





hundred – tolerations. That's a lot of open programs in the brain!

How do tolerations affect us? Consider the analogy of the frog that remains in a pot of water where the temperature is slowly raised to boiling. The frog's body temperature adjusts as the heat is increased and he doesn't even realize he's in danger. We, too, can grow accustomed to our environment even though it may not be a good idea to remain. We can be blind to seeing the clutter in our brains, relationships, physical space, commitments, and so on.

What are you tolerating? If you removed a few tolerations, how much better would you feel? Think about it. One less burden to carry on your shoulders. More space and energy and capacity to focus on what is really important. More space to feel happiness and contentment rather than the anxiety and stuckness that often accompany tolerations.

And who doesn't want to be happier?

### **Do this for yourself: The Tolerations Exercise**

1. Write at the top of a page, "**What am I tolerating in work/life that I am no longer willing to tolerate?**" Avoid editing yourself, just write. Carry the list around with you for at least a day. Visit all the different "environments" in which you live – office, car, home, work and personal relationships, career, financial, fun...and notice what you are "putting up with" in each area. Write down everything you notice -- everything.
2. Review the list for any themes that emerge. You might prioritize by noticing which of the items bother you the most.
3. Ask yourself, "**What do I want to do about <this> and by when?**" Consider your four options: Do, Delegate, Defer, or Dump:

#### **Do:**

Take action to remove the toleration. Have the conversation, change the behavior, remove the item, clean it, replace it, buy it, or whatever is required to remove it from your list.

HINT: You'll find that many tolerations will sort of "take care of themselves" once you've identified them as such, even if you do not put them on a task list. That's because tolerations remain so because we've simply become used to them, and once they are back in conscious awareness, we naturally take action to "scratch the itch." You'll find that eliminating tolerations is incredibly energizing!

#### **Delegate:**

Turn to someone else to take the action. Delegate a task to a child, partner, coworker, or contractor. Automate it (like setting up all your utilities and car/house payments to automatically come out of your checking account) or create a system to complete the action.

Example: My father-in-law realized that he hated mowing the lawn and shoveling his walk in winter, so he hired a landscaper to mow and plow, and then sold his lawnmower at the next family garage sale!





One of my clients worked for a small company of fifteen employees. The office space they occupied had one shared washroom. Two employees were known to continually leave the washroom in a less-than-ideal condition. It might not seem like much, but in fact their actions were disrespectful and inconsiderate to the other employees. Yet everyone tolerated the “delicate situation.” Finally, my client got fed up and confronted the employees. The behavior changed and morale in the office improved.

Consider this behavioral experiment. Five monkeys are put in a cage. Bananas are placed at the top of a platform. When one monkey attempts to climb to the platform, the other monkeys are sprayed with water. Another tries, same result. Eventually, any time a monkey tries to get to the platform, the others attack.

One by one the monkeys are replaced. None of the original monkeys that had been sprayed with water remain. The new occupants, who have no knowledge of the spraying, continue to attack anyone who attempts to get to the bananas.

I remind people that this story is a fable of how corporate culture is created and maintained. It also begs the question, Are you doing things in your workplace just because “that’s the way they’ve always been done?” Well, you can break the cycle. Encourage your coworkers to challenge and eliminate workplace tolerations. If you do, I’m sure you’ll find your work environment a much more pleasant and productive place to be.

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: ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE CURIOUS MIND**

The Mentos and Diet Coke Experiments. I picked this up off a feed from a blogger in the UK who had picked it up from a National Public Radio online feature about the power of video and the Internet.

Did you know that when you drop Mentos candy into Diet Coke, the result is... well, I’ll let you find out. (If you’re picking this up in the midst of a cubicle village, keep the volume down on your speakers – the musical accompaniment is hard to ignore)

<http://www.eepybird.com>

This video is of Experiment 137. If you are intrigued by the final experiment, you might page down and view the short clips of Experiments 6, 10, and 13A. ☺

Meanwhile, I think most people have heard of [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com), the fabled video repository, which allows anyone in the world to experience their 15 seconds of fame thru posted video. Have you seen the *Wunderkind* of posted videos, the six-minute Evolution of Dance routine? A nobody comedian named Judson Laipply posted his routine online, and ended up on Good Morning America and the cover of Rolling Stone. Yikes!

If you love music, you should see this one. You can find it linked from about a million places on the internet, but the prime source is Laipply’s site, [www.theevolutionofdance.com](http://www.theevolutionofdance.com). And turn up



*Happiness@TheSpeedofLife*

the volume on this one – it is a blast!

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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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Drop me a line anytime with your feedback and queries! 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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