



Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter Edition 69: Speak The Truth, Start The Conversation

1,746 words of content including **three conversations** that will help you get out of overwhelm.
Approximate reading time required: **6.98** minutes. And isn't your Happiness worth it?

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

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, [SUBSCRIBE](#) Now to get your own copy in the future.

IN THIS ISSUE

=====

- I. Speak The Truth, Start The Conversation
- II. In The Workplace: Missing Conversations
- III. Four Weeks To Go...
- IV. Shameless Commerce Division
- V. Learn More

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

I. SPEAK THE TRUTH, START THE CONVERSATION

Last month's edition, [You Can't Change Other People](#), was about ways you can shift a conversation by changing how you respond to the other person. But here's the thing – you must first START the conversation!

{{NOTE: before you read more, please pause for a moment and recall a subject that you need to speak with someone about – personally or professionally – but that you've been avoiding, because it's going to be an uncomfortable conversation. Imagine that issue, as you read the rest of this article}}

Happiness Principle #11 says, *Speak The Truth*. Stop playing games. Recognize that though the truth may sometimes sting, it is the starting place for all progress. Challenge yourself and others to see the truth.

First, a distinction: TELLING the truth is about being honest when you communicate. SPEAKING the truth goes a level deeper in that it compels you to actually say what you are thinking, even if what you have to say is unpopular or will be met with resistance.

How often do you experience regret, frustration, or lack of progress because you did not speak up? Have you ever found yourself in a difficult situation because you had earlier avoided saying what needed to be said?

Certainly, much of the world's UNhappiness comes out of conversations that are poorly handled by one or both parties. But my experience – in life and in the world of Work – has shown me that most people, once they are *actually talking* with one another, can make progress. The real culprit is the Absence Of conversation: the conversations that are put off or avoided, or the conversations where the REAL issue never comes up. For example, politicians do this all the

time; they avoid speaking the truth, in favor of double-speak that pleases no one yet irritates no one – and look at where that's gotten us!

A Missing Conversation rarely gets you anywhere. In the absence of conversation, human beings make up stories about what they think is really happening. People get stressed out worrying about what's NOT being addressed. People lose their connection to others, and start to imagine the worst.

And if YOU are the one who is avoiding conversation, you get stressed out. You worry about someone else bringing up the subject. You make up your own stories about how people would react IF you told the truth. You get upset with other people because they don't bring up the subject, first. And after awhile, the things you hold inside of you start to eat away at you, clawing to get out. And the harder you try to shove down the truth, the more you end up walking around in anxiety, fear, anger, sadness, and resentment. Ouch!

SPEAK UP!

Conversation is one of the most human and affirmative things you can do. Think about it – the worst punishment mankind has ever invented is solitary confinement – the elimination of conversation. So please, don't inflict it on yourself!

Sometimes, a subject is very sensitive and you know that it will provoke an emotional response. OK... that's a good reason to prepare yourself and maybe even rehearse the conversation with a friend or colleague. But how will never having it be better?

Part of happiness is accepting where you are – and where others are -- at any point in time. One of my favorite definitions of Happiness is *wanting what you have*. If what you have is a difficult situation, a sensitive issue, then you can choose to either hold it in and avoid speaking about it (see above for the consequences of that strategy!) OR you can choose to embrace your role, prepare yourself, take a breath, and dive in.

And notice how, once you've had the conversation, everyone usually feels better!

By the way: it is about telling YOURSELF the truth, as well. Having trouble meeting a goal? Engaging in personal habits that aren't serving you? Putting off an important project? Sometimes, you need to have a good conversation with YOURSELF in order to feel better and get yourself on a better path. Or at least get yourself into motion, which is nearly always better than apathy or paralysis.

Bottom line: We don't miss truth because truth is difficult to see. It is quite visible. We miss it because it is more comfortable (in the short term) to pretend it is not there. In the long run, speaking the truth frees up trapped energy, releases negative emotions, and opens up the space for more happiness and resolution to emerge.

So please, Start the Conversation!

~~~~~

Speaking of Conversation: Why not post a copy of the 13 Principles of Happiness on your workstation wall or on your refrigerator? Then when people stop by, you can engage them in a





only one who is beating up on you (P.S. And if there IS a problem, don't you want to know?!).

2. **You with your Boss.** You need to reach out and say, I need help/support to complete all the stuff on my plate. Are you struggling because your boss is unhelpful, or because you are unwilling or uncomfortable to ask for help? If your boss is a Leader, s/he will welcome the opportunity to assist you.

If your boss resents such a conversation, see the next conversation.

3. **You with Yourself.** Speak the truth to yourself. Are you struggling because you truly have NO OTHER OPTIONS other than to drown? Hmm. I doubt it. From my experience dealing with my own self-talk, I suspect there are some conversations you just don't want to hold with yourself. For example:

- "I know I would be more effective if I changed my personal systems, but... ugh, that would mean I have to change a habit, and to be honest I'd rather whine than change."
- "I need to make different decisions about my use of time and stop blaming my workload – I am not a 'victim' of my task list."
- "I realize I will never have enough resources to do everything, and I need to get better at saying NO."
- "I need to be in a different job. I'm tolerating this one (or I'm tolerating my boss), and I'm miserable and unhappy."

**Remember: Leadership is not about a title.** Anyone can be a leader who speaks the truth and steps bravely into the missing conversations, and says what needs to be said, for the good of all.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

## IV. FOUR WEEKS TO GO

**Back at the old Smith homestead, seems we've spent the past year always counting up or counting down to something or other.** We've tracked the days till our last tuition payment, our final college graduation, my son's wedding, and our vacation; and now we're tracking the weeks of gestation as my daughter prepares to give birth next month.

**Here's a conversation I have mixed feelings about: "You're going to be a grandfather."** I am very excited about the birth of my first grandchild in four weeks...AND I'm struggling to understand how I could be as old as... a grandparent!

**Well, if it's true that kids keep you young, then I suppose grandchildren have the same effect.** So I may be aging, but I've decided I'm getting YOUNGER next year.

~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

## IV. SHAMELESS COMMERCE DIVISION

- **Though school begins soon, it's still summer.** If you take your vacation time later in the year, there's still time to benefit from **Jim's 11<sup>th</sup> annual Summer Reading List.** Go to [http://www.theexecutivehappinesscoach.com/resources/2010\\_Books.cfm](http://www.theexecutivehappinesscoach.com/resources/2010_Books.cfm) or visit my home page and look for the link. No obligation -- this is just my



