



## Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter Edition 64: Spring Cleaning

**1,920** words of content including **19 ideas** to increase your happiness and/or strengthen your leadership presence. Approximate reading time required: **7.68** 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.

If you received this from a friend, I invite you to [SUBSCRIBE](#) to get your own copy in the future.

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### I. IT'S TIME FOR SPRING CLEANING

Ah, Spring! The days are longer. The sun shines brighter.

Oh, and as it shines in and brightens my home, I'm suddenly aware of a winter's worth of dirt on the windows, dark paths on the carpeting from tracked-in winter slush, and cobwebs in the dim recesses that were invisible in the grey light of winter.

Hey, it's time for Spring Cleaning. Let's bring in some fresh air and bright sunshine while we get rid of the crud that's accumulated over the past year.

Here are some ideas to clean up your physical and emotional houses this month.

#### Spring Cleaning Tips

1. **Wash the Windows.** Windows don't get dirty overnight. But over months and years the drips and streaks build up a little at a time until even a sunny day looks drab and colorless. So it is with our emotional lives. We build up judgments and beliefs ever so slowly, and then one day we wake up and think, "When did the world turn so negative?" To reveal what is truly happening in the world, we need to occasionally clear the film we've allowed to accumulate.

So in your house, use your favorite window cleaner and a dry rag. In your head and heart try scraping away a few assessments that are no longer serving you. Wipe away any opinion you hold that includes NEVER or ALWAYS, conditions that cloud judgment. For example, is your sister/neighbor/coworker/boss ALWAYS that way, or is it that your "filters" only let through the evidence that supports your expectation? Clean windows let you see what's really happening and give you a brighter experience.



2. **Clear the Cobwebs.** Spiders weave their webs and then move on to new locations. A dust mop or a rag on a stick will clear away the dusty old webs that got left behind.

Old stories are the cobwebs of the mind. What's gathering dust in your head? Do you hear, "I can't ..." or "I don't deserve..." or "I'm not good enough" or "I'm unlovable." If the story ain't workin' for you, try poking it with a stick and then spin a new story in its place, like, "I'm enough," "I can...", and "I deserve to be happy!"

3. **Shampoo the Rug, Move Some Furniture.** Rug trails come from people walking the same path over and again. In a similar way, things you do over and again form deep neural pathways until they become what we call Habits.

To unmark the path, clean the carpet. Then rearrange one or two pieces of furniture to shift traffic patterns to a new location (this really works!)

To create new Habits, follow a similar process. First, observe your old pattern of reaction. What one small shift will support a new or modified habit? For example, if you can't seem to get to the gym after work, consider shifting bedtime and then get up earlier to fit in your fitness before work. Repeat the new pattern until you form new pathways that work better for you.

4. **Change the Air.** One of my favorite ways to refresh the house is to open all the windows and turn the furnace to Fan mode. In a couple hours the air is completely turned over and all the accumulated odors of winter have disappeared.

Fresh air is a great tool to improve your mood, as well. Try this simple exercise from the yoga world: Sit quietly. Using the thumb of your right hand, gently press your right nostril closed and take a long, slow breath in through your left nostril. Now shift your hand and, using the pinkie finger on your right hand, press your left nostril closed while you exhale long and slow through your right nostril. Repeat this for ten breaths. I promise that whatever you were concerned about when you started will have fallen away, as you experience a moment of stillness and calm.

5. **Toss Out the Junk.** Your surroundings affect you emotionally – cramped spaces evoke emotions that restrict, such as frustration, sadness, and despair. Creating a simpler, less cluttered environment opens up space where calm, happiness, and optimism thrive.

You need not overhaul your entire home to enjoy the benefits of decluttering – just pick one physical space that causes you to feel restricted when you go there. Maybe it's your desktop, the front seat of your car, or your kitchen counter; tackle only what you can complete in an hour. Remove everything that does not belong there permanently and forever and either toss it, give it away, or store it where it belongs. Polish up what's left. Ahhhh!

6. **Change Your Wardrobe.** As seasons shift we typically rotate the seasonal clothing, right? In spring, sweaters and turtlenecks give way to shorts and t-shirts. As you rotate clothing, take a second with each item to ask three questions: *Did I wear it in the past year? Does it make me feel beautiful/handsome? Does it support the Image I want for myself in the world?* If the answer to any of these is NO, it's time to go. (exception: you can keep one set of rags for painting and digging in the mud. But just one!).





You won't be able to address all the barriers, but each one you eliminate will reduce frustration and allow people to use more of their capacity to make progress versus fix problems.

**Yes, I'm talking to YOU**

By the way... you don't have to be the one in charge to be a leader in this regard. Sometimes the Boss is simply unaware. So please don't assume that s/he knows of your misery and is ignoring it. Speak up. Declare that there is an Elephant in the Room, and then request help. Often that's all it takes to get a conversation going that results in a new process, better access to resources, or clarified expectations.

And once frustration goes down, happiness has a better chance of showing up.

**Remember: Leadership is not about a title.** Anyone can be a leader who helps to remove barriers that prevent people from being and doing their best.

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**III. WEDDING UPDATE: IT'S STILL ALL ONLINE**

Last month I wrote about how everything to do with this wedding – invitations, RSVPs, directions, etc – was all online. Well let's add one more item to that list: Mom's dress.

My wife hates shopping. If she never had to enter another store in her life except to buy food, she'd be thrilled. So believe it or not, she went shopping online for her Mother-of-the-groom dress.

She found one based on her search string (green, cocktail length, etc) but it was Out of Stock. Sigh. But wait, she found it at Nordstrom's site, and Nordstrom is known for their personalized service, right? So I encouraged her to click on the "Talk to a personal shopper" icon. After a few minutes of online chatting, she was redirected to a Clearance bin, where she found The Dress. It was similar to the one she'd already found except for a longer sleeve (which was a plus). AND it was in her size.

AND it was on sale!

Three days later, Mr. UPS arrived. Observation: Nordstrom really knows how to package and ship a dress so it arrives beautifully folded and free of wrinkles.

IT FITS! PERFECTLY! I may be biased (after all, I've been married to her for almost 32 years) but I have to tell you, she looks fantastic in this dress!

So, RSVPs are coming in, the hall is rented, both Moms and the bride have their dresses. Is there anything else that matters?

T-minus 10 weeks and counting.

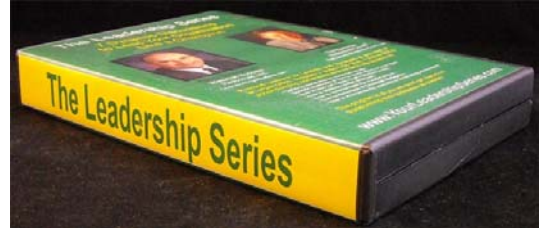


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**IV. SHAMELESS COMMERCE DIVISION**

**Buy the book:** [Happiness At The Speed of Life: 13 Powerful Strategies for Finding Happiness at Home and on the Job.](#)

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**V. CONTACT OR CONNECT**

Jim Smith, PCC, is The Executive Happiness Coach®. He is an executive and life coach, international speaker, and author. Jim works with people who want less stress and more fulfillment, but don't know how; he provides the practical tools they need to live their happiest life 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](#).

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Contact Jim directly: <mailto:Jim@TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com>

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

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