



## Happiness@TheSpeedofLife Newsletter Edition 71: Are You Scared of Being Happy?

**1,671** words of content including at least 13 ideas for making Happiness less scary! Approximate reading time required: **6.68** 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.

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### I. ARE YOU SCARED OF BEING HAPPY?

**Each year on October 31, Americans celebrate Halloween by dressing in costumes, exchanging candy and, most of all, scaring each other.** The usual candidates for fright include Ghosts, Monsters, Zombies, crawly things, and Vampires.

**Believe it or not, Happiness frightens some people more than giant spiders.** In honor of Halloween, I've assembled a list of stories people tell when they try to resist the conversation about Happiness. As you'll see, while these myths can feel as scary as any monster, in the end they are only as "real" as vampires and zombies.



### Thirteen Scary Stories About Happiness

- 1. Fiction: I'm too stressed, I'm too busy, and I have too many things going on in my life to be happy.** It's too much work to be happy, and I don't have time or the energy.

**Fact:** Yes, living in more positive emotional states can take some work. **The paradox, of course, is that when you carve out some time for happy-making pursuits, your burdens feel lighter, even if they don't go away.** You see, happier people don't have less work or problems in their life, but they are more resilient and are able to handle more stressful events before they reach their limit.



## 2. Fiction: I can't. He/She/They won't let me be happy.

**Fact:** **YOU have the final decision about your happiness.** As Viktor Frankl, a survivor of the Auschwitz death camp, wrote, *"everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way"* Frankl reminds us that even if we are completely under another's control, we still own our mind and have the power to choose our attitude.

## 3. Fiction: It doesn't belong in the business world. Many people fear that talking about emotions – their own or their employees' – is not a "real" business concern.

**Fact:** That mindset is SO last Millennium! It's now been 11 years since the Gallup organization, in their groundbreaking book, *First, Break All The Rules*, presented irrefutable evidence that **engaged (a politically-correct code word for Happy) employees are more productive, have better tenure and attendance, and contribute more to organizational success** than their DISengaged (aka UNhappy) coworkers.

Numerous other workplace studies have proven that those who report feeling happier at work are more creative, healthier, and actually have fewer on-the-job accidents and make fewer errors. And all that profit-making behavior is very important to business!

## 4. Fiction: People will mock me and call me names, like Pollyanna. They will say my attitude is unrealistic.

**Fact:** The stereotype of Pollyanna (a book and movie character) gets applied to people who others assess as "unrealistically optimistic." **Most people forget that at the end of the story, Pollyanna proved that your expectations tend to create your outcomes.** A line from the book reads, *"When you look for the bad in mankind expecting to find it, you surely will"* and of course the opposite, as well. So, why NOT have positive expectations? Even if you are occasionally wrong, the journey's a lot more fun.

## 5. Fiction: It won't last (so why bother?).

**Fact:** **This one is true -- Happiness won't last. But then, neither will sadness, anger, fear, or any other normal emotion.** Happiness is a great place to visit, and I hope you get there often. Yet every emotion has a purpose, and you want to visit those emotions when they will serve you better. (Tip: try to visit Happiness daily, to keep in practice!)

## 6. Fiction: My enemies (or boss, or rivals) will think I'm weak. I'll get hurt.

**Fact:** **The emotional family to which Happiness belongs is a very grounded and solid one.** Active practice of the positive emotions like joy, confidence, forgiveness, hope, enthusiasm, ambition, and gratitude actually make you incredibly strong.

## 7. Fiction: I'm not ready to be happy yet. I'm poor. Unemployed. Sick. I can't be happy until...I get out of school, get married, get divorced, have kids, the kids move out, I get a promotion, I get a job, I lose weight, etc, etc.



**Fact:** No matter what your circumstances, you can experience moments of happiness and contentment if (the big IF) you give yourself permission. Tal Ben-Shahar, author of *Happier* reminds us, “Attaining lasting happiness requires that we enjoy the journey on our way toward a destination we deem valuable.” Don’t make your happiness conditional based on some future event occurring...what if you never get there? The trick, you see, is to enjoy the journey itself.

**8. Fiction:** I don’t “do” emotional. It’s not macho. I’m not a touchy-feely person.

**Fact:** This is the biggest myth of all. You’re human, and as such you are always in some emotional state (even calm and numb are emotions!). Your comfort with emotions may be affected by your gender, cultural and family background, and context (e.g. work or home). When you pay attention to your emotions, you gain more control over them, which helps you grow stronger in your own life and in your relationships.

**9. Fiction:** My life has been full of suffering. It’s too late for me to be happy.

**Fact:** Lifelong cigarette smokers who quit soon learn that their body can heal. **Just as it’s never too late to quit smoking, it’s never too late to practice living in a positive emotional state.** Start small, with a daily gratitude practice to rebuild your emotional muscles. In a short time you’ll be amazed at how much lost ground you can make up.

**10. Fiction:** I don’t know how (to be happy).

**Fact:** Of course you do – it’s part of the human software. Even little babies know how to experience quiet contentment, happiness, joy, and curiosity. Still, if you’ve not used that program in awhile, it may be in storage at the back of your brain. Activate it, and the first thing you’ll notice is a suggestion to stand taller, breathe deeply and on purpose, and smile with intention. Fake it... your system will remember the rest.

“Mr. Duffy lived a short distance from his body.”  
~James Joyce

**11. Fiction:** It’s disrespectful to be happy when so much unhappiness exists in the world.

**Fact:** The worldview offered by the media is a hyper-narrow window on the evil, catastrophe, and breakdowns that affect a relatively small percentage of us. Outside of active war zones, the vast majority of people – regardless of circumstances – claim to be happy most of the time. To shift your own worldview, Google “good news” or subscribe to <http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/>, where the daily headlines will warm your heart.

**12. Fiction:** I want more from life; if I’m happy, I’ll stop trying.

**Fact:** Happiness is not an emotion that demands exclusivity. You can be happy (wanting what you have) and simultaneously feel ambition and desire for a better future.





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**IV. EAT, SLEEP, POOP**

**Our first grandchild arrived on Tuesday, 21-September** at 11:56, at 9# 3oz (4,175g) and 21.5 inches. His name is Jonathan Wesley Gibson.



This photographer does beautiful work, yes? ([More photos here](#))

**I was the eldest of eight kids, so I'm pretty comfortable around babies, but I'd forgotten how really simple their lives are.** Eat, sleep, poop, repeat. What a life!

**Although I've been apprehensive about the Title of "grandpa" I am delighted with the role.** On Sunday evening I got to give him his bath. While he squirmed and squealed a great deal, it was so worth it to just sit and smell his sweet little baby-ness.

**That was a very happy moment!**

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**IV. SHAMELESS COMMERCE DIVISION**

- **Start your holiday shopping early:** Over 110 practices for building your Positive Emotional muscles, plus dozens of practices specifically for the workplace: [Happiness At The Speed of Life: 13 Powerful Strategies for Finding Happiness at Home and on the Job.](#)
- **A mini-MBA in a box! [The Leadership Series](#):** 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, this low-cost, high-value program is for you. It includes nearly a full day of workshops with two leadership experts. Visit <http://www.achievemomentumnow.com/leadershipjim/> to download the audio or order the seven-CD series in hard-copy.

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**V. CONTACT**

Hi, I'm Jim Smith, PCC, The Executive Happiness Coach®. I work with smart, successful people like you, who secretly struggle with overwhelm, negative self-talk, and fear of more success. I help you become a better leader by "holding up a mirror" to show you where you are now, helping you paint a clear picture of a better future, and then supporting you **as you build powerful new**



## Happiness@ TheSpeedofLife

**behaviors that transform how you “show up” in your life and work.** You will achieve more clarity, build broader leadership skills, and expand your capacity to LEAD your life on a MUCH bigger stage!

I have helped thousands of leaders and business owners just like you to increase effectiveness at work AND live a happier, more balanced life. I invite you to contact me for a free Leadership Strategy Session to learn how you can create a **less-stress leadership presence**.

Reach me directly: <mailto:Jim@TheExecutiveHappinessCoach.com> or +1-440-885-3247

### **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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