at a future low point to pull us back up. We can even spread our good feelings to others thru sharing.

What follows is a story about how I applied the skill of Savoring to help others and myself. At the end, look for more on how to engage this skill for yourself.





## *Happiness@TheSpeedofLife*

Our 22-year old daughter, who believed in guardian angels so much that she chose Angela for her confirmation name, was suddenly an angel herself. Our little Asian Beauty, whom we adopted from Thailand when she was 8 years old and who had been such an important part of our lives for 13 years, was gone. Left behind: mom, dad, older sister, two younger brothers.

This is the sad part of my story. The rest is about what goodness emerged.

Within hours, everyone knew. And in the next five days we learned as much about Kara as we thought we already knew. Hundreds and hundreds and again hundreds of people came to the wake service, and at least half of them said to us, “Kara was my good friend.” People she knew from grade school, high school, college, her place of work for four years, and from her life.

**\*\* “Kara was my good friend.” \*\***

We learned about what an amazing person she was. We laughed at new stories, and stood in awe of the immense amount of love that people held for her. Former schoolteachers told of the special regard they held for the little girl who struggled with English but excelled on the soccer field. Girlfriends who had been her “special buddy” in the second grade when she spoke not a word of English told us of their special bond and that “I will always remember her.” And in this Internet-era funeral for a Net-Generation child, nearly 100 people posted web logs to Kara’s online obituary – happy memories along with messages of support, sympathy, love, and hope.

How does this tie to Happiness? Throughout the week, even as I grieved for Kara, I also marveled at the strength and resilience of our friends and family. I noticed how a great many people – myself included – were able to hold, almost simultaneously, grief over her death and a celebration of her life; sadness for her absence yet gratitude that she had, however improbably from halfway around the world, passed our way.

Cheryl and I, even in the midst of our grieving, found happiness in the fact that we had no regrets. When Kara had been at the house three days before her death, we’d parted on good terms, with hugs and “I love yous” all around. When she died, we were “whole” with each other. We found some peace and joy and comfort in that fact.

**\*\* Savoring Kara \*\***

I was determined to deliver a eulogy at Kara’s funeral. I turned to the tool of Savoring to assemble that eulogy. I contacted many people from her life – her boyfriend, close friends, and family – and asked them to share with me a story or a memory of Kara. I then wove those into the memorial I shared with the more than 400 people who attended her funeral mass.

If you’d like to learn more about Kara, you can read her eulogy.

<http://www.1leadercoach.com/happiness/eulogy.cfm>

That act of sharing, of Savoring, her life had a most amazing and calming effect on me and those who had helped me write the eulogy. I believe that sharing Kara’s story with others has ensured that in some small way she is still present with us – in our hearts, in our memories, and in our love. And for that, I will always be happy.

Kara Watsana Angela Smith, b. 1982, Chang Mai Province, Thailand; d. 2004, Cleveland, Ohio, USA.

**\*\* Happiness is not just for the “good times” \*\***



I am fairly certain that some readers may be thinking it odd that I chose to speak of such sadness in a newsletter about Happiness. Why? Because this tragic event helped me to realize, on a very deep level, that the Principles of Happiness and the tools of Positive Emotion are not just for the good times in life. Indeed, it is during the bad times that we most have need of the strength and resilience that come from the intentional use of Gratitude, Forgiveness, Joy, Happiness, Calm, Optimism, and – above all -- Hope.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

### **III. MORE: FOUR TECHNIQUES FOR SAVORING**

Here are several different ways to engage in this Positive Emotion-building skill:

**ABSORPTION:** slowing down in the moment, and noticing all the sensations you are experiencing. Immerse yourself totally in what is happening. Eat a bowl of popcorn one kernel at a time, noticing the sweet/salt taste on your tongue and the feel of it in your mouth; resist the urge to just shovel it in. Go to a movie or a play and completely let go of your reality to flow with the film as though you were in it yourself. Attend a family event and allow yourself to let go of everything outside while you soak in every little detail and nuance – the smile on Mom’s face, the joyful play of your two-year old nephew, the happy chaos (or quiet togetherness) of interaction that you normally take for granted.

**MEMORY-BUILDING:** the act of creating mementoes of a moment. Memory building occurs when we take pictures, buy souvenirs on vacation, do scrap booking, or attach a sound or sensation to an event. Do certain songs bring back good memories of your teen years, a certain person, a special time or event in your life? It happens all the time; you can intentionally create positive memories when you focus on this skill.

**SELF-APPRECIATION/SELF-CONGRATULATION:** is about giving yourself permission for POSITIVE self-talk. It’s saying to yourself, “I am so proud of you. I think you did a great job!”

**SHARING:** occurs when we tell our own vacation stories or relive with a friend how her boyfriend surprised her with a marriage proposal over the weekend. Telling others our “story” as a way to relive an experience is the most powerful way of savoring.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story. I appreciate the chance to Savor, once more, Kara’s memory.

**Question:**

***How might you make intentional use of the tools of Happiness today to increase your resilience tomorrow?***

Want some ideas? If you’d like to download a 1-page summary of the 13 Principles of Happiness as a reference, you can do so right now:

<http://www.1leadercoach.com/happiness/philosophies.cfm>

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

### **IV. NEXT MONTH: HAPPINESS RETURNS**

Thanks for listening. I have my next couple of editions lined up and ready to go. Watch for next month’s newsletter on Gratitude. Gratitude is a powerful skill for strengthening our “positive emotion muscles!”

