

# FULL HEART LIVING

*Conversations with the Happiest People I Know*

# WORKBOOK

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Minneapolis

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“When we feed and support our own happiness,  
we are nourishing our ability to love.  
That’s why to love means to learn the art of nourishing our happiness.”  
~Thích Nhất Hạnh, Beloved Vietnamese Buddhist Monk, *How to Love*

## PART ONE

# Before Happy

## CHAPTER 1

### Happiness lost: Happiness found

(This chapter contains no key points or workbook activities.)

## CHAPTER 2

### Defining happiness: Happiness explained?



#### KEY POINTS

- Happiness doesn't mean always smiling or perpetually feeling good
- Happy people get down but don't stay stuck
- Maintaining perspective is key; happy people avoid getting mired down in minutia, and focus on what is truly important
- Awareness of the present moment breeds happiness
- Viewing difficulties as opportunities instead of obstacles provides perspective
- Establishing a common definition of this subjective term is challenging
- The process of becoming happier may be more important than being happy

#### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**DEFINE** Create your own definition of happiness. Most of us claim we want it but are hard pressed to say what happiness is to us.

1. Before using words, start with images. Cut out magazine pictures or printed web images that represent happiness to you. Try to get out of your mind—let the subconscious guide you. What images are you drawn to? If you want, draw images that make you feel happy. Allow yourself to draw or cut out more images than you might eventually use.
2. Get a large piece of paper or poster board.
3. Once you've got a large pile or number of images, place them all out in front of you. What themes or patterns emerge?

**COLLATE** Using the images above, create a happiness collage. Make it as utilitarian or beautiful as you wish. Glue the images to your paper or poster board.

**DRAFT** Now that you've got images in front of you to engage both sides of the brain, begin to find words to express your unique definition of happiness. Perhaps use prompts like this to get you going:

- I know I'm happy when . . .
- To me, happiness is . . .
- When happy, my body feels . . .
- I'm happiest when I'm doing . . .

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Let this list sit for a few hours or a few days. Continue to revise or rewrite it as you like. It may take several drafts before you identify the themes that point to what happiness truly is to you. Likewise, in the days following completion of your collage, you may come across additional images. Allow it to be a work in progress.

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**MONITOR** For a week or so, track your happiness throughout the day. Note what you are doing when you are happiest. Carry a notebook, or use the notepad feature on your smartphone. You might try websites and/or apps such as TrackYourHappiness.org.

WHAT THEMES DO YOU NOTICE?

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WHEN ARE YOU THE LOWEST? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

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\*Darrin McMahon: <http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/a-history-of-happiness>

## CHAPTER 3

### Finding your happiness set-point: The coffee table syndrome

(This chapter contains no key points or workbook activities.)

## CHAPTER 4

### Establishing a foundation: The self-care investment



#### KEY POINTS

- To a person, all those I interviewed agree that self-care is essential to their happiness
- Eating well and getting enough rest and activity provide a foundation in which happiness becomes possible
- Lack of physical activity, poor nutrition, and too much stress and recreational chemicals cause inflammation, which leads to fatigue, grogginess, moodiness, and even anxiety and depression
- Exercise often promotes immediate feelings of euphoria
- A great, natural stress reliever, moving the body can clear the mind and be meditative
- Walking is a great way to boost mood
- How we treat our body and mind today results in how we feel and what we can do tomorrow

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

**EXERCISE:**

**IDENTIFY THE BENEFITS:**

Write down the immediate benefits of exercise to you. What does it do for you right away (enjoyment of the outdoors? Seeing a friend? More energy? Increased sex drive?) How do you feel better immediately?

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Post these on your bathroom mirror, car dashboard, phone or computer background, or another prominent place.

**BEGINNING TO EXERCISE/SIMPLE EXERCISE IDEAS:**

Start by walking an additional 10 minutes a day, five out of seven days, for one week. The next week, add an additional 10 minutes a day.

Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.

Park your car at the far end of the parking lot.

**FOOD:**

**SIMPLE SMART FOOD TIPS**

**ADD MORE OMEGA-3S** to your diet. Add in some seafood, eat a handful of nuts a day, sprinkle some seeds like hemp, chia, or flax on salad or cereal. Use olive oil instead of other cooking oils. Take a high-quality fish oil (or other Omega-3) supplement.

Some people complain of a fishy aftertaste to fish oil. Keep the capsules in the freezer, or take them later at night. Vegan options are available; check your nearest health food store.

**SUBSTITUTE WHOLE GRAINS** for white, bleached, or processed

ones. Look for the words “whole grain” on food labels. If it’s too much to switch cold turkey, start by mixing them with your current flours.

**BLOOD SUGAR STABILIZERS:** Increase your consumption of whole grains, root vegetables, and beans and legumes.

Reduce refined sugar, caffeine, and simple carbohydrates (white bread, white rice, white potatoes). Replace these with whole grains, brown rice, and sweet potatoes. If it’s too hard to switch at once, start by combining. Perhaps the top slice of bread on that sandwich is your old-time favorite white bread. Place a 100% whole grain one on the bottom. Your taste buds will likely adapt after a week or two, and you can begin experimenting with both slices being whole grain. The friendly counter folks at Chipotle will be glad to give you half white and half brown rice on your burrito or tacos.

**WEAN YOURSELF OFF SWEETENERS** Replace refined sugar with natural sweeteners, such as local honey or maple syrup, agave nectar, or stevia. Slowly reduce even these. For example, the first week, use one-quarter less honey in your tea. After your taste buds have adjusted, in a week or 10 days, cut that amount by about a quarter. Continue until you can tolerate the taste. That’s how I grew to like Green Tea. I couldn’t stand the stuff when I first tried it. So I added honey, gradually reducing the amount over time. I now drink one or two cups a day, unsweetened, every day. Avoid artificial sweeteners, as they have been found to negatively impact blood sugar levels.

**MEAT REDUCTION** Eat meat with most meals? Begin with just replacing one meal a week with a vegetarian entree. Make sure it’s something that tastes good to you. Lots of my carnivore friends love meat-free lentil soup. And many folks don’t miss the meat in vegetarian Mexican food. All it takes is an open mind, a bit of effort, and some patience.

**THE FOOD DIARY** Record everything you eat: what, when, how much,

and how you feel afterward. After about a week, write the answer to the question, “What am I going to give up and what am I going to substitute?” (this is inspired by President Bill Clinton).

**START SMALL** Adding even five or ten minutes of walking a day, for example, can make a huge impact on your mood and health.

**MAKE JUST ONE SMALL CHANGE AT A TIME** Far too many people attempt to make too many changes too fast. Take it slow and easy. You’re far more likely to add more healthy habits once one has been established. For instance, when I first started running, after a few good workouts I was naturally motivated to start eating better. When I first starting doing pushups, I congratulated myself for completing ten. Had I aimed for 100 right off the bat, I would have been far more likely to become discouraged and give up.

**REWARD YOURSELF** Not with a cookie, but in your mind. Tell yourself what a good job you did. Consider success to be making the effort, not seeing the outcome.

**TRY FRUIT FOR DESSERT** When I first experimented with avoiding processed sugars, I was amazed how quickly my taste buds adapted. Pretty soon, pears seemed sweeter, apples crispier. Even vegetables suddenly revealed their true sweetness. In time, even replacing one dessert a week with fresh fruit can dramatically reduce your caloric intake.

**EAT LIKE THE FRENCH** I spent Christmas in Paris one year. French cuisine is legendary for good reason; I don’t think I ever ate so well. But what most struck me was seeing how the French eat. What they consume may not be considered healthy here (fatty cheeses, white bread baguettes—crunchy outside, soft and chewy inside—with the most delectable strawberry marmalade). But the portions are smaller, and

people take their time, really tasting and enjoying the food. Try eating with your full attention, avoiding distractions such as watching TV while you eat. Put your fork down between each bite.

**SLEEP** For one week, go to bed at the same time and wake up at the same time every day. If you have trouble falling asleep, listen to soothing music or relaxation apps (there are some at my website, [www.fullheartliving.com](http://www.fullheartliving.com)). But stay in bed, even if you’re just resting.

Get into the habit of allowing enough time for relaxation and sleep. Put sleep time in your calendar, as you would your work hours. Show up on time, just as you would for work. Stay there until it’s time to punch out. (Important note: an exception to this is if you’re laying there worrying about falling asleep, which obviously can be counterproductive. I’m talking allowing yourself time to just veg, peacefully. If that’s impossible for you, of course get up and do something that might help you relax, such as restorative and certain other forms of yoga.)

Keep a notebook by your bedside. If thoughts occur to you that you don’t want to lose, jot them down and then return your mind to relaxation. That way you can let go of trying to remember something.

**PUT DOWN YOUR GADGET** At least a half hour before bedtime, stop using electronics. Electronic gadgets emit blue light that prevents the release of the hormone melatonin, which is essential for falling and staying asleep.

**KEEP A SLEEP DIARY** The National Sleep Foundation offers a terrific, free sleep diary that may help shed light on your nocturnal patterns.

### AVOID STRESS

When you're less than perfect, avoid getting down on yourself. In my book (pardon the pun) the stress and emotional damage of self put-downs is worse than the bad habits themselves.

Visit <http://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-diary/SleepDiaryv6.pdf>

\*This definition was first introduced as a working definition in the World Health Organization paper on 'self-care in the context of primary healthcare' of 2009, and is often referred to as the 'WHO 2009' definition. Webber D, Guo Z, Mann S. Self-care in health: we can define it, but should we also measure it? *SelfCare* 2013;4(5):101-106

\*\*Physical Activity and the Prevention of Depression: A Systematic Review of Prospective Studies, George Mammen, MSc, Guy Faulkner, PhD, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Volume 45, Issue 5, November 2013, Pages 649-657



## PART TWO

# A Happiness Boot Camp

CHAPTER 5

Expressing thanks:  
A poorly wrapped gift



KEY POINTS

KEY POINTS

- Gratitude is a skill that can be cultivated
- Being grateful releases oxytocin, the “feel good,” relational chemical
- Expressing thanks can provide a potent antidote to feeling bad
- Being grateful can lead to Radical Acceptance, the willingness to experience ourselves and our life as they are
- When feeling thankful, we are open to receiving love
- Experienced in response to something or someone, gratitude by definition, is a relational experience
- Gratitude can contribute to growth and creativity

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

ADVANCED APPRECIATION PRACTICE

See if you can write two to three sentences about an experience of gratitude. The aim is increased awareness of what you appreciate, why, how it registers inside, and how you are an active participant.

1. **IDENTIFY** Notice what you are grateful for.
2. **EXPAND** Notice more deeply. What specifically are the qualities or the elements you appreciate?
3. **EXPLORE** What does this experience tell or teach you? What does it mean to you?

4. **DEEPEN** How do you respond? How do you acknowledge it? How did you take it in?

5. **BRING IT FULL CIRCLE** How are you a participant in this whole experience? What do you contribute?

Use this template to write about your gratitude experience:

1. **IDENTIFY** I am grateful for

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2. **EXPAND** The qualities or elements I appreciate about the above include

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3. **EXPLORE** This teaches me and/or brings meaning to me by

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4. **DEEPEN** I respond, acknowledge, and take this in by

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5. **BRING IT FULL CIRCLE** I am an active participant and contribute to this experience by

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**START THE DAY WITH THANKSGIVING** Over your morning coffee or tea, take a moment to consider what you're grateful for and how you help manifest that. Like Patty, we might be grateful for the cup and warm beverage in our hand. Many mornings, my first thought is how thankful I am for the gift of a good night's sleep. You might appreciate the moments of quiet before the day gets in full swing, your friendly neighborhood barista, or the morning newspaper.

**BREATH BREAK** If you can, take a few moments throughout the day to breathe deeply. In your mind, acknowledge the gifts of the day or the moment. What's going well right now?

**SAY GRACE** before meals. See if you can take a moment before meals. If not a formal prayer, simply reflect on all the effort that went into bringing this food to you, from the miracle of photosynthesis to the

farmers, truck drivers, grocer, and cook who participated in bringing it to your plate. This can be done either silently or aloud—or both!

**DRINKING WATER** Before taking a sip of water, give a silent word of thanks for it.

**BREATHE** in gratitude. Imagine it going to every cell. When grateful, imagine you can feel it with your whole body.

**SMILE** to people you pass, and be grateful for their smiles in return.

**VALIDATE OTHERS' THANKS** When someone thanks you, look them in the eye. Take a breath. Smile and say, "You're welcome." And mean it.

**THE GRATITUDE STROLL** Take a walk letting your senses be the guide, and notice all the things for which you are grateful. These might include the fresh air, the shape of the clouds, the evergreens in the park, the fit of your favorite shoes, the aroma from your neighbor's grill, the buzz of insects, or countless other things. (Inspired by Marelisa Fabrega)

**FOUR QUESTIONS** At or near the end of each day, ask yourself one or all of these:

- What touched me today?
  - Who or what inspired me today?
  - What made me smile today?
  - What's the best thing that happened today?
- (Inspired by Marelisa Fabrega)

**GRATITUDE MEDITATION** Take a few moments to settle in. Close your eyes if you like. Notice how your breath affects your body. Perhaps become aware of the rise and fall of the belly, or the expansion and contraction of the chest, or the movement of air in your nostrils. After a few moments, if it's comfortable, move your awareness to your heart. With

each breath, imagine breathing in gratitude, all the way in to your heart. With each out breath, imagine breathing out gratitude, from the very depths of your heart. Allow the gratitude to sink deeply into your heart. Allow gratitude to flow freely from your heart. When you're ready, on an in breath, allow the gratitude to sink deeply into your whole body. And allow gratitude to flow freely from your entire body on the out breath. Remain in this state for as long as you like. End with a dedication such as, "May all beings know freedom from suffering. May all beings be happy. May all beings be free." (Inspired by Thich Nhat Hanh)

## CHAPTER 6

# Developing mindfulness: Happiness is a state of consciousness



KEY POINTS

### KEY POINTS

- Mindfulness is full attention in the present moment, free of distractions and judgments
- While they might call it different things, everyone I interviewed practices mindfulness
- Mindfulness can help you connect to yourself and to others
- Mindfulness can help with problem solving
- Any activity can be performed mindfully
- Especially when first learning mindfulness, many people prefer movement vs. stationary meditations

### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**LET GO** of seeking a constant state of happiness. Embrace the fullness of every moment, even the less desirable ones. When you're sad, for instance, be sad. Like all emotions and experiences, it will come and go. While it often seems counterintuitive, the more you resist, the longer the unwanted feeling or experience is likely to last. Support yourself to tolerate whatever is occurring right now.

**START BY JUST NOTICING** Most of us "tune out" occasionally as a means of coping with the demands of modern life. Notice when you're

tuning out, and make it a conscious choice instead of something done automatically without your permission. Do you truly need some down time right now? Have your down time with your full awareness. Conversely, might you be missing something really important just now? I'll never forget hearing about a mother who kept asking her young daughter to hurry up so they could get to school or other important places. When it came time for her daughter to leave home at age 18, in her need to get places on time, the mother realized she'd missed too many precious moments. Only when her daughter was grown did she realize that punctuality is not as important as her daughter.

**IDENTIFY PATTERNS AND THEMES** Keep a log of when you tend to tune out. What are you doing? Watching TV? Driving? What does that tell you?

**GO FOR A WALK** As you walk, notice how your foot feels as it strikes and leaves the ground. What sights, sounds, and aromas come to you? Your mind will inevitably be drawn to other matters, such as your to-do list or a recent argument. When that happens, just notice it, and return your attention over and over again to your five senses. In this way, simply walking—with full attention—becomes a meditation.

**FOCUS ON WHAT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW** When your mind wanders, simply return your focus to what is right in front of you. You're likely to have to do this repeatedly. It takes time to train the mind to stay in one place.

For a week, **CHOOSE ONE MUNDANE ACTIVITY**, like brushing your teeth or walking up the stairs. Each time you engage in that action, bring your full attention to it. When your mind wanders, gently steer it back.

**BRING YOUR FULL ATTENTION TO ANY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** Many people find sitting meditation difficult, especially at the beginning. Moving the body can help. Experiment with bringing your full

attention to any physical activity you're doing, whether swimming, biking, gardening, lifting, or whatever it is you do with your body.

**REDUCE THE USE OF ELECTRONICS** Useful and compelling as they can be, electronic devices can reinforce the tendency to drift away from the present moment. Use them selectively, and be as mindful as you can while you do so. Think “High Touch” over “High Tech”—how can I be most in touch with myself while I use this equipment?

**GET OUTSIDE** The act of being in nature is soothing and meditative for most of us, especially if we fully experience being outside, instead of listening to the constant chatter in our minds.

**ATTEND TO YOUR LOVED ONES** When in the presence of others, especially those most important to you, give them your full, undivided attention. Listen fully and speak sparingly and only from the heart. More of this in Chapter 9: Connecting.

**TAKE A MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS REDUCTION (MBSR) COURSE** This is the best way I know for Westerners unfamiliar with meditation to learn all kinds of ways to be more fully in the present moment.

**TAKE A MOVEMENT-BASED CLASS** High-quality classes such as Tai Chi, Qi Gong, and yoga are phenomenal for teaching moment-by-moment awareness.

**READ** A skeptic? Read Dan Harris' amazing book *10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help That Actually Works—A True Story*. After suffering a panic attack on live national television, Harris was desperate for drastic change. Though he'd been suspicious of meditation his whole life, this highly public crisis eventually led him to a deep exploration of mindful meditation. He tells the harrowing yet gripping tale with the wit and grit only a seasoned journalist can muster.

## CHAPTER 7

## Celebrating simple joys: The passion of sandpapering blankets


**KEY POINTS**
**KEY POINTS**

- Engaging one's passions brings deep pleasure
- Valuing the simplest moments contributes to joy
- Happy people appreciate how such moments are part of a greater plan
- Taking risks supports happiness
- Happier people are true to themselves
- Beware of self-improvement if it only reinforces the belief that something is wrong with you. Instead, approach change from a place of self-love
- Focusing on what brings joy is a potent antidote to difficulties and challenges

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

**ENJOY THE SIMPLE MOMENTS** How can you make doing the laundry fun? Sing along to the radio, or chat with a friend on the phone while you fold. Hate mowing the lawn? Create different patterns in the grass. This idea (and he has many more) is from my friend and colleague Andy Weisberg's book *Laid Off and Crazy Happy*.

**RECALL ON THE GREATER PLAN** Making lunch for the kids?

Think of how that peanut butter is going to fuel your daughter's brain for learning tomorrow afternoon. Maybe it will provide just the jolt she needs to decide to become the next president!

**REDISCOVER YOUR PASSIONS** When you were young, how did you answer the question, "What do you want to do be when you grow up?" What activities did you most enjoy? Answering these questions will likely lead you to what would be most enjoyable for you now.

Once you know where your interests lie, **TAKE A CLASS, JOIN A CLUB**, or **VOLUNTEER** in that area.

**ALLOW YOURSELF TO TAKE RISKS** If the above seems too scary, explore how you could support yourself to follow through. Maybe you need a friend to come along. Perhaps you don't believe you deserve to have fun. If so, refute the irrational part of the belief. Remind yourself you **DO** have the right to enjoy yourself.

**BE TRUE TO YOURSELF** Are there areas of your life where you are violating your own values? Perhaps you're not as honest as you'd like to be. How can you begin to live with more integrity? Choose one relationship to start. Be more truthful with that person. Notice how you feel.

**PUT DOWN THAT SELF HELP BOOK** Even this one! If you're trying to change out of self-hatred, you are far more likely to fail. If you start from a place of love and acceptance of yourself, you're far more likely to succeed.

## CHAPTER 8

## Accepting yourself: Half off the beaten path


**KEY POINTS**
**KEY POINTS**

- While suffering may be unavoidable, joy is equally possible
- Happier people are self-accepting; they embrace the fullness of themselves, including those parts that are imperfect
- Self-acceptance allows us to love ourselves and others more deeply
- Settling the mind, opening the heart, and connecting with others all contribute to self acceptance
- It's not so much what happens to us that determines our happiness as how we respond to those events
- Loving others—and being loved by others—feeds our sense of self
- Loving yourself helps others love you, and loving yourself helps you love others more

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

**EVERY DAY, FIND TIME TO SETTLE DOWN YOUR MIND** Do five minutes of breathing. Meditate for 20 minutes. Take a mindful walk; with each step repeat a self-affirmation. If you are religious, recommit to your faith and start a daily habit of prayer. Breathe. Practice patience and mindfulness. See Chapter 6: Developing mindfulness, for ideas on this.

**INTERRUPT EMOTIONAL HIGH-JACKING** When your mind is scattered or racing, interrupt the flow by attending to the breath, the body, or objects.

**PRACTICE “SQUARE” BREATHING** Breathe in to a count of eight, hold to a count of eight, breathe out to a count of eight, hold for a count of eight. Complete the cycle a total of eight times.

**NEAR AND FAR** Look at something far away. Really notice what you see. Now examine an object very near. Bring your full attention to the task.

**HUM, WHISTLE, OR BREATHE THROUGH A STRAW.**

**MIND-BODY PRACTICES** such as Yoga, Qi Gong, and Tai Chi are very effective for getting us out of our heads.

**EMBRACE THE PARADOX** We need to accept who we are and change behaviors that aren't serving us.

**ACCEPT** that just like everyone, you make mistakes. You're as human as the next guy. Have you ever examined an Amish quilt? Look closely enough, and you'll find an imperfection. It's included purposely as a reminder that only the Creator is—and creates things that are—perfect. I love that idea! I'm even practicing it in this book. See if you can find the intentional error in this paragraph.

**WRITE IT OUT** Keep a journal of when your demons show up. Is there a pattern to the time or day when they become especially active? Is there a particular person or place that triggers them? It might be good to avoid these triggers until you have learned how to quiet your mind.

**CONNECT** with others. See Chapter 9: Connecting, for many ideas on this.

## CHAPTER 9

## Connecting: All you need is love


**KEY POINTS**
**KEY POINTS**

- Everyone I interviewed identified relationships as a key component in their happiness; they all actively develop and maintain connections with others
- Being fully present—eliminating distractions, smiling, making eye contact, and deep listening—fosters connections
- Close relationships provide opportunities to recognize our true, full selves, including parts that we're proud of and ashamed of
- With their stable presence and unconditional love, those closest to us provide the safety to expose these more vulnerable—sometimes called the “shadow”—sides
- In functional relationships, it's essential to embrace our shadow and take responsibility for our part in conflict
- Small kindnesses, such as simply smiling or saying hello, can make a profound impact
- When conflict arises, the key is to repair any rupture in connection

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

**REACH OUT** Contact friends with whom you've been out of touch. Ask a coworker to lunch. Send a family member a card. Stop by your elderly neighbor's place.

**TELL PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT THEM** Some of the most powerful phrases are: I care about you. I'm here for you. I'm here with you. I love you. I'm sorry.

**SEEK OUT THE COMPANY OF PEOPLE YOU ADMIRE** When I first started in radio, I was amazed how often people agreed to be interviewed. Even when I thought they were too famous or busy, just having the courage to ask often proved fruitful. You don't need a radio show to reach out. Maybe say you're working on a personal project—you! Simply asking markedly increases the probability that they'll say yes. If you don't ask, the answer for sure is no.

**INVEST IN THE PEOPLE YOU CARE ABOUT** Years ago it occurred to me that relationships are similar to other enterprises. We invest time in our education and our careers, for example. Friendships, too, need time and attention. Think of it as making a deposit in your “Wellbeing 401K.” Sometimes I even block off time in my calendar so I'm sure I'll save time for correspondence.

**PRACTICE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE** Folks with higher EQs (a.k.a. emotional intelligence) have far more satisfying relationships. They tend to be more aware of their own feelings and display more empathy for others'. See *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman to get you started. Goleman describes five elements of emotional intelligence and demonstrates how they determine success in relationships, work, and even our physical health.

**ASK OTHERS QUESTIONS** Demonstrate interest in others by asking their opinions. Inquire about their experiences. Express interest in what they're interested in. When she first sees them, for example, my friend Merrra almost always comments on what her friends are wearing. It's like a social appetizer served to warm up the conversational palate. In doing

so, Merra tells me (via email) she is “appreciating my friend’s beauty and expression—a compliment, enjoying their ‘colors’... not so much the clothes themselves.” Her friends feel noticed and appreciated, and deeper conversation ensues. Upon meeting a new person at a party, you might gently inquire how they know the host. The response will give you clues about the person’s work or hobbies. Ask a follow-up question based on what you learn, and so on.

**ENCOURAGE** When you notice people doing something well, tell them.

**SUPPORT** If someone seems in need, offer help. Be specific. “I’d be glad to watch the kids while you go to your doctor’s appointment” is better than, “Let me know if there’s anything I can do to help.”

**ALLOW OTHERS TO NOTICE AND LOVE YOU** Too often, my clients complain that others don’t approach them. After careful examination, however, it often becomes clear that the client isn’t noticing others’ “bids” for connection. Failing to maintain eye contact, for example, or not returning others’ smiles turns people off. Without sacrificing personal safety, of course, be open to others who may be subtly cueing you that they’d like to connect. See John Gottman’s book *The Relationship Cure*, which introduces the concept of the “emotional bid,” the fundamental unit of emotional connection. Gottman outlines a five-step, research-based, time-tested approach for improving relationships of all kinds.

**REALLY SEE THE OTHER** Even the cashier, teller, or tollbooth attendant. Make eye contact. Engage with a warm hello. Ask how their day is going—and truly listen to the answer. Notice how you feel.

When in conflict, **CHECK IT OUT**. Make sure you understand what the other is saying before responding.

Still in conflict? **TRY A SOFT START-UP**. Yes, it’s important for you to be assertive and state what you feel and need. Tone of voice makes all the difference. Speaking calmly and with a neutral look on your face will get you much further than yelling and scowling.

### ASSESS YOUR FRIENDSHIPS

As Philip does, take a look at those you spend time with.

- Do these people inspire you?
- Do they bring out the best in you?
- Do they challenge you?

**BE GOLDEN** Treat others as you would like to be treated. It is the Golden Rule, after all. It’s golden for a reason.

**BE KIND** To me, being kind is probably the most important thing of all.

## CHAPTER 10

# Bouncing back with resilience: 10,000 joys, 10,000 sorrows



### KEY POINTS

- Happier people face the same hardships as everyone
- Fully experiencing their emotions and actively developing resilience allows them to bounce back
- Maintain perspective
- Hold both joy and sorrow
- Manage your energy through moving your body, eating a diet that is right for you, and getting adequate relaxation and sleep
- Calm the mind, and pay attention to your thoughts and emotions
- Cultivate a good heart, and create deep connections

### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**ACCEPT** that life involves both good times and trying ones. Resist the urge to cling to one or the other. Embrace each fully.

**FULLY EXPERIENCE GRIEF** Once you've had your sadness over a loss, you can begin to rebuild a life.

### MAKE A LIST OF TRAUMAS AND/OR LOSSES

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**HAVE YOU FULLY GRIEVED?** If not, talk it over with a trusted friend or therapist.

**APPRECIATE THE HIDDEN GIFTS** What did you learn or gain from the loss or trauma? How can you utilize those moving forward?

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### BE AWARE OF AND GRATEFUL FOR SIMPLE THINGS

See Chapter 5: Expressing thanks, for more suggestions regarding gratitude.

### MAKE A LIST OF HOW YOU'VE MANAGED TOUGH TIMES IN THE PAST

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Return to the list in times of hardship. It will help remind you of what works for you, and help maintain faith that things will work out.

**PRACTICE GOOD SELF-CARE** Get physical activity nearly every day. Avoid most junk food. Get adequate relaxation and sleep. Take supplements if needed. For more on this, see Chapter 4: Establishing a foundation.

**CALM YOUR MIND** Practice relaxation or meditation. Download relaxation and hypnosis apps (many are free) on your smartphone, and listen often. See Chapter 6: Developing mindfulness, for more ideas.

**TRAIN THE BRAIN** The best way I have found to do this is to take a formal meditation class, such as MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction).

**SURROUND YOURSELF WITH LOVE** Whether wise teachers, mentors, friends or family, spend as much time as possible with people who love you. The unconditional love of pets and other animals also can help tremendously. Love is contagious—if we experience love from others, we believe we are lovable. The reverse, of course, is equally true; if we trust we are lovable, others pick up on that and tend to act accordingly.

**BE LOVING TOWARD OTHERS** Extending acts of kindness benefits both the giver and recipient. See Chapter 9: Connecting, for more suggestions.

**READ** Dr. Emmons’ books, especially *The Chemistry of Joy* (see Resources FFI).

\*Dr. Emmons is an expert in the field of resilience. While he is known mostly for his writing, especially his two books, (*The Chemistry of Joy* and *The Chemistry of Joy Workbook*), he was also one of the first to offer formal instruction on resilience. He developed a ten-week course on resilience that integrates movement, nutrition and supplements, along with the psychology and practice of mindfulness. The goal of the course is to help restore resilience and rediscover joy—even for folks who have been experiencing depression or anxiety for months or years. I took the earliest iteration of the course years ago. It is currently being offered through his collaborative partnership Partners In Resilience [www.partnersinresilience.com](http://www.partnersinresilience.com).

## CHAPTER 11

### Protecting yourself: News fasts



#### KEY POINTS

- Most of the people I interviewed in my happiness videos avoid news overexposure
- Instead, focus on positive events and what you can influence
- Don’t, however, deny suffering
- Find a way to be aware of suffering and remain happy
- Because our brains are wired to focus on negative news and the news cycle is now 24/7, our ability to resist becoming negative is being severely tested
- Consider being more deliberate about when and how you “consume” news, much as you might be deliberate about your nutritional choices

#### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**INVENTORY** Check the headlines of the nearest newspaper. Compare how many “positive” news stories you find to every negative one

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**LIMIT** your exposure to the news. Slowly decrease it over time, replacing it with other activities you enjoy.

**PRACTICE MODERATION** Like foods, consume media within sensible limits.

**REDUCE USE OF ELECTRONICS** Think “high touch over high tech.” Stop by a coworker’s cube instead of sending that email. Meet a friend for coffee or a game of golf. Call your friend instead of text or PM.

**EXPERIMENT WITH NEWS FASTS** Wean yourself slowly. But consider spending half a day, then a whole day, then a weekend, etc., slowly increasing the time away from the headlines. Record how you feel.

**NEWS MEDIA DAY**

**Upon Awakening**

Mood  
 BAD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT  
 Clarity of Thought  
 CLOUDY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 CLEAR

**An hour after breakfast**

Mood  
 BAD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT  
 Clarity of Thought  
 CLOUDY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 CLEAR

**Mid-afternoon**

Mood  
 BAD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT  
 Clarity of Thought  
 CLOUDY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 CLEAR

**NEWS FAST DAY**

**Upon Awakening**

Mood  
 BAD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT  
 Clarity of Thought  
 CLOUDY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 CLEAR

**An hour after breakfast**

Mood  
 BAD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT  
 Clarity of Thought  
 CLOUDY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 CLEAR

**Mid-afternoon**

Mood  
 BAD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT  
 Clarity of Thought  
 CLOUDY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 CLEAR

**Mid-evening**

Mood  
 BAD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT  
 Clarity of Thought  
 CLOUDY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 CLEAR

**Bedtime**

Mood  
 BAD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT  
 Clarity of Thought  
 CLOUDY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 CLEAR

**Mid-evening**

Mood  
 BAD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT  
 Clarity of Thought  
 CLOUDY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 CLEAR

**Bedtime**

Mood  
 BAD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 GREAT  
 Clarity of Thought  
 CLOUDY 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 CLEAR

**SWITCH THE SOURCE** Obtain news from sources you have more control of, such as the Internet or the paper instead of television.

**IDENTIFY ACTION STEPS** Take today’s headlines. Identify what is in your control regarding it. For example, can you donate money? Can you volunteer? Write a letter to the editor? Contact your elected officials?

| TODAY’S HEADLINES | WHAT I CAN DO | CHECK WHEN COMPLETE |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| _____             | _____         | _____               |
| _____             | _____         | _____               |
| _____             | _____         | _____               |
| _____             | _____         | _____               |
| _____             | _____         | _____               |

**SEND BLESSINGS** Knowing others suffer, send positive blessings their way. Wish them relief. Imagine them free of their suffering.

**ACT LOCALLY** Identify the causes that most concern you: education, economic development, the environment, human rights, etc. What can you do about them within your own household? Your neighborhood? Your workplace? Your faith community? Your city or town?

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**MAKE A LIST** of all the good things that happened today, whether in the media or not (most of it likely isn't)

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**CONSUME IN COMPANY** When you do choose to watch the news, do so with a friend or family member. Talk about what you've seen, how it makes you feel, and what you can do about it.

## CHAPTER 12

# Giving back without depleting: Gifts from the heart



### KEY POINTS

- Do what you can
- Do what you love
- Trust your intuition
- Listen to your heart
- It's okay to wait a few days before making a decision
- It's okay to say no
- Remember, "No" is a complete sentence. You don't need to justify why you are saying it

### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**BEWARE OF "SHOULD"** Whenever you catch yourself using the dreaded "should" word, as in "I should volunteer," ask yourself what you want to do in your heart. If you're not used to doing so, it may take some time for your intuition to "wake up." Maybe "sleep" will come to mind. This may indeed be a sign that you need some rest. Get the rest, and then see what you can contribute.

| CAUSES I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT | WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO ABOUT THEM |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <hr/>                       | <hr/>                          |

**ACCEPT** volunteer tasks when your heart is drawn to them and when you know you can complete them without resentment.

**CONTRIBUTE IN OTHER WAYS** For causes you care about but don't have the skills or interest in working directly on, you can offer to provide meals or help with child care for other volunteers. Or consider donating money.

**WRITE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** regarding causes that are important to you. They actually do make a difference.

**SIGN PETITIONS** Elected officials and retailers like to keep people happy. Collective action does sway policy and decisions.

**LET YOUR FEET DO THE TALKING** Don't shop at businesses whose practices fail to reflect your values.

**VOTE.** Enough said.

**DISCERN AND USE GUILT** Feelings of guilt can help guide us in the right direction, but we must dig deeply into the cause of the feelings. If it's "pure" guilt, you've acted in violation of your values. A repair or apology is warranted, and you need to change your ways. Often, however, we feel guilty when we needn't. If you haven't erred, you don't need to feel guilt. Let go of this kind of unproductive shame.

**DO WHAT YOU CAN/DO AS MUCH AS YOU CAN** Being an activist is a great thing. If you burn yourself out, however, you can't do well for anyone. Do as much you can. Then rest.

## CHAPTER 13

# Believing in yourself: Countertop wisdom



KEY POINTS

### KEY POINTS

- If you truly believe you can do it, you probably can
- Persistence often pays off
- Fighting righteous causes can lead to community
- Happier people take setbacks less personally
- Setbacks often lead to unexpected—and even greater—results than anticipated
- “It’s an assertive person’s world”
- Positive role models help us overcome self-doubt

### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

#### OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

I met Pam in a community theater production. A stay-at-home mom, she was in her late 40s with two children and a loving husband. With her girls in their early teens, she was beginning to feel restless and less fulfilled than when the girls were younger and “needed her more.” She had a dream she always wanted to fulfill.

1. Pam wanted to be in a musical but never tried out for one.
2. She wasn't sure she could do it; she'd always wanted to, but she had no formal experience acting or dancing. Moreover, she was afraid it would take her away from time with her growing kids.

3. She found a community theater that welcomed families. She and her daughters tried out for a local musical production and got parts in the chorus.

**LIST** three things you've always wanted to do but haven't:

(example: I always wanted to tap dance.\*)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

\*NOTE: Here we must consider certain fundamental limits. In my case, for example, standing 5'6" and weighing 160, I'm unlikely to become a linebacker in the NFL. If football is my thing, it may be wise for me to explore other ways of engaging my passion.

**WRITE** what's kept you from doing them:

(example: I had no time to learn it.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**IDENTIFY** what you can do to make those there things happen. If you're having trouble, look at the ideas below, and come back to complete this section:

(example: I found time by cutting down on TV watching.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**VISUALIZE SUCCESS**

Make a "mental movie." See yourself taking the steps necessary to achieve your goal. Imagine yourself facing setbacks with equanimity. Engage all your senses. What will you see, touch, smell, taste, and hear when you've accomplished your goal—and along the way?

**TAKE IT PUBLIC**

Announcing your intentions to make a change increases the likelihood that you will persevere.

**ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED**

Recruit trusted comrades to help you achieve your goal. Be specific about what you'd like them to do. Do you need a cheerleader? Assign someone that role. A mentor or coach? Find one. Someone to listen when doubts come up? Ask a friend to be on "stand by," a quick phone call away.

**TAKE NOTHING PERSONALLY**

It can be tempting to interpret setbacks as a message from beyond that you're not meant to do it. It may be the universe's way of telling you there are unexpected lessons along the way. Take from each experience what you can. It's fine to reassess along the way; your goal may change. But if it's truly in your heart, keep finding ways to do what you love.

**BE CREATIVE**

When roadblocks and setbacks appear, see if there is another way.

**EXERCISE DISCIPLINE**

Achieving goals takes more than visualizing, of course. Action is required, and often similar actions need to be repeated over and over again. So whether it's practicing the piano or getting a promotion, put in time and effort. This book would not have been completed, for instance, had I not set large chunks of time in my calendar or if I allowed distractions to keep me from writing.

**TAKE BREAKS**

On the other hand, don't be so persistent that you burn yourself out by not getting the rest you need. All creative endeavors and learning require adequate "down time" to percolate. During the writing of this book, I took several extended breaks—some as long as a year. When I tried to force the writing, I didn't progress. When I listened to my heart, took breaks as needed, and wrote when I truly felt the call, the muse appeared. Major efforts require copious amounts of patience.

**MIX IT UP**

Another key in avoiding burnout and/or dropping out is variety. An opera singer doesn't master her art by signing a single aria. She explores all kinds of pieces, even different styles of music. Same goes for becoming more physical. Experiment with a number of different activities—it's better for your mind and body.

**REFUTE IRRATIONAL, LIMITING BELIEFS**

If you have unrealistic doubts about your abilities, label those doubts as irrational. "I'm not good at anything" is one example of an irrational, self-limiting belief. To counter it, make a list of things you are good at, and post it on your mirror, dashboard, and/or screensaver. Recall concrete examples that dispute any limiting beliefs.

| I AM GOOD AT . . . | CONCRETE EXAMPLES |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. _____           | _____             |
| 2. _____           | _____             |
| 3. _____           | _____             |
| 4. _____           | _____             |
| 5. _____           | _____             |

**USE AFFIRMATIONS**

While self-affirmations are often ridiculed, research shows that when used properly, they can be helpful (for just one example see L. Legault, T. Al-Khindi, M. Inzlicht. "Preserving Integrity in the Face of Performance Threat: Self-Affirmation Enhances Neurophysiological Responsiveness to Errors." *Psychological Science*, 2012; DOI: 10.1177/0956797612448483). When you write or speak an affirmation about a desired goal, state it in the present tense and be as specific as you can.

(example: I am sitting in my beautiful newly renovated kitchen, appreciating the rich, walnut cabinets and quartz countertops. I feel alive, content, and motivated.)

**FIVE EXAMPLES ARE:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**BREAK IT DOWN**

Break large projects into manageable pieces. Reward yourself when you've accomplished each step, even if it's simply saying to yourself "Good job!" When I've completed a big project, I always take at least several minutes to "soak it in," appreciating what I've done. After mulching the garden each spring, for example, I sit, breathe deeply, and take a good long look at my gorgeous newly spruced-up flower and vegetable beds. I revel in how good they look. Then I make my long-suffering husband do so, too, while I brag about how much work I just did.

**REACH OUT TO COMMUNITY**

One of the best ways to find like-minded people is to use your interests as a guide. Join volunteer organizations that work to support goals you

are passionate about or take a class in something you love. Better yet, start your own group.

### FIND A ROLE MODEL

Pay attention to your role models. Notice what they do. Ask them how they achieved things similar to what you want to accomplish.

### ASK A SPONSOR

A “sponsor” is a new buzzword in the business world. Sort of like god-parents, sponsors push you to make your dreams come true—but in the process, you also make them look good. In a 2013 *New York Times* op-ed article, Sylvia Ann Hewlett, an economist and business innovator, explained the difference between sponsors and mentors this way: “Mentors act as a sounding board or a shoulder to cry on, offering advice as needed and support and guidance as requested; they expect very little in return. Sponsors, in contrast, are much more vested in their protégés, offering guidance and critical feedback because they believe in them.”

## CHAPTER 14

# Taking risks: Aim for the moon, fall among the stars



KEY POINTS

### KEY POINTS

- Happier people take more risks and allow themselves to be more vulnerable
- It's easier to take risks when we believe we are okay
- It's possible to take risks and honor our boundaries
- Focus on the process more than the result
- Distinguish between failing and making mistakes; the former may seem terminal, the latter temporary
- People who believe they have good luck try more often, so they appear to have more successes
- Even successful people experience setbacks

### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**ACCEPT YOUR FEARS** I used to own a copy of the book: *Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway* by Susan Jeffers. Decades ago I lent it to a client (I don't recall whom) who never returned it. I'm not bitter; I figure they need it more than I do. It's been so long, in fact, that I barely remember the book itself at all. But the title has remained with me. What a great concept. It's okay to feel afraid. Courage, of course, is not the absence of fear, but being afraid and doing the right thing anyway. Know you're

afraid. Own it. Accept it. Explore it. It may have great messages for you. The idea here is not to let it rule you. Find ways to support yourself through the fear and do what you want to do anyway.

**DISCERN RATIONAL FEAR FROM “AVOIDANT FEAR”** If a situation is truly dangerous, obviously listen to your gut and protect yourself. Most situations in modern life aren't truly life threatening, however. If your fear is “avoidant”—causing you to avoid what you'd truly like to do, use the strategies below.

**GO SLOWLY** Start slowly, respecting your boundaries, limits, and capabilities. As Barry said, he doesn't put himself in danger. Yes, there is some risk in diving, but he also reminded himself that he was learning from a professional instructor he knew and trusted, and who was right there. Diving looked like fun. Though he was afraid, he did it anyway.

**MAKE IT MANAGEABLE** Break large, daunting projects, into simpler, more manageable components. Identify the larger goal, and then record steps you can take to get there.

**GOAL:**

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**FIVE STEPS I CAN TAKE TO GET THERE**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**DEFINE SUCCESS AS THE ATTEMPT VS. THE OUTCOME**

Sometimes things don't work out as we'd like. Reward yourself simply for trying, even if it didn't go as you originally hoped. Focus on what

you learned. Think of a time you didn't reach a goal. What did you learn from the experience?

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**WHAT I'D MOST LIKE TO DO**

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**I WILL SUPPORT MYSELF BY**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**MY DEFINITION OF SUCCESS**

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**THE POST-REVIEW**

I TRIED

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I REWARDED MYSELF BY

I LEARNED

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**STAY AT IT** None of us learned to walk without falling down over and over again. Inevitably, challenges and roadblocks are going to appear. Persistence is key. However, it is good to sometimes see setbacks as opportunities to pause and reflect. You may need a brief break to relax, rest, and recover. Review your priorities. Has your goal changed? Based on what you have learned thus far, what do you want now? This is how you build resilience.

IN THE FACE OF A SETBACK, I WILL

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For more on supporting yourself, see the next chapter: Supporting yourself.



## PART THREE

# Beyond Happy

CHAPTER 15

Supporting yourself:  
Exit the highway



KEY POINTS

- Money doesn't guarantee happiness
- Doing what you love brings true wealth
- Anxiety is unsupported energy
- Ask what you need to do to support yourself
- Explore ways you can support yourself to do the things you most want to do
- Place yourself on fertile ground
- Affirm your right to be happy

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

EXIT THE HIGHWAY Philip needed to escape an environment that fed his pocketbook but was crushing his soul. What highway do you need to escape?

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TRUST YOURSELF Despite pressure from well-meaning family and friends, Philip trusted his instinct and left a job that made him miserable. List positive decisions you have made in favor of your personal happiness, even if others disagreed.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

IDENTIFY YOUR RIGHTS Philip believed in his right to be happy. That belief helped him stay on course. It allowed him to take risks that would make his happiness a reality. What rights do you need reminding of? The right to say no? The right to live free of fear or harassment?

I have the right to \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE YOURSELF ON FERTILE GROUND What do you need to make your happiness a reality? Be as specific as possible. Do you need to be in a certain environment? find like-minded people who share your passion? change your current surroundings?

To be happy, I need (1) \_\_\_\_\_

To be happy, I need (2) \_\_\_\_\_

To be happy, I need (3) \_\_\_\_\_

To be happy, I need (4) \_\_\_\_\_

To be happy, I need (5) \_\_\_\_\_

**DETERMINE THE HOW** How I will achieve each of the above needs

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**IDENTIFY SUPPORTERS** Seeking out the support of family members and trusted friends can make all the difference. Ask yourself, who has always believed in me? To whom can I turn when the going gets rough? Who tells me the truth, even when I may not want to hear it? Who is a good role model for what I want?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**CHAPTER 16**

**Embracing difference:  
Squeaky brakes and sensitivity**



**KEY POINTS**

- Identify and attend to your needs
- Honoring what you need to recharge your internal batteries is vital to happiness
- Acknowledging your needs and limits can help you be your true self and have authentic relationships
- Accepting yourself for who you truly are not only reduces shame, it also brings more contentedness
- Reframe old definitions of yourself. Aspects that once seemed like liabilities often have hidden advantages. Utilize those benefits, and share them with others

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

**IDENTIFY** what makes you feel different from others. Often these are attributes that make us feel self-conscious or even ashamed, especially if others ridicule us about them. List those items people tease or ridicule you about.

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**NOTICE** if you judge others for anything listed above.

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**RECORD** your judgmental thoughts of others. Then consider how much you do that same thing.

| MY JUDGMENTS OF OTHERS | DO I DO THE SAME THING?<br>IF SO, HOW? |
|------------------------|--|
| <hr/>                  | <hr/>                                  |

**REFUTE** Accept that this is where your thoughts currently reside. Begin to gently refute any irrational or untrue judgments. Here, record replacements for the above judgments:

An example: Trish has been living with her partner, Jeremiah, for four years. She feels guilty for calling him a slob. She might write something like this: Jeremiah leaves dirty take-out containers scattered throughout the house, and he rarely picks up his dirty clothes and junk mail, and it drives me nuts! But is calling him a slob a fair judgment? By saying he is a slob, I underscore how neat and tidy I am. But is that really true? I often forget to take out used tissues in my pockets, causing havoc in the washing machine and dryer. And I know Jeremiah hates how the bathroom counter is always wet after I've washed my face. I hate, too, hate

both habits in myself. I guess he could call me a slob just as much as I could call him one. But no matter what I do, he never complains. Maybe I'm just as hard to live with as he is. Perhaps I can put up with a few dirty chopsticks in the den and random sweepstakes offers left on the dining room table given all the good things he brings to our household. When I reframe his sloppiness as the actions of someone who works hard and sees his home as a place to relax, I find that I am less judgmental toward both of us. And I can be more accepting of my sloppiness, too.

| MY JUDGMENTS OF OTHERS | REFRAMING THEM |
|------------------------|----------------|
| <hr/>                  | <hr/>          |

**COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS**

List both the costs and the benefits of a need or character trait that you have mixed feelings about.

Trait or Need: \_\_\_\_\_

| COSTS | BENEFITS |
|-------|----------|
| <hr/> | <hr/>    |

**ACCEPT** How can I be kinder toward myself in thoughts, beliefs, and self-talk?

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**IDENTIFY** your needs. What activities help you feel fully alive? Do these activities require that you recharge your batteries?

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How do I recharge my batteries?

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**SEEK COMMUNITY** Online or in-person, find like-minded souls—others who share the same trait or interest.

## CHAPTER 17

### Becoming determined: Decide. Remind. Decelerate.



#### KEY POINTS

- Establishing a clear goal to be content and reminding ourselves of it often helps prime the mind to make choices that support it
- Frequent goal reminders help keep us on track
- Calming the mind increases awareness of experiences, thoughts, and emotional reactions
- When we are more aware, we can make better, more deliberate choices
- Experiencing emotions deeply allows them to pass
- Believing that you are intrinsically well and viewing others as essentially good furthers the possibility of happiness

#### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**DECIDE** Make a conscious, deliberate choice to be happy. Elaborate in your own words. Don't be afraid of repeating yourself; here, repetition is your friend, as it can reinforce the idea in the brain and subconscious.

Mia, for example, tells me she brings her mind to contentedness first by making a “really clear choice to do so.” In the space below, she might write something such as, “I choose to be content. I want to be content and happy. I remind myself that this is my choice. I commit myself to cultivating contentment. I prefer happiness, peace, and joy.”

Today, I choose . . .

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**REMIND** Repeat your goal throughout the day. This type of reinforcement increases the likelihood that you will be able to achieve it. Write your goal on sticky notes and place them in prominent places around the house or your workspace, perhaps even on your car’s dashboard. Make it your screensaver.

**DECELERATE** Slow your reactions down. Breathe. Practice some form of relaxation or meditation daily to help keep your mind calm and increase your awareness. See Chapter 6: Developing mindfulness for more ideas.

**FEEL** Our emotions provide information. They can lead to wisdom we can get nowhere else. When strong emotions arise, breathe into them. Support yourself with your breath and your mind; remind yourself you can handle this. You’ve faced difficult emotions before; you can do so again. Notice what is happening in your body. What are these physical sensations telling you? Why is this emotion here now? What is its sacred message? I’ve seen it time and again with clients, friends, and within myself. If we stay with our feelings long enough, inevitably we come to a new understanding.

**CHOOSE** Utilizing your increased awareness, make active choices throughout the day that support your goal. Restate your goal, and record action steps that will take you there. For most of us, happiness comes when we connect with others, our passions, and ourselves. For more on this, see Chapter 2: Defining Happiness.

Three examples:

1. GOAL: Make more friends

ACTION: I will take a class on something I am passionate about (be specific)

2. GOAL: Be kinder to myself

ACTION: I will become aware of those times when my self-talk turns cruel and stop saying things to myself that I would never say to anyone else. I will imagine I am talking to a dear friend. What would I say to him instead?

3. GOAL: Explore my passions

ACTION: Set time aside in my calendar to have “a date with my passion,” be it kayaking, water color painting, going to museums, bike riding, fishing, bird watching, attending sporting events, or practicing piano

1. GOAL: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. GOAL: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. GOAL: \_\_\_\_\_

ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

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**ASK** yourself which feels better—aggravation or kindness? Like Mia, for example, to be irritated at the other drivers, or to extend courtesy and allow the other to go first?

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**BELIEVE/REINFORCE** As Mia suggests, live from the belief that you are intrinsically healthy and sane. Make “I am intrinsically healthy and intrinsically sane” a mantra or self-talk. Write it in your own words here, then transfer it to sticky notes and place in prominent places, or use as your screensaver.

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**VIEW OTHERS AS BASICALLY GOOD** Seeing others as acceptable, decent human beings also brings peace.

## CHAPTER 18

### Aligning your values: The circle of passion



#### KEY POINTS

- Three key components of happiness:
  - 1) Connecting deeply with yourself
  - 2) Connecting with others
  - 3) Engaging in activities you are passionate about
- Exploring our passions leads to creating better connections with ourselves and with others, and often vice versa: the more connected we are with ourselves, the more likely we are to pursue our passions. This is the “Circle of Passion”
- Finding community, connecting with others, and embracing passions supports the development of the true self
- Happy people’s actions are in harmony with their values
- Bringing others happiness produces happiness in oneself (and vice versa: being happy ourselves often inspires others to be happy)
- Doing what you love in the service of others further heightens happiness

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

**SEARCH YOUR CHILDHOOD**

What did you love to do as a child?

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When you were young, how did you respond when people asked, “What do you want to do when you grow up?” or more commonly, “What do you want to be when you grow up?”

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**SEARCH YOUR DREAMS AND PASSIONS**

What do you most enjoy doing now?

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What do you still dream of doing?

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**CLARIFY VALUES**

1. Circle your top 15 values from this list. So you're forced to not over think your selections, set a timer for a maximum of five minutes.

- |                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Community                | Creativity                       |
| Intellectual status      | Location                         |
| Serenity                 | Decisiveness                     |
| Competition              | Loyalty                          |
| Engagement               | Supervising others               |
| Personal development     | Democracy                        |
| Involvement              | Respect                          |
| Sophistication           | Achievement                      |
| Job tranquility          | Financial gain                   |
| Cooperation              | Physical challenge               |
| Knowledge                | Getting promotions and advancing |
| Order                    | Freedom                          |
| Stability                | Pleasure                         |
| Conformity               | Adventure                        |
| Working alone            | Friendships                      |
| Solitude                 | Power and authority              |
| My country               | Affection, love and caring       |
| Leadership               | Personal Growth                  |
| Status                   | Privacy                          |
| Personal tranquility     | The arts                         |
| Fast-paced work          | Having a family                  |
| Actualizing my potential | Public service                   |

Health and fitness  
 Purity  
 Challenging problems  
 Helping other people  
 High-quality  
 Fast living  
 Change and variety  
 Helping society  
 Having quality relationships  
 Having good character  
 Honesty  
 Recognition  
 Close relationships  
 Taking care of others  
 Money  
 Inner harmony  
 Serenity  
 Responsibility  
 Integrity  
 Security  
 Ethical practice  
 Merit  
 Financial gain  
 Excellence

Nature  
 Wisdom  
 Expertise  
 Fame  
 Time freedom  
 Effectiveness  
 Efficiency  
 Meaningful work  
 Truth  
 Commitment  
 Influencing others  
 Reputation  
 Competence  
 Working under pressure  
 Excitement  
 Ecological awareness  
 Market position  
 Independence  
 Accountability  
 Religion  
 Spiritual practice  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Of the 15, cross out five. Again, set a timer. This time, give yourself a maximum of two minutes.
3. Now give yourself one minute to whittle the list further to five.
4. And one more minute to eliminate two.
5. Write the three remaining values here.

\_\_\_\_\_

**ASSESS** I am currently living those values by

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**ASSESS** I am currently NOT living those values by

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**IDENTIFY** Where do you feel part of a community?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**EXAMINE** How does your community support you in living your values?

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**EXAMINE** How does your community encourage you to ignore or violate your values?

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**DETERMINE** your next step. What I will do to bring my actions more in accordance with my values

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**COMMIT** I will begin \_\_\_\_\_ (insert date—  
HINT: make it today!) by taking this concrete action:

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**MAKE A DATE WITH YOURSELF** Every three months for the next year, mark in your calendar dates to spend time to review your progress

**REVIEW** What are my life goals?

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How well do my goals align with my values?

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**DETERMINE** your next step. What I will do to bring my goals more in accordance with my values . . .

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**COMMIT** I will begin \_\_\_\_\_ (insert date—  
make it today!) by taking this concrete action:

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**REFLECT** How I bring happiness to others

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What I can do to bring more happiness to others

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**COMMIT** I will begin \_\_\_\_\_ (insert date—make it today!)  
by taking this concrete action:

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## CHAPTER 19

### Overcoming shame: Life is a painting



KEY POINTS

#### KEY POINTS

- “Having it all” doesn’t guarantee happiness, but being true to yourself might
- Sharing our stories connects us with others
- Divulging our pain inspires others to do the same
- Desperation can breed ingenuity and lead to community
- One can be happy while experiencing conditions that society disparages
- Accepting yourself and your circumstances fosters contentedness

#### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**IDENTIFY** What is not quite right in your life right now? What are you struggling with or ashamed of?

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**IDENTIFY** Three trusted friends with whom I could share this truth:

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**DETERMINE** People in my life who allow me to be who I am

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**INVESTIGATE** How I can spend more time with them

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**CONSIDER** Things I've always wanted to do but held back from doing

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**ESTABLISH** What would I need to do to make those things happen

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## CHAPTER 20

### Stepping into full heart living

**MY FULL HEART LIVING PLAN:**

| <b>ACTION</b>                     | <b>A FEW POSSIBILITIES</b>  | <b>WHAT I DO NOW</b>    | <b>MY NEXT STEPS</b>    |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Decide</b>                     | Declare your intention<br>Write it in a journal<br>Tell a trusted friend<br>Place reminders in prominent places       | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <b>Connect</b>                    | Journal thoughts and feelings<br>Make a date with a friend<br>Give the cashier eye contact<br>Forgive someone         | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <b>Cultivate mindfulness</b>      | Learn to meditate<br>Take yoga, Tai Chi, or qigong classes<br>Fully attend to whatever is happening right now         | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       |
| <b>Engage your passions</b>       | Start (or return to) a hobby<br>Make a “bucket list”<br>Serve others  | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       |
| <b>Take care of yourself</b>      | Stop eating and drinking junk<br>Eat whole foods, but not too much<br>Add an additional vegetable each day            | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       |
| <b>Eat better</b>                 | Stop eating and drinking junk<br>Eat whole foods, but not too much<br>Add an additional vegetable each day            | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       |
| <b>Move your body</b>             | Go for a 10-minute walk   | <hr/>                   | <hr/>                   |
| <b>Get rest</b>                   | Schedule & take downtime  | <hr/>                   | <hr/>                   |
| <b>Express gratitude</b>          | Say thank you, both silently and aloud<br>Keep a gratitude journal  | <hr/> <hr/>             | <hr/> <hr/>             |
| <b>Accept yourself</b>            | Determine what can and can’t be changed<br>Hold yourself with kindness  | <hr/> <hr/>             | <hr/> <hr/>             |
| <b>Develop resilience</b>         | (do all of the above and below!)  | <hr/>                   | <hr/>                   |
| <b>Consume news in moderation</b> | Take news fasts   | <hr/>                   | <hr/>                   |
| <b>Take risks</b>                 | Feel the fear, and do it anyway   | <hr/>                   | <hr/>                   |
| <b>Persist</b>                    | Break projects into manageable pieces<br>Avoid taking setbacks personally<br>Find alternative ways to reach your goal | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       |
| <b>Live with intention</b>        | Choose to be happy  | <hr/>                   | <hr/>                   |
| <b>Embrace meaning</b>            | Volunteer<br>Attend a spiritual service   | <hr/> <hr/>             | <hr/> <hr/>             |
| <b>Play</b>                       | Do something just for fun   | <hr/>                   | <hr/>                   |
| <b>Laugh</b>                      | See a comedy  | <hr/>                   | <hr/>                   |
| <b>Talk about happiness</b>       | Hang with the happiest people you know<br>Ask them what they do<br>Share what you learn with others                   | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>       |

## EPILOGUE

### Thirteen boulders in the woods

(This chapter contains no key points or workbook activities.)

