



Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter
Edition 16: Different Choices, Different Outcomes

1276 words of content -- approximate reading time required: 5.1 minutes. And isn't your happiness worth it?

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Welcome to my e-newsletter, which focuses on defining and applying the Principles of Happiness and Positive Emotion in your life and work. Actually, I should say, “welcome back,” as I’ve been absent from the scene for several months (more on this below).

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I. RETURNING FROM LIMBO

Yes, Happiness @TheSpeedofLife is back.

Three years ago I launched this e-zine as a vehicle for spreading the good news about Happiness. I called it a “more or less monthly publication,” and it has certainly lived up to the “less” descriptor! Following the death of my younger daughter in late 2004 I fell under a writer’s block that, until recently, felt large and immovable. Meanwhile, my business took off and I got comfortable hiding out behind the excuse, “I’m busy – I’ll get to that tomorrow...”

Suddenly it was months later, and “tomorrow” hadn’t arrived. What’s up with that? Hmmm. We humans are creatures of habit. Once we become comfortable in a situation, good or bad, we tend to settle down into this self-sustaining cycle that keeps us stable.

Understanding The Cycle

The cycle goes like this: A Situation or event occurs. I have Thoughts about this situation. My thoughts fuel an Emotion. My emotion results in certain Physical Feelings that go with that emotion. My feelings cause me to take Action(s). My actions lead to an Outcome, which reinforces my original Thinking, which leads to the same Emotion, Feelings, Actions, and Outcomes, and on and on.

For example, my coworker speaks abruptly to me. I conclude that she is rude, which makes me angry. When I think about speaking with her, I feel nauseous and tense and I look down at the floor when I am near her. I avoid all conversation with her. Since she doesn’t speak to me, either, that behavior reinforces my thinking that she is rude, etc.



To break out of this cycle, I must **choose** to alter it at some point. I can change my thinking about a situation (“Maybe she was just having a bad day”). I can notice and change my physical feelings –for example, I can take a deep breath and relax my shoulders while making eye contact with her as I pass by. Or I can change my behavior, perhaps by engaging her in a few conversations about different subjects to see how she responds to me. Any one of these shifts can break the cycle of negative thinking I was in and lead to a different relationship with my coworker.

What does this have to do with writing? Well, consider my cycle:

Thought: “I have a writing block.” *Emotion:* frustration, perhaps a bit of anger at self. *Feelings:* whenever I sit down to try to write, a large lump forms in my gut, my shoulders tense up, I get drowsy or feel very unfocused and uninspired. *Behavior:* I spend a long time looking at blank page, nothing “creative” shows up on the page, I move on to something else. *Outcome:* nothing gets written, which reinforces my *Thinking*, “I have a writing block...” and so it went.

What Changed?

Fast forward to a few weeks ago, when two events conspired to push me headlong out of my comfort zone.

First, my wonderful spouse and I spent an entire weekend assessing our relationship, our lives, our careers, and our plans for the future. We emerged from the weekend with a 10-year plan for our relationship, our family, our finances, and our professional lives. Best of all, we updated our personal/family vision to include the statement, “We have adventures.” This new commitment – to having adventures – creates a need to step out of the comfort zone of “same old, same old.”

Two weeks later, I spent a very full and intense Vision Day (www.visionday.com), one-on-one with my coach. During my Vision Day I dove in, examined, and changed the physical feelings I was experiencing around the areas where I felt “stuck”. I emerged with a redefinition of my business model and a plan of action for my new vision.

That new vision involves re-branding myself as The Executive Happiness Coach and moving out into the world in a very different way. I have learned so much over the past 18 months, and I can’t wait to share it with my clients and my readers. To do so, I have recommitted to my writing practice, for I no longer see it as a chore, rather as a means to spread a powerful message to the world!

~*~*~QUOTES & TIPS~*~*~

*“God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know it's me. ~Variation of an excerpt from "The Serenity Prayer,"
Author unknown*

Ten Choices for Happiness

Jim Smith, The Executive Happiness Coach™



1. Choose to be joyful and to create fun and enjoyable activities in your life.
2. Choose to take responsibility for your own values, thoughts, emotions, feelings, behavior, and outcomes.
3. Choose to change your “filters” so you can see new possibilities and options, and see



problems as opportunities, challenges and gifts.

4. Choose to forgive and let go of judgments and grievances.
5. Choose to see the future through a lens of optimism and hope.
6. Choose to be generous and kind to others.
7. Choose to express gratitude for both small and big things/experiences in your life.
8. Choose to let go of relationships, material goods, or situations that drain you.
9. Choose to pay attention to your physical self; care for your body, and “listen” to it.
10. Choose to be happy today -- make it your intention to live in a positive mood everyday.

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>

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II. IN THE WORKPLACE: MAKING NEW CHOICES

Ever heard the cliché: “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results”?

Think about the aspects of your job where you are not happy with the current state of affairs. Maybe it is a relationship with your boss, a peer, or team member. Maybe it is a project that is stalled or a workflow process that is generating too many issues.

In how many of those areas are you continuing to “show up” in the same way as you always have? How many times do you say to yourself: “Well, this is the way we do things” or “Oh, that’s just the way ‘they’ are” or “If I just work longer or harder, that will make the difference”?

Try reviewing your circle of thoughts and actions. Where might you choose differently to move the circle to another level? If you change the conversation in your head, shift the way hold your body, change the way you respond to others, or in some way change the environment in which you are trying to address the situation, you may be surprised at how quickly you can affect what happens for you and for others.

Remember: Leadership is not about a title – anyone can be a leader when they focus on helping others succeed!

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III. RANDOM FUN – NOUNS AS VERBS

The old English major in me has recently been marveling at the way we so often turn nouns into verbs. Have you used any of these terms?

- ~“I googled it” (found it on the internet using Google.com)
- ~“Let me mapquest that” (look up directions thru Mapquest.com)
- ~“I’ll IM you later” (send you an InstantMessage)
- ~“I’ll text you when I’m available” (send you a text message from my mobile)

And I’m thinking, would it not be lovely if we could move more positive words into actions this same way? Imagine it: “I’ll happy you later today” (send some happiness your way).

Isn’t this how a trend starts?! ☺

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IV. INSTRUCTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Jim Smith is The Executive Happiness Coach™. He is a recovering corporate executive whose passion is to help people discover and increase the amount of Happiness in their lives and work.

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View past editions at <http://www.1leadercoach.com/newsletter/archives.cfm>

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

Happiness is a decision, not an event.

How will YOU decide today?

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