



Happiness@ TheSpeedofLife

Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter Edition 58: Back To Basics

1,594 words of content in a tips-filled edition -- approximate reading time required: 6.37 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. BACK TO BASICS

September is one of several times each year when I think about new beginnings. In September the new school year kicks off, while gardening experts remind us that this is the best time to re-plant a lawn or move perennials to new locations. 'Tis a season for starting over. In that context, I've found myself revisiting some of my basic beliefs about living a happy life.

1. **You have the right to pursue Happiness, not have it delivered.**
You are free to define happiness in your own way, without others imposing their definition on you. At the same time, it's no one else's job to make you happy. That right only pays off if YOU do the work to seek, create, and nurture the elements that support your happiness.
2. **Pleasure is only one form of Happiness.**
Many things create happy moments: a good book, sex, entertainment, a sports team win, video games, dark chocolate ☺... yet pleasure is only the simplest (and most short-lived) level of happiness. If you want to build a solid foundation for a happy life, seek also to create Meaning. Build your life around your personal values. Engage in work (paid or volunteer) that allows you to positively impact others. Look for ways to create beauty, community, or connection.
3. **It's a decision, not an event.**
Events in your world are neutral; it is the 'story' you tell yourself that leads to an assessment that something is Good or Bad. Remember that there are *always* multiple, simultaneous, valid assessments of every situation -- thus any individual event can lead to positive, negative, or a dozen other reactions. Your experience of life depends on which point of view you most often take. When you CHOOSE to focus more often on the positive, the upside, the good news, and the possibility, you will notice more moments of happiness in your life.

4. **Your friends can make you Happier (or not).**

Emotions are contagious. Human beings frequently tune in to the prevailing mood in any gathering, whether it's a family event or a business meeting. If you want to live in anger and resentment, go to lunch with chronic complainers; if you want to experience lightness and joy, volunteer to work with pre-schoolers. So if you seek more happiness, find people who radiate optimism, then spend more time in their company – they carry a 'virus' you WANT to catch!

5. **Happiness is like the candle, not the cake.**

If you see happiness as a cake, it's all about finite resources that, when cut up and passed out to others, mean there is less left for you. Rather, think of happiness as the candle: when you use your candle to light others' candles, yours does not burn any less bright, yet all those around you now share the light. Share happiness without worrying about ever running out.



6. **All emotions have value...though some we like better than others.**

Living a happier life is not possible without acknowledging the value of our many other emotions. Sadness connects us with loss, fear protects us from danger, anger is a legitimate response to harm done, love joins us to others, and perseverance helps us endure in the face of obstacles. Each emotion has a time and a place for use. Happiness connects us with what we have and who we are and helps us notice that, in this moment, it is enough.

7. **If you want to live in Happiness more often, you must practice visiting it.**

Emotions are fleeting, but when we live very often in a particular emotion that one becomes our prevailing Mood. Many people 'practice' living in anxiety, fear, worry, stress, sadness, anger, or resentment. It's hard to experience happiness when your stress response is angry, bitter, or afraid. If instead you practice Gratitude (counting your blessings), Optimism (listing what might go right), or Happiness (standing solid, breathing deeply, smiling), you can shift the Mood that your body considers "home base."

8. **It's about wanting what you have (period).**

I recently posted a quote online: *Happiness is a function of accepting what is.* One fan commented: "...but trying to change it for the better..." My reply: Ah...no. Happiness IS accepting what is. Period. *Ambition* is wanting to change it for the better. You can be happy and ambitious at the same time, of course, but let us not mistake one for the other. Happiness is an emotion of the present, the now, the moment; while ambition is an emotion of the future, what is next, tomorrow.

The most basic of all basics: You can give yourself permission, right now, to be happy, without having to be anything else, do anything else, or please anyone but you. You have that power, if you choose to use it.

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The 13 Principles of Happiness are all strategies for 'practicing' happiness. Why not download and post a copy of the original 13 Principles on your workstation wall or on your refrigerator at home? You can download a 1-page summary here:

<http://www.theexecutivehappinesscoach.com/happiness/philosophies.cfm>. Choose Happiness.





# Happiness@ TheSpeedofLife

[Surf over to 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**. You'll get over 110 tools and practices for strengthening your positive emotional 'muscles' and getting back to the basics of Happiness.

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## IV. PERSONAL: ANOTHER WEDDING!

My long-time readers may remember that in 2007 I shared monthly updates on my daughter's wedding – which turned into the most-followed part of my newsletter for a time. Well, if you can believe it, my oldest son Justin is now engaged to Katie, with a May 2010 wedding scheduled.

While details are still emerging, we know enough now to stand in awe of the tremendous creativity these two young people are exercising as they plan. I am also incredibly touched by the degree to which they've woven sentiment into their plans. Listen to this:

- Justin contacted Katie's parents to secretly obtain a ring of her grandfather (who was very special to Katie), then had the diamond remounted on a custom-made setting that he helped design.
- For the proposal, he feigned getting lost while on a trip to Chicago, and "ended up" on the same street where they had their first kiss...where his friends were hiding with a boom box and special music to play as a theme while he got down on his knee to propose.
- For a wedding band, Justin will use the wedding ring worn by Katie's grandfather...while Katie will use a wedding band that belonged to Justin's great grandmother.

Isn't that so sweet?! Needless to say, we are very happy and excited about the upcoming event!

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## IV. CONTACT OR CONNECT

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 build more positive work cultures.

All things Happiness Coach:  
Blog: [www.LifeWithHappiness.com](http://www.LifeWithHappiness.com). Ask me a question on [LinkedIn](#), [Friend me on Facebook](#), or [Follow me on Twitter](#).

View past editions <http://www.TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com/newsletter/archives.cfm>

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**Happiness is a decision, not an event.**  
**How will YOU decide today?**

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*the Happiness Conversation at [www.LifeWithHappiness.com](http://www.LifeWithHappiness.com).*” If you choose to do otherwise, I will be very unhappy :-)