

What Makes You Happy? Really.



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What makes you happy? That's a serious question... maybe one of the most important questions of your life. But did you know most people can't answer it correctly? In his book *Stumbling on Happiness*, Harvard professor Dan Gilbert explains that most of us think we know what makes us happy, but typically we are wrong.

I have found there are three major traps you may fall into, unknowingly making yourself unhappy. The first unhappiness trap is postponing happiness—the “When I (fill in the blank), I will be happy” syndrome. The reality is happiness isn't something to be acquired in the future. You are either happy now or not; “then” never arrives. Living and striving for “then” results in a constant state of unhappiness. Now is the only time you have to be happy. If you can't be happy now, you most certainly will not be happy later.

The second unhappiness trap is spending your life trying to make other people happy, which can make you very unhappy. Many times we are living a life we didn't choose. We might have unconsciously started pursuing the idea of happiness programmed by our parents, peers, culture or the examples given to us by Hollywood or commercialism. Whose idea of success are you living?

The third unhappiness trap is contrast. For the most part, happiness is really an illusion. In other words, you make up the idea of whether you are happy or not. And you really only know how to judge something by comparing it to something else. Typically this means comparing yourself to other people. This is dangerous business because there will always be reference points that will cause you to be unhappy.

The bottom line is this: Happiness creates. It is not derived from the outside; it is only derived from within. Happiness is a state of mind, and you can continually choose to be happy. The best way I know to live in happiness is to live in gratitude. When you focus on all you have and all that you are, right now, that is where happiness is born. Once it is born, you can nurture it further by discovering those other experiences that bring you increased joy, happiness and exhilaration.

Besides the feel-good factor of happiness, there is one very measurable and meaningful outcome I think you might be interested in. Comprehensive research studies have proven that happy and optimistic salespeople outsell their pessimistic counterparts by 56 percent! Imagine being able to grow your organization's sales revenue by 56 percent with no additional investment or increased effort, but simply by helping those around you be happy and get and keep a positive attitude. As a leader interested in tangible improved results, this could be the best use of your time and resources... and a very important issue to study.

This issue of *SUCCESS* and the enclosed CD are packed with practical tips and strategies that can help you increase your happiness, and thus your success. But we don't want you to simply read this magazine and get that fuzzy, happy feeling. Whatever key ideas you get from our time together this month, act on them now! Then be sure to tell us about the bounty of results and happiness they produce in your life. I can't wait to hear about your new successes.

Now, let's get happy!

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