



**Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter**  
**Edition 31: Be Who You Really Are**

1,776 words of content -- approximate reading time required: 7.1 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.

NOTE: People Inc is now The Executive Happiness Coach™, and you will notice this newsletter coming from a new address, [Jim@TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com](mailto:Jim@TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com). Please add this address to your contacts file.

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**I. AUTHENTICITY: BE WHO YOU REALLY ARE**

**Authenticity**, *n.* The quality or condition of being authentic, trustworthy, genuine, or real.

Happiness Principle 13 reads: **Be Authentic: Be yourself, not somebody else.** What does it mean to be authentic, to really “show up” as yourself? And what does that have to do with happiness?

Well, consider that many of us spend parts of our lives playing different roles. For example, we might show up as the caring service rep for a client, as the wise counselor for a friend, as the concerned parent, or as the dutiful child, for example. We typically do so because the part we are playing is one that we took on voluntarily – we sought the Service Rep job because we like to serve; we want the friend to succeed; we chose to parent the child, and so on.

When we play a part of our own writing, it can be a source of joy. What happens, though, when we find ourselves pretending to a role that does not fit us?

Think about a time when you felt stuck with a project/task that you did not believe in, or working with an individual or team whose values actually violated your own. How did it feel? If you are like most people, you felt drained, even exhausted by the experience of having to pretend. You may have found yourself constantly on edge, carefully guarding your words and how you reacted to others to avoid friction. It probably required enormous amounts of energy to play such a role.

*"There can be no happiness if the things we believe in are different from the things we do." ~Freya Madeline Stark*

The energy that gets tied up in playing uncomfortable roles is energy that is not available to us for moving forward. Plus, we if we play the role for too long, we can get confused about what part is really us and what part is the role.





I worked with a client who loved the company she worked for. She received a promotion that required a move to a new division. Within a few weeks she realized that the culture of teamwork and service that had so engaged her in her old job was completely missing in this new division. Here, “team” meant “shut up and do what the boss says.” One time she came to our conversation and said, “working here is like buying a car from one of those dealerships where they tell you how to fill out the Customer Survey in advance.” The subtle message was, “you better give us all 5s – or else!”

So every day, she pretended to be a happy camper just to keep her job, saying Yes to the division head even while her stomach churned over the disrespectful behavior her co-managers dished out.

*"No one man can, for any considerable time, wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which is the true one." ~Hawthorne*

Then one day she showed up to our conversation in a panic. “I yelled at one of my staff today. Actually yelled! I am so upset – this is not me, but I feel like I’m falling into the same behaviors as everyone around me.”

*"If you do not tell the truth about yourself, you cannot tell it about other people." ~Virginia Woolf*

Within the safety of the coaching conversation she was able to disconnect from her reaction and create a strategy to stop her “slide into the black hole.” She went back and spoke privately to several of her peers whom she suspected were also unhappy. Armed with the certainty that she was not alone, she had a conversation with the division head to share her concerns about how her (the leader’s) style was affecting her own and other’s behavior.

*"Honesty and transparency make you vulnerable. Be honest and transparent anyway." ~Mother Theresa*

It was an intensely uncomfortable conversation. However, the division head thanked her for the feedback and asked for ideas to change the situation. The boss did not change overnight, but she agreed to open up discussion and listen to other’s opinions and ideas before putting out a decision. My client reported that her energy levels at meetings went way up, as she now felt like a she could contribute rather than spend all her energy keeping her mouth shut.

*"To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." ~William Shakespeare in Hamlet*

### **Do This For Yourself!**

Some questions to help you examine your own authenticity:

- ~~ Have I been doing something that goes against my values?
- ~~ What roles do I play that do not match who I am?
- ~~ Whom do I know that I can trust to ask if they’ve seen a change in me recently?
- ~~ What message(s) from myself have I been ignoring?
- ~~ What action(s) might I take that would increase my comfort level?

Remember: When you honor the Real You in your thoughts, in your actions and in your





The founder of the positive psychology movement, Martin Seligman, says his mission is “to increase the overall tonnage of happiness in the world. As a certified Authentic Happiness® Coach who trained under Martin, I’ve adopted a subset of that mission: to take Happiness into the workplace, where happy leaders create happier workforces, better outcomes, and happy shareholders.

I invite you to continue with me on the ride!

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### III. EIGHTH ANNUAL SUMMER READING LIST



Each year, prior to taking two weeks of holiday on the North Carolina shore, I ask my friends, clients, and colleagues what they are currently reading. I research the resulting list, make my selections, and share the entire commentary with everyone.

I continually push myself to explore new genres while also having fun and learning. This year’s nine selections will take me to Afghanistan, Alaska, Egypt, India, and Sierra Leone, and help me explore creativity, Happiness coaching, and personal effectiveness.

In addition, I share 14 books of fiction and business fact that I read since last year and believe you might also enjoy.

You can review and download (pdf) the list at [www.TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com](http://www.TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com), where you’ll find the Summer Reading List icon. In the list you will find summary notes along with my personal comments. The list itself is fun reading, even if you don’t pick up any of the books. I hope that you enjoy this year’s compilation. Have fun, and happy reading!

To view or download the entire list from this year or last, go here:

<http://www.theexecutivehappinesscoach.com/resources/resources.cfm>

Enjoy learning, growing, and exploring!

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### IV. RANDOM STUFF: A WEDDING UPDATE

The wedding favors have been painted, printed, trimmed, glued, shellacked, packaged, and tied with lovely bows (I can’t tell you what they are or I’ll be shot!).

A shower date is set, and we recently learned that the groom’s parents will be coming to Cleveland for that weekend. They are wonderful people, but now there is another level of drama added to planning: “The Mixing of The Families,” as my one friend puts it ☺.

Kelly arrived home last weekend for a short break between her third and official last year of med school. A hurricane of activity is planned for this week, since (except for the weekend of the shower) she will not be home again until just before the wedding. The list includes the final fitting of The Dress and The Veil, and a run thru of everything that she must physically review and approve (some details for this wedding of Millennials cannot occur over the internet!).

