



## Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter Edition 61: You Are a Gift

1.936 words of content including over a dozen powerful practices and ideas to help you enjoy the holiday season more. Approximate reading time required: 7.74 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.

### IN THIS ISSUE

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- I. You Are a Gift
- II. In The Workplace: It's More Fun To Give
- III. Commerce Division: Many Small Steps
- IV. Wedding Update – Planning a Gift
- V. Contact or Connect

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### I. YOU ARE A GIFT

The theme for this month's edition was first inspired by portions of a newsletter I received two weeks ago from Roy Williams, the Wizard of Ads<sup>®</sup>. Roy publishes the Monday Morning Memo, an eclectic publication that is rarely predictable and always provocative. Here's a portion of what intrigued me. Ray speaks of Going Home for the Holidays:

We go home with an idealized memory of a place where everyone listens and cares and loves us for who we are, a place where we're known and everything is okay.

And what we find when we get there is our family. We're never quite prepared for the selfishness of Carol, the laziness of Lee, the assertiveness of Sarah and the insensitivity of Bob. And Gary, well, he's just a jackass.

<...predictably...> clinical psychologists see a spike in requests for counseling <depression> right after the holidays. <shouldn't holidays lead to the opposite? We can only wish. But here's a thought: > : "The opposite of depression isn't 'Yippee!' The opposite of depression is gratitude."

So this year I have a plan: *Rather than trying to have a good Christmas, I'm going to make sure that everyone around me has one.* My plan is to be silently thankful. Constantly, consciously thankful.

I'm going to see past Carol's selfishness and like her anyway. I'm going to accommodate the laziness of Lee. I plan to submit to the assertiveness of Sarah and understand the insensitivity of Bob. I'm even going to seek out Gary and show an interest in whatever he wants to talk about.

If my plan is to serve rather than be served, and to give understanding rather than receive it, how can I be disappointed?

Are these things in my nature? *No. Not at all.* Might I crash and burn? *Absolutely.*

I love how Roy decided that, rather than focusing on what others can do for him, he will focus on what he can do for others – how he can BE A GIFT to everyone else.

### HOW Might You Be a Gift?

The first step may be the hardest (I'm just sayin'...): You'll have to **let go of your 'story' that the purpose of the gathering is to provide you with entertainment**, dining, and relaxation. Oh, those may occur (or not), yet recognize that there are many reasons people are there, and most of those reasons have *nothing to do with you*. Some are there out of excitement, some curiosity, and some obligation. And most of them, whether they admit it or not, probably carry a little bit of nervousness about the whole affair.

Step two, then, is to **engage people in conversation and find out what's going on with them**. Let their story be their story – you don't have to agree with it or like it, just listen.

Step three is to not impose your story on anyone. Don't ask John and Sue when they're gonna get engaged, even though they've been dating for five years – they're sick of that. Don't make jokes about how much gangly Sally has grown, since she's already dealing with enough just being 13. In fact, **avoid judging anyone, unless it's a compliment**. For just the one day, let go of assessing and make it your mission to spread joy.

### WHY Be a Gift to Others?

What's in it for you to be a Gift to others? Less stress, perhaps. Along with less anger, less resentment, less depression. And more peace, laughter, gratitude, and moments of happiness and joy.

So here's the formula to Be a Gift: Show Up Fully + Listen + Be Nice = Happier Holidays

Will this be easy for you? Maybe not. It may be the hardest thing you've done this year, to be a Gift to others. While it may take some work, I promise you'll have a more positive experience, and so will all those you touch.

### Ways to Practice Being a Gift

Here are a few small ways you can practice 'being a gift' to others in advance of the big family gatherings that will occur between now and the celebration of New Year's Day:

- Practice patience. Be kind and patient with a stressed-out retail clerk.
- Practice positivity. Tell someone who looks tired, "you look fabulous!" and watch them perk up.
- Practice generosity. Volunteer some time to help someone in need.
- Practice supportiveness. Offer to babysit for a young mom so she can shop without hassle for an afternoon
- Practice relationships. Play a game of imagination with a child (no electronics).

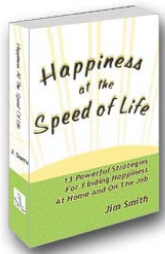


And isn't that a great way to be?

**Remember: Leadership is not about a title.** Anyone can be a leader who spends more time excited for the success and learning of others than they do about themselves!

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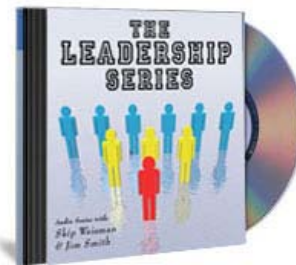
**III. COMMERCE DIVISION – TAKING MANY SMALL STEPS**



Since last month, when I declared that I am incompetent in the realm of Completions, I've gotten some great coaching and ideas to help me make progress in the world of e-commerce.

Last month, I had only one product online: my book **Happiness At The Speed of Life: 13 Powerful Strategies for Finding Happiness At Home And On The Job** (available at [www.HappinessAtTheSpeedofLife.com](http://www.HappinessAtTheSpeedofLife.com)). Creating this book and setting up online sale was a big step...that took lots of tiny steps to achieve.

After another series of small steps, I'm nearly ready to announce a new addition to my offerings I've partnered with Skip Weisman of WeismanSuccessResources.com, the creator of "Champion Organizations" and a fabulous leadership coach based in downstate New York to produce a dynamic audio training series for leaders.



If you are a small business owner, middle manager, or frontline supervisor and you want to lower stress, reduce conflict in the workplace, be more relaxed, and have happier more productive people, then you should pay close attention to this new program.

Watch this space for a January introduction of **The Leadership Series!**

**2010: Creating More Happy Conversation**

I've committed to you, my readers, that this newsletter will always focus on value and not become 'too salesy' or clog up your mailbox with stuff you don't want. However, I have also heard from some of you that you'd like to be in the happiness conversation more than once a month.

I'm happy to announce that early next year I will roll out other ways to 'get into the happiness conversation.' I will invite many of you to join a *separate list* that will provide more frequent, much shorter messages, along with invitations to be the first to try out some new products or ideas, and tell me what you think. Watch this space for more news and the invitation.

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**IV. WEDDING UPDATE: PLANNING A GIFT**

Justin and Katie completed their move to Chicago this month, and while they continue to plan their May wedding, their primary focus is and will continue to be Establishing Roots. This means, primarily, serious attention to their careers.

