



Happiness@ TheSpeedofLife

Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter Edition 56: Tips for Self-Care

1,633 words of content in a tips-filled edition -- approximate reading time required: 6.53 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. SPREAD THE WORD: Please forward to a friend who needs more Happiness.

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I. GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK: TIPS FOR SELF-CARE

Exercise: Raise your hand if you've recently engaged in any of the following activities:

- Called someone a moron, a jerk, or an idiot?
- Screamed at someone for being stupid?
- Looked at someone and said, "I can't stand the sight of you!"?
- Pushed someone down then kicked them over and over and over?

What's that, you say? You *never* treat people that way? Okay. Let me ask the question differently.

Raise your hand if you've done any of the following to *yourself*:

- Called yourself names
- Yelled at yourself for being 'stupid'
- Expressed disgust with some aspect of yourself
- Kicked yourself repeatedly while you were down

Hmm. I notice that most of your hands are now in the air. Welcome to being a Human Being – you live in judgment much of the time, and nobody can beat you up nearly as well as you can.

My Story

As I left for my vacation a few weeks ago, I wrapped up several coaching contracts. As is my practice, I sent out a request for feedback. In short order I received back six evaluations, and if I were to convert them to a grade, my 'report card' would have read like this: A, A, A-, A+, A, C. On a 4-point scale, my GPA would be 3.7, which is fabulous, right?

Moreover, I had expected a poor assessment from the one client, who had consistently resisted the coaching. Yet still, I found myself sliding into a funk. The soundtrack in my head started playing “you’re a bad coach” over and again. Oooh, I hate it when my inner Gremlin starts that conversation. It’s not true, yet still I listen. Down went my mood.

You ever had an experience like mine – living in negative self-assessment? If you have, here are some tips that might help you move more quickly out of negativity the next time your Gremlin shows up.

The 13 Principles of Happiness: Self-care edition

1. Become Positively Self-ish

In Louise Hay’s book, *You Can Heal Your Life*, she offers a lovely exercise for taking your own oxygen. On a piece of paper write, “I love myself, therefore _____” and fill in that blank with a positive belief or something you do that takes care of you. Complete the sentence as many times as you like. Keep that list where you can access it when your Gremlin gets loud.

2. Live Your Values

Ask yourself, “Did I violate one of *my* core values?” If yes, take action to bring your behavior back into line with what you say is important. If, on the other hand, your assessment is based on *other people’s* standards, just let it go -- it’s not yours!

3. Live for Life, not Stuff

Ask yourself, “Will this matter five minutes from now? Five months from now? Five years from now?” If not, why beat yourself up about it?

4. Be Early

Plan ahead. Create an affirmation and a body posture that you know will pull you out of a funk. Practice both every day while looking in the mirror, e.g. while in an open, confident stance say, “I am a gift to the world.”

5. Build Reserves

We tend to dwell on the negative and dismiss the positive. Stop that! Instead, build a store of good news about you. Collect those complimentary notes and emails into a single file. When you are having a bad day, pull out that file and notice how your negativity melts into gratitude.

6. Tolerate Nothing

Like mushrooms, moldy thoughts grow best in manure-filled spaces. Take time to toss out some of your old assessments – think of it as a mental version of cleaning out your closets, getting rid of the items that no longer fit or that don’t make you feel beautiful.

7. Choose To Respond

Negative self-talk can wear you down physically. So practice a physical response that will pull you out of your funk. Stand tall. Take one or two breaths into your deep belly. And smile. The world will more likely smile back.

8. Stimulate Your Development



If where you are right now (physically, mentally, emotionally) is not serving you, change environments! Get some fresh air. Chat with a more positive person. Shift to a different task. Or simply stand and walk around your chair three times. When you return to your task, you'll carry it more lightly.

9. Pay Attention

Notice which side of an issue you give the most attention to. 7% unemployment also means 93% are employed. One flaw in something means 99% is OK. Good AND bad things will happen, and your stress will decrease when you look harder for what's right versus what's wrong.

10. Simplify

Personal standards are important, yet holding too many make it impossible for you to declare "success." Most people can hold no more than 5-7 priorities before they start to break down. So decide the *few* things that are important; let go of the others.

11. Speak the Truth

Speak Facts rather than Assessments. "I failed to meet the deadline" is a fact; "I am a failure" is the assessment you create. In my situation, above, the 'story' was, "I'm a bad coach" when the fact was simply, "one client was not satisfied." Let the truth set you free from beating yourself up.

12. Focus on Today

Be your own best cheerleader. When you notice yourself saying, "I'll never... (make this work, figure it out, etc)" you are beating yourself up by imagining *future* failure. Replace that with, "I am giving it my best today, and I know I'll eventually get it right."

13. Be Authentic

Laugh at yourself. Forgive yourself when you do mess up. Most of all, practice saying, "I am not perfect... AND I am okay with that."

And a bonus 14th tip: **Get Back on the Horse**

Even as my Gremlin was beating me up for being a "bad coach," I attended a coaching conference and was pulled into a Laser Coaching exercise. This activity, much like a "speed dating" event, creates a rapid series of coaching conversations as people move down a line every few minutes.

*Much to my astonishment, I helped two of my clients identify significant breakdowns **in just two minutes!** If I'd not been willing to 'try, try again' my Gremlin would have won the argument.*

When you fail to meet your own or other's expectations, get back in the saddle and try it again. Failure, my friend, is a powerful path to learning.

I am totally adequate at all times.

I accept myself and create peace in my mind and heart.

~Louise Hay

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The 13 Principles of Happiness serve as powerful strategies to support your Happiness through Self-Care. Why not download and post a copy of the original 13 Principles on your work-station



wall or on your refrigerator at home? You can download a 1-page summary here:  
<http://www.theexecutivehappinesscoach.com/happiness/philosophies.cfm>. Take Care of You

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## II. IN THE WORKPLACE: GOOD LEADERS MODEL SELF-CARE

You're doing a job and a half, you've got 56 hours of backlog on your desk, and your team's primary mood is stressed-out! It feels like everything could explode any minute. What to do?!

Working longer and harder, as we all know, is only effective as a short-term strategy. In the long term, people get more done and carry less stress when they have a chance to disconnect from work a few times each week – and that includes the people in charge.

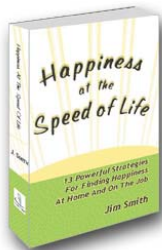
Healthy, well-balanced leaders take time each week to fill their own oxygen tank, to maintain important relationships, and maintain appropriate boundaries between their work and their personal life. And wise leaders know that everyone else on the team needs the same courtesy, so they don't burn out.

Do you maintain a healthy balance? Do you give others permission to do the same? The more you model and promote self-care, the more likely you are to have a team that works hard, generates great ideas, and takes extraordinary care of customers.

Remember: Leadership is not about a title. Anyone can be a leader who knows how to maintain a healthy self-care regimen and supports others in doing the same for themselves.

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## III. SHAMELESS COMMERCE DIVISION



Admit it: you love this newsletter – you look forward to receiving your monthly dose of Happiness and practices to improve your life, right? So....when are you going to buy the book?!

[Visit my website to order your copy](#) of ***Happiness At The Speed of Life: 13 Powerful Strategies for Finding Happiness At Home And On The Job.***

Cover to cover, the book offers over 110 tools and practices for strengthening your positive emotional 'muscles' and TAKING CARE OF YOU. You'll also find several dozen workplace-specific practices.

You can order your own copy by clicking on the book cover on my home page ([www.TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com](http://www.TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com)), or visit [www.HappinessAtTheSpeedOfLife.com](http://www.HappinessAtTheSpeedOfLife.com).

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## IV. GETTING OVER MYSELF

Speaking of horses and getting back in the saddle....

I used to carry a story that "I'm afraid of horses." A few years ago I attended a workshop with Sue Thomas of MAPotential in which I worked thru my fear ([see me in her L-E-A-D video](#)), but then went two years before getting near a horse again. In May, my wife, daughter, son-in-law,



and I rode up a mountainside in Guanacaste, Costa Rica. When we reached the peak our guide, William, offered to take our picture. Suddenly, he tossed out an idea. “How about if you stand on Cholaco’s back?” he asked. Hmm.

So, this is me. Immediately behind us is a drop of ‘only’ a few hundred meters.



I assess that I no longer have ‘trust issues’ with horses ☺ I’ve let go my negative story. It was happy moment, for sure!

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## V. INSTRUCTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Jim Smith, PCC, is The Executive Happiness Coach®. He is an executive and life coach, international speaker, and author. Jim provides inspiration and practical tools to help people build happier lives and more positive work cultures.

Join the Happiness Conversation at [www.LifeWithHappiness.com](http://www.LifeWithHappiness.com). Ask me a question on [LinkedIn](#), [Friend me on Facebook](#), or [Follow me on Twitter](#).

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Drop me a line anytime with your feedback and queries! Jim  
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**Happiness is a decision, not an event.  
How will YOU decide today?**

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