



**Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter
Edition 21: It's All About You!**

1123 words of content -- approximate reading time required: **4.5** 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.

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I. IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Last week I was wrapping up a workshop on conversation and listening. After everyone completed an action plan, I invited the participants to share one thing they were taking away with them.

One woman (who, during the workshop, had confessed to a “terrible habit of completing other people’s sentences”) told the group that she was going to try to stop interrupting her husband. “I’m not sure how he will handle it, though,” she added.

What happened next both horrified and delighted me. From across the room, one of her classmates challenged her: “It has nothing to do with him. It’s all about you, honey! Are you going to be a better listener...or not?” I was somewhat aghast at that challenge to someone’s personal action plan. Yet I saw her face literally light up, and I realized that a new learning had just occurred for her.

In that moment of coaching from a classmate, she’d realized that her listening skill had nothing to do with the person speaking. How she shows up in a conversation is totally up to her. “Even if he doesn’t notice, I know I will!” was her new declaration.

I am confident that woman’s learning is going to stay with her. Similarly, her classmate’s challenge is staying with me, a week after the class.

How I show up in a conversation isn’t about the other person – it is all about me. If I show up grouchy, distracted, or pessimistic, that conversation is probably going to carry a negative tone. Conversely, if I show up attentive, optimistic, and ready to contribute, a positive outcome becomes far more likely.

Sometimes I have days where I’ve got six to ten coaching conversations back-to-back. At the end of these marathons I sit down to capture my learning from the day in my journal. Sometimes



I write: Wow, there must have been something in the air – everybody showed up stressed today!
Another time I might write: Everyone I spoke with today was on a high!

Hey, guess what? Both of those days probably had the same variety of clients and issues – good, bad, ugly. How I was ‘showing up,’ however, had a huge influence on my experience in the conversations.

Do this for yourself: Look at your part in the conversation

Clients often complain about time wasted in an endless stream of “stupid meetings.” Is this a problem for you?

I remember Forrest Gump’s favorite saying, “Stupid is as stupid does.” Well, what are you doing? How are you entering those meetings? Do you brace yourself with coffee to stay awake while others waste your time, or do you arrive with an intention to make something happen? Do you sit back and watch, working on another project in your head? Or do you contribute to the conversation and look for ways to facilitate what is going on? Do you hear challenges as simple disagreement (needing some good conversation to clear up?) or do you hear them as attacks (thus requiring defensive tactics?).

Change the filters you bring to the conversation, and notice how it shifts.

Hey -- it’s all about you.

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

“If a pickpocket meets a Holy Man, he will see only his pockets.” ~Hari Dass

Overheard at a meeting last week (paraphrased): “The Golden Rule is one of the biggest problems we have in the workplace. Because people treat others like they treat themselves...and lots of people are very good at beating themselves up.”

The 13 Principles of Happiness provide a framework for centering ourselves, eliminating frictions, and showing up fully. If you’d like to download a 1-page summary of the 13 Principles of Happiness as a reference, you can do so here:

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

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II. IN THE WORKPLACE: PERSONAL SPACE

In one of my workshops I have participants stand and spread their arms straight out. Then I ask them to rotate at the waist to the left and the right (imagine a stretch routine at the start of an aerobics class), thus describing a full circle with their arms.

“What is this?” I ask.

“My personal space!” is the answer that comes back.



“That’s right – the space I can reach with my arms outstretched is the only space I can truly control. So the question you need to ask yourself is this: ‘is my personal space a warm and comfortable zone that people want to visit and in which I enjoy living, or... is it a toxic waste dump that everyone else seeks to avoid and in which I sit miserable and suffering?’”

While we can always point to “management” and say that “they” are responsible for creating a positive workplace culture, the fact is that the overall environment is little more than the accumulation of all our little personal circles. We bump up against each other all day, overlapping and influencing others.

“Are you a net contributor,” I ask, “or are you draining away the life energy of your workplace?” More than once, I’ve had participants come to me on break and express a fear that they are a drain, or to tell me about a coworker who drains them. This confession usually leads to a lovely laser-coaching conversation around questions like “What role do you play in the situation? How would you rather be?” and we design a new practice for them.

The best part comes when I run into that same person a few weeks later and they excitedly share their story about how a conversation shifted with <that coworker> when they practiced their new approach. Interesting, is it not? <That coworker> changed nothing, yet because you shifted the conversation on your side, the problem seems smaller. Maybe it was, truly, all about you!?

I always encourage them to share what they learned with others, maybe even their entire team.

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

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III. RANDOM FUN: THE POSITIVE IMPACT TEST

This month’s random fun site is actually related to the main topic, in that it’s all about YOU. Go to www.bucketbook.com and page down to the block labeled: Positive Impact Test. The “test” consists of 15 statements and takes about two minutes to complete. You will receive a score between 15 and 100 that measures the positive effect you’ve had on others over the past seven days.

This is not a personality assessment. It is a number that is temporary – you can change your score simply by acting on any one of the fifteen statements.

And if you score 90 or more, please drop me a note. I’d love to buy you a cup of coffee (real or virtual) and learn how you did it!

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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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