



A companion to the motivational book
***Climb your Stairway to Heaven:
the 9 habits of maximum happiness***
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Dear reader:

Welcome to *the Get Happy workbook*. To get the most out of this workbook, it helps to understand a few truths about happiness as outlined below. It also helps to read *Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness*, which gives you background helpful to understanding happiness. This workbook helps you create your own happiness action plan.

TRUTH #1: Habits affect our happiness, but so do our upbringing and our environment. So, too, do little things that happen during the day, but how we react to those little things can make a big difference ... and good habits can help us react positively to those little things.

TRUTH #2: Science tells us what makes people happy, but not what makes YOU happy. You are unique, and while most of what science says about happiness applies to you, some of it does not. Only you, looking at yourself with honesty, can be the judge of what applies.

TRUTH #3: Happiness is important and so are other things. Life is about finding the right balance. Adopting everything about every one of the nine habits might not make you happy if such excess leads you to ignore other important aspects of life.

TRUTH #4: Money can't buy happiness. It is a tool, and if you use it well it is a good thing. To the extent that it consumes you, even a little, it is not such a good thing.

TRUTH #5: This workbook will not bring you happiness. You have to create happiness inside you, and this workbook can help ... if you really want to. (Caveat: see TRUTH #1.)

How to use this book:

There are nine habits of maximum happiness. This course assumes that none of us have achieved perfection in any one of them, and that each of us has different strengths and weaknesses.

The best place to start is where you are. So just where are you? Let's look at each habit separately, so you can determine how much effort you want to put into improving each one. Answer the questions in "The Quiz", and add up the total for the habit. The lower the total, the more benefit an improvement plan might provide for that habit. Remember ... there are no right answers, just indicators. Each of us has to find happiness in his or her own way.

Next, let's develop an action plan to follow. Where you have a weak spot, you might wish to make a very detailed plan. Where you already have a strength, you might need just a few improvements. Check off those actions in "The Plan" that you feel you should pursue. (Feel free to e-mail me if you come up with a really great idea that I didn't think of.)

Finally, flip to page 19 and list all the action items you want to pursue for each habit. That page becomes your personal action plan for happiness. Keep in mind, this workbook covers only habits. It does not address issues of your environment (where you live, whom you live with, career, etc.), which you may also wish to improve.

Happy planning

David

Habit #1

Throw a parade in your honor

Next time you think, "Oh oh, I've gone and done it again," relax. You live a charmed life. Your errors will never compare to the screw-ups in Chapter 4. Aren't you the lucky one!

(from Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness, page 57)

How easy it is to become frustrated with every little thing we do wrong: trying to feed too many pieces of paper or laundry or dishes into a machine, saying the wrong thing to a friend or a co-worker, missing an opportunity for new business or a new love (or an old love). Sometimes, a little goof up can spoil a person's mood for the entire day ... even while she is successfully completing hundreds of tasks and social interactions.

Habit #1 is to throw a parade in your honor for all the things you do right. It's OK to cheer for tying your shoelace up right, for finding the car keys, for smoothly driving out of the driveway. If we bemoan the rare slip ups and ignore the frequent achievements, the odds are stacked against us. But if we cheer those little successes just as "loud" as we bemoan the slip ups, we can't lose. We win.

There are many tools we can use to recognize our successes. Sometimes just writing them down or vocalizing them helps. Sometimes placing a note in a prominent place helps. Sometimes enlisting the help of a partner or friend can also help. And often we learn best by teaching, so helping someone close to us to recognize successes can help us in turn.

~The Quiz~

When you make a minor slip-up (with your computer, say the wrong thing, etc.), how long do you remember? 1) Weeks. 2) Days. 3) Hours 4) A few minutes. 5) I forget right away.

Do you believe you are a lucky person? 1) I'm unlucky. 2) No. 3) A little. 4) Somewhat. 5. Very.

How often do you feel like a victim (of life, the government, people around you, etc.)

1) Almost always. 2) At least monthly. 3) Occasionally 4) Rarely. 5) Never.

Which of the following are you most likely to say? 1) Rats, I goofed again.. 2) Oops

3) I could have done better. 4) I was almost right. 5) I was almost wrong.

When you miss a spot (painting a room, lost business opportunity, mowing the lawn, etc.), how much does it bother you? 1) I can't rest until it's fixed. 2) It stays on my mind. 3) I can live with it.

4) Who cares? 5) I'm glad it's just one spot I missed.

TOTAL:

~ My Plan ~

I will stop blaming myself and others for things that have happened.

I will ask a family member or friend, when they hear me blaming myself or others, to remind me not to.

I will read up on Darwin Award winners to put my own minor slip ups into perspective.

I will write down every little failure, crumple up the paper and throw it away to signify that it no longer matters.

When I fail to achieve something I've been trying for, I will say "I almost made it" and look for ways to improve next time.

When I miss a spot, I will step back and ask, "From a distance, does this look like a success?"

I will ask a family member or friend to remind me of everything that's going right when I appear frustrated with something going wrong.

To increase my support network, I will compliment three people each day, knowing that people who receive compliments tend to also give compliments.

I will point out achievements to people around me who are feeling unsuccessful, despite their own successes.

To start each day on a successful footing, I will pick some small task I know I can accomplish.

I will start a success journal, and every day add one or two things I do successfully that I would otherwise take for granted.

I will record each little thing I do successfully on a micro-cassette recorder. When I'm feeling like I just can't get anything right, I'll play back the recording.

I will put a new message of my successes on my screensaver each day.

As my child grows, I will celebrate not only his little achievements, but my own mastery of them so many years ago ... and still today.

I will paste up in easy view a picture of cheerleaders I drew or from a magazine, with the cheer, "Yay me!"

Other:

Other:

Other:

Habit #2

Distinguish yourself

Shining like a diamond is about being at ease with who you are and not changing just to please other people.

(from Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness, page 87)

It is natural to compare ourselves with others around us. As babies, that's how we start learning to do the things our parents do: to drink from a cup, to stand upright, to pull our shirts over our heads. As adults, that is still the way we learn how to do things, but too much of a good thing just isn't so good.

People define themselves by whom they resemble and by the people they differ from. We are always conscious of how we resemble others or differ from them. To some degree, conformity is a positive thing. It allows us to feel safe in a community of people like us, with similar values and similar expectations of each other. Too much conformity has the opposite affect. It stifles individuality and freedom. But most of all, it places our happiness firmly in the hands of other people.

If we have to ask, "What do other people think of me?" to be happy, we lose control of our own happiness. Some people will just never be pleased. Others will be pleased only when we change who we are. And there is no way to please everybody.

If we have to ask, "What do I think of me?", we can make happiness. We can please ourselves. Happiness is a choice, and it should be a choice we make, not one we let others to make for us.

~The Quiz~

How aware are you of your differences from other people? 1) I'm obsessed by the differences.
2) They make me uncomfortable. 3) I notice them when I meet other people.
4) I'm aware I have differences. 5) Differences? What differences?

Which of the following defines you the most? 1) How I fit in 2) What I do for a living. 3) My hobbies.
4) What I do in private. 5) My core values.

How eccentric are you? 1) I'm a true conformist. 2) I don't stray from the crowd very much.
3) I carefully decide when to choose my own path. 4) I'm a rebel ... sort of. 5) I'm a true eccentric.

Which of the following is most important to your ego? 1) What everyone around me thinks of me.
2) What neighbors and colleagues think of me 3) What authorities think of me.
4) What my family thinks of me. 5) What I think of myself.

Whom do you see in the mirror? 1) A fat or stupid or useless loser. 2) A person taking up space on the planet. 3) An average person. 4) One of the best people you know. 5) A superhero.

TOTAL:

~ My Plan ~

For every success I notice in Habit #1, I will try to define a good characteristic it represents in me.

First thing each morning, I will tell myself I have one day to live, that I may pass on at the end of the day, and I will be the person I want to be today.

I will write down my core values, place them where I can see them every day, and choose to be true to them.

I will decide in what areas to compromise to the world and follow changing fashions, and in what areas I will ignore changing trends.

I will decide who I am, not what I am. My job or family role will remain important, but I will remind myself daily that I am so much more.

I will develop a mantra to repeat several times every morning. An example might be, "I am a great person just the way I am. I appreciate me for whom I am."

I will compare myself to someone who does not impress me, to fully recognize what a good person I am.

Whenever I catch myself seeking someone else's approval, I will stop and remind myself that it's my own approval I really need.

When I find someone to be irritating, I will define how I am different than that person.

I will list all the people who care about me, and all the people whom I have helped. When my self-esteem is low, I will take out this list to realize my value.

I will seek out people who accept me as I am, and who will value me for what I bring to the relationship, without expecting me to change for them

When I see the bikini babes and chunky hunks on TV, I'll remind myself that it's mostly fake (and look what Michelangelo created from a hunk of rock!)

My weight and waistline will be a matter between me and my health, and I will set a realistic weight at which to be pleased with myself.

I will do something outrageous and wacky every day.

I will turn off soap operas.

Other:

Other:

Other:

Habit #3

Count your blessings

Don't be shy to express your gratitude or your joy. You'll thank yourself for doing so.

(from Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness, page 111)

I think this may be the most important of the 9 habits of maximum happiness. Even if all the other habits fail us – our self-esteem suffers, our friends abandon us, we cower in our own shadows – we can enjoy our lives if we simply count our blessings.

A friend of mine was telling me about his visit to Uganda, where most of his family remains. His first visit as an adult was a real eye-opener. Everybody was happy in their squalor. They opened their arms and their homes. They celebrated life. Asked by an uncle where he would rather live, America or Africa, he had a tough time deciding between the comforts of his home and the joy of his homeland.

In the developed world, America, Europe and some Asian countries, we have it pretty good. We have more stuff, more knowledge, more variety, more opportunity, more experiences than any people anywhere at any time in history. But the more we have, the more we seem to want.

Can money buy happiness? Yes. To be sure, studies show that it generally doesn't, but that's because we quickly get accustomed to the bigger home, the fancier meals and the faster cars. But what if we actually appreciated every inch of that new home, even when it's no longer new? And every taste of fine cuisine, even after years of tasting? And every moment of freedom and comfort in that luxury car, even after the warranty expires? Ah, then money would buy us happiness. And what if everything we do can also buy us happiness? It can. Let's make a plan to count our blessings.

~The Quiz~

How satisfied are you with your material/financial situation? 1) It sucks. 2) It's a struggle. 3) I make ends meet. 4) I'm fairly satisfied. 5) Woo-hoo!!!

How much happier will a new house/car/other major purchase will make you? 1) Much, much happier 2) Much happier. 3) Somewhat happier. 4) A little happier. 5) Not really any happier.

How often do you say thank you for something? 1) Less than once a week. 2) Most days. 3) A few times a day. 4) Several times a day. 5) I'm a compulsive thanker.

Do you say grace at meals (thanking God, or if you don't believe in God, Mother nature or the farmer who grew your meal)?

1) No. 2) Occasionally 3) One a week. 4) Once a day. 5) At every meal.

When you can't afford something you want, how do you feel? 1) Ripped off. 2) Envious of people who can afford it. 3) Frustrated. 4) Like finding something less expensive to enjoy. 5) Accepting

TOTAL:

~ My Plan ~

I will open up the obituaries every day to see how many people would gladly take my place and trade their problems for mine.

When I look at what others have that I do not, I will think about the things I have that others might not.

I will share my bounty with those who have less, both the needy and those around me who seem to lack my resources.

I will skip one meal every week, and reflect on how many people skip many meals every week, not by design, but by circumstance.

I will take ten minutes each day to walk around the house, look at things I might be tempted to take for granted, and imagine what my life would be like without them.

I will stop expecting gifts and favors, so that I can truly appreciate those "unexpected" bonuses when they happen.

I will thank one person each day for being in my life.

I will keep a glass full of water as a silent reminder that my glass is not half empty, not have full, but full and overflowing.

I will carry a lucky charm with me to remind me just how lucky I am.

I will celebrate Thanksgiving Day every day, thanking not just God, but anyone else for what has gone well that day (food, family and friends, a close call, etc.)

I will keep a gratitude journal.

I will choose to be satisfied with what I can afford and not wish for a bigger, house, car, television, vacation, etc.

I will give away gadgets and other stuff that I do not need, so I can better appreciate the simple pleasures in life.

I will write down how much is enough (money, possessions, status, etc.), and I will stop working to stockpile more beyond that point.

Other:

Other:

Other:

Habit #4

Learn, then burn

Think about the home videos people watch.

They replay the videos of their weddings, not their divorces.

(from Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness, page 144)

We all have them – painful memories. The truly happy person forgets them quickly (in which case they are no longer memories but ... uh ... forgetories?). They are guilt, blame, anger, remorse, embarrassment. All these are natural feelings, but none of them are helpful, at least in the long run. Psychologists can explain the value of anger and guilt, for example, but the sooner we can dispense with these negative emotions, the happier we can be.

The tough part is that we would often rather be right than happy. This makes no logical sense. Would you rather be proven right and feel miserable, or would you rather be happy without being proven right. I think you'll answer happy without being proven right, but so many people still insist on proving themselves right, if only to themselves. Nobody said anger and blame are logical emotions. Hey, nobody said emotions are logical in the first place.

The tough part of anger in particular, and other negative emotions, as well, is that we often do not recognize them in ourselves. Imagine if, in the midst of a fit of anger, you could stop and say, "Wait a minute. I'm angry. I don't like feeling angry. I think I'll stop." Not a chance. But sooner or later, the anger has to stop. May it be sooner for you, rather than later. Because it is so easy to "get caught up" in our own emotions, this is one habit that is best to work on with a friend or partner.

~The Quiz~

When someone cuts you off in traffic, what do you do? 1) Chase after him to teach him a lesson. 2) Shout four-letter words and wave my finger. 3) Lean on the horn. 4) Sign in frustration. 5) Brake and pay no more attention to that vehicle.

Are you upset with someone for something they did? 1) In a previous decade. 2) In a previous year. 3) In a previous month. 4) Last week. 5) Yesterday.

How often do you feel like saying, "Why always me?"

1) Every few minutes. 2) Most days. 3) A few times a month. 4) Rarely. 5) Never.

Of all the people who have offended you in the past year, how many have you forgiven?

1) None. 2) One. 3) A few. 4) Most. 5) All.

When you make a mistake with long term repercussions, what are you most likely to feel a week later? 1) Deep depression. 2) Remorse. 3) Wishful thinking. 4) Try to forget it.

5) Excitement to learn from the mistake.

TOTAL:

~ My Plan ~

I will remind myself that events don't make me, but my reactions to them do.

I will release myself from guilt by forgiving myself, and I will release myself from anger by forgiving others before I go to sleep each night.

I will destroy my enemies by turning them into friends

I will try to put myself in the other person's shoes before blaming them. I will adopt the premise of innocent until proven guilty.

I will accept my emotions – even the negative ones – rather than feel guilty or ashamed of them.

I will recognize when something is over, and I will release my negative feeling to be "over", too.

I will start a "chapter" in my diary when something disturbing happens. After writing about the event, I will write "the end", and close the chapter.

Whenever I'm upset, I will ask myself if this will matter in ten years. If not, I'll forget it. If it will matter, I will find a way to address it.

When I feel anger, I will ask, "What can I do to change the situation that triggered my anger?"

I will use the chart on page 23 to refocus on the successful day I've had, rather than brood.

I will write down any negative feelings toward myself or others, and then throw the paper into the fireplace (or burn it in another safe place.)

I will draw a fork in the road, and label the handle with whatever is bothering me. I will label the tynes with my choices, and then I will choose a positive path.

I will enlist a friend to point out when I am feeling angry, guilty, brooding, etc., so I can step out. (Be really careful about doing this.)

I will take up a hobby (painting, jogging, jigsaw puzzles, knitting), etc. specifically as an outlet for and an oasis from negative emotions.

If there are emotions I cannot control or manage, I will seek professional therapy to guide me through to psychological help.

Other:

Other:

Other:

Habit #5

Carpe diem

Stuck in the Comfort Zone! We hate where we are. We don't feel happy. We don't feel inspired. But somehow we feel...comfortable.

(from Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness, page 160)

Regret is one of the most powerful emotions. Unlike the days of yesteryear, most of us today will live long enough for plenty of regrets. Research shows that most regrets are not over actions we take, but rather over actions we fail to take. For instance, we are less likely to regret marrying someone than having passed up someone we would have liked to marry. After all, a poor marriage can always be corrected, but we'll never get a second chance with the person we passed over ... and who may live as an idealised fantasy in our minds!

Most regret hits us when it is too late to deal with it ... long after we realize that we really, really wanted to do something. So what we do now to avoid regret down the road is an investment in our own future happiness. Have you always wanted to develop a new skill, travel to the four corners of the earth, take a risk, improve your education, raise children, live healthier or change careers?

Don't wait for the New Year to start making those resolutions. When you are motivated is the time to start. And this workbook can help motivate you. However, you still have to do the motivating. Whatever you want to do, do it now or regret it later.

Let's plan regret out of our lives.

~The Quiz~

Do you have any regrets about things you haven't done?

1) Many. 2) Several. 3) Some. 4) Some, but I'm taking action to do them. 5) No regrets.

If you could do anything, what is it you would most want to do? Have you done it yet?

1) No, and I'm afraid to. 2) No, but I have plans. 3) I'm starting to work on it. 4) Yes.
5) Yes, and I'm savouring it or the memory of it.

Is fear holding you back from something you really want to do?

1) Yes. 3) Just delaying me. 5) No.

When you walk alone into a room at a social function, what is the first thing you want to do?

1) Run for cover. 2) Look for a drink to calm my nerves. 3) Look for a drink to have something to hold.
4) Look for a friendly face. 5) Rush over to a stranger.

Are you in a job/relationship/something else that's comfortable, but not where you want to be ?

1) Since forever. 2) Yes. 3) I'm planning my getaway. 4) No. 5) I was, but no more.

TOTAL:

~ My Plan ~

When afraid to do something, I will imagine the worst thing that could happen, come to terms with that result, and then proceed without fear of more likely results.

Each week, I will eat something I haven't eaten before or try some new activity I have never tried before.

I will speak to a stranger every day, and try to engage check-out clerks and gas station attendants in conversation.

I will set long term goals, and break them into small, easy to handle actions that take me toward my goals, and I will offer myself rewards after completing each action,

I will plan to achieve one personal goal at a time.

I will strive for complementary objectives, so that what I do to achieve one also helps achieve the other(s).

I will draw up a plan to keep my New Year's resolutions.

I will plan my schedule to include time to meet my objectives.

I will start now!

I will enlist the help of a close friend or spouse to keep on track toward my goals. If possible, I will pursue goals together with him/her.

I will hire a personal coach to help me stick to my plans.

I will tell everyone I know of my plans, so at best I'll have many allies and at worst I will be more motivated to succeed (or avoid public failure).

I will fill my personal space with reminders – a note on the fridge, a cassette recording in the car, a reminder on my desk.

I will draw a giant, hollow thermometer on the wall, and as I complete steps toward my goal, I will slowly fill it in with a red marker.

When I fall, I will get back up. I will have a daily, weekly, monthly review scheduled to get back on track if I stray.

Other:

Other:

Other:

Habit #6

Slow ... it ... down

Imagine if Shakespeare or Freud or Mozart or Jefferson had all our modern time-saving gizmos. They never would have accomplished anything.

(from Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness, page 186)

Let's face it, the earth is spinning faster. Not literally, of course, but we are trying to squeeze more and more activities into the day ... and into the night.

Rest is at a premium, sleep is pure gold. Cell phones and pagers follow us around, ready to pounce just when we finally can enjoy a few hot rays, a cot and a good book. Stress is one of the biggest threats to our happiness, even though there is objectively very little to feel stressed about since we drive the sabre toothed tigers to extinction.

Rest, and especially sleep, is necessary for both health and happiness. As much as the body needs to recuperate, so, too, does our spirits. My wife and I noticed when our baby was born that we were getting less sleep. We were also grumpier and edgier. Coincidence? Not at all. Stress and fatigue go hand in hand, and both conspire against our happiness.

So lie down on a good mattress or sink into a comfy couch for this quiz. Fluff up that pillow. Kick off your shoes, because it's time to relax.

Aaaaahh ...

~The Quiz~

Do you sleep at least seven hours each night?

1) Not even close. 2) Not usually. 3) Sometimes. 4) Usually. 5) Always.

Does your cell phone or pager take vacations with you? 1) Of course, what would I do without them? 2) Sigh ... yes... 3) Only in a tight spot. 4) I leave them behind. 5) Cell phone? Pager? Huh?

How often do you put in extra hours at work?

1) I live and breathe work. 2) Every day. 3) Every week. 4) Occasionally. 5) Who wants to work?

How often do you snap at a spouse or roommate? 1) I'm doing that now. 2) A few times a day.

3) Every day. 4) Every week. 5) I'm too relaxed for that.

How much do you play ? 2) Less than I work. 4) More than I work.

TOTAL:

~ My Plan ~

I will reduce the number of activities I undertake.

I will place my garbage can on my desk and label it "IN".

I will say "Maybe" when people ask for a favor, making it easier to say "No" if I feel my agenda is already too busy.

I will let the phone ring during dinner or other relaxing activities. If I don't have an answering machine yet, I'll get one.

I will drive in the slow lane, and, instead of getting upset at the aggressive drivers passing by, I will imagine how stressed they must be ... and feel sorry for them.

I will schedule "recess" into my day to go for a walk, talk to a stranger, day dream, doodle, listen to soothing music, or something truly relaxing.

I will leave for meetings and activities ten minutes early, so I don't feel so rushed. I will bring something to read, so I won't feel like I'm wasting my time if I arrive early.

When I've had a stressful day, I will take a soothing bath or get a relaxing massage.

I will watch more comedy and less suspense on television (even if I love suspense).

I will spend more time in the tranquillity of nature.

I will plan relaxing, soothing activities for just before bed time.

Before going to bed, I will prepare what I need in the morning so I will feel less rushed when I wake up.

Instead of counting sheep, I will count my blessings, so I can not only fall asleep, but sleep soundly in emotional comfort.

I will go to bed an hour earlier every night.

I will buy a more comfortable mattress and pillows.

Other:

Other:

Other:

Habit #7

PUMP IT UP!

*Get out from behind that 693-inch screen. Better yet, move out. Stretch your arms.
Warm up those legs. It's time for your workout!.*

(from Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness, page 193)

Sometimes we have to slow things down, but we also need to pump things up. It may seem like a contradiction, but exercise really does help us feel happier. It works in the short term and the long term. A fast-paced walk makes it hard to resist smiling. Over the long term, lack of exercise makes us feel worn down. Ironically, we need to slow it down AND pump it up to feel rested and free from stress.

There are so many ways to exercise, but they can easily be classified into two categories: natural and artificial.

By "natural", I mean that by just living life, we move. Unless, of course, we choose to change channels by remote, use an electric can opener or hire somebody to mow our lawns.

By artificial, I mean exercising just for the sake of exercising. Aerobic exercises are best for stress relief: swimming, cycling, jogging, skating, dancing, basketball and trying to outrun the bus. Any activity that gets your heart pounding works. I find swimming works best, combining aerobics, muscle-building and buoyancy (which relieves physical stress).

Let's get ready to exercise our will-power with this next quiz and plan.

~The Quiz~

When you have the choice, do you choose the stairs or do you choose the escalator or elevators? 1) I ride the machine every time. 2) Elevators. 3) Escalators, but I walk on them. 4) Escalators or elevators going up, but stairs going down. 5) Stairs.

How much television do you watch? 1) My TV is implanted in my head? 2) Several hours each day. 3) At least an hour a day. 4) A few hours a week. 5) Too busy practising for the triathlon.

What's your idea of a good workout? 1) TV remote thumb pressing. 2) Shaking salt onto French fries. 3) Walking around the house. 4) Chasing the bus (late again!). 5) Daily aerobics.

How often do you walk or bicycle on your errands?
1) Never. 2) Occasionally. 3) Sometimes. 4) Often. 5) Always.

What's your favorite sport?
1) Football ... watching it. 2) Pool. 3) Bowling. 4) Speed walking. 5) Basketball ... playing!

TOTAL:

~ My Plan ~

- I will join a league (soccer, baseball, bowling) for regular exercise that's social at the same time.
- I will join a health club and schedule a variety of activities they offer into my routine.
- I will place exercising into my schedule at regular intervals, at least twice a week.
- I will partner with a friend for joint activities, such as walking, badminton, tennis or bowling.
- I will read a good book ... on the exercycle or stairclimber.
- I will develop a short exercise routine for arrival at work and arrival home again..
- I will use waiting time (line-ups, waiting rooms, etc.) to stretch and exercise.
- I will let someone else take the seat on the bus or subway or in the waiting room. I can stand.
- I will walk or bicycle more often when I have errands to run.
- I will move to a two-storey home so there will be stairs to climb.
- I will pick up anything I see on the ground immediately, keeping me in shape and my house/office/yard/neighborhood tidy.
- I will fire the person who mows my lawn, shovels my snow or does my gardening.
- I will avoid escalators. They are no faster than a good run up the stairs, and they cheat me out of my rightful exercise.
- I will hide all the remote controls and automatic gadgets.
- I will sell my television. There are too many channels to keep up with now anyway.

Other:

Other:

Other:

Habit #8

Choose YouBet people

Happiness is contagious. Isn't that wonderful news?.

(from Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness, page 202)

You can tell a person by the company she keeps. It's true. If you hang around with positive, upbeat, supportive YouBet people, that's what you will be like. If you share yourself with grumpy, downcast, complaining YeahBut people, you'll become just like them.

Of course, people are not that simple. We all have our moments. But some people really do bring out the best in us, while others snuff out the best in us. This is the toughest of the nine habits of maximum happiness, because it calls on us to evaluate our friends and our friendships.

Take note please: this is not about deciding who is good and who is bad. Nor is it about dumping friends who may be going through a rough spot (Please, no!). It is about making choices to get closer to those who bring out the best in you and help you become the person you really want to be, and distancing yourself from those who send you in the opposite direction. This is about enlisting your relationships in your quest for happiness.

While happiness has to grow from within, it sure helps to have allies in our efforts. Friends will not bring you happiness, but it sure helps to have their support. Take your time to nurture those that bring out the best in you, for you will see yourself reflected in their faces. You are the company you keep.

~The Quiz~

Do you seem to spend all your time talking about you friends' problems?

1) Oh yes!. 2) More than I would like. 3) Sometimes. 4) Occasionally. 5) Rarely.

Do you look to your friends to help you improve?

1) NO way. 2) Not really. 3) Sometimes. 4) Usually 5) All the time.

When things get tough, do you feel alone?

1) Always. 2) Far too often.3) Sometimes. 4) Rarely. 5) Never.

How many people would you describe as a soul-mate, a bosom buddy, a comrade in arms?

1) Nobody. 2) One person. 3) Two or three. 4) Four or five. 5) More than five.

Which of these words best describes your friends ?.

1) Complaining and negative. 2) Not too happy. 3) Buddies. 4) Positive. 5) Joyful and supportive.

TOTAL:

~ My Plan ~

I will use the Wheel of Friendship from *Climb your Stairway to Heaven* to make a realistic assessment of my friendships.

I will let each of my friends know that I really love them.

I will spend more time with a positive, upbeat supportive person I know.

I will become more intimate with a positive, upbeat supportive person I know.

I will decide who seems genuinely interested in me and my welfare, and I will spend more time with those people

I will choose new friends, associates and acquaintances as much as possible based on how supportive and upbeat they seem to be.

I will observe people around me and search out those who support and help others as friends for myself.

When entering a room of strangers, I will watch for the people who smile the most, and I will get to know them.

When entering a room, I will smile wide and be to others the kind of YouBet person I want them to be to me.

I will explain to people who are unsupportive or pessimistic how their words make me feel, and suggest how they can make me enjoy their company more.

I will stop sharing my troubles with people who only want to share theirs right back.

I will stop sharing my dreams with people who want to shoot them down.

I will be the kind of supportive friend who helps my friends find the silver lining when they are feeling down ... and never, ever shoot down someone else's dreams.

Other:

Other:

Other:

Habit #9

Spread the joy

Joy is like love and ideas. The more we share it the more we have.

(from Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness, page 214)

This is my favorite habit. In fact, it's my mission statement: to spread the joy.

It's amazing how we can make ourselves happier by making others happy. If you've heard that it is better to give than to receive or that givers gain, it is true. Whether it's a simple smile or a true act of generosity, we bask in the glow of our own joy reflected off other people around us.

There is, as you may guess, some science around the importance of smiling. The act of smiling actually changes the blood flow to certain parts of the brain to make us feel happier. Add that to the feeling that we've made someone else happier and to knowing that people are always more co-operative with a smiler, and you can see how smiling can make you happy.

At the same time, true acts of generosity make us feel happier. We need only look at the grumpiest, crankiest, most miserable people we know to realize that they are not the generous kind of people. Altruism breeds happiness and happiness breeds altruism. Forget that image of the do-good martyr. Doing good is fun!

So please help me spread the joy.

~The Quiz~

How do you react to strangers in an elevator or waiting room?

- 1) I avert my eyes. 2) I usually look, but I'm too shy to speak. 3) I speak if I'm spoken to.
4) I might say something if it seems right. 5) I often strike up conversations.

- Do you smile?** 1) Never 2) Less than most people. 3) About the same as most people.
4) More than most people. 5) All the time and ear to ear.

- How do you contribute to charity?** 1) BY avoiding it. 2) By sending money.
3) By baking or giving old things away. 4) By volunteering, but behind the scenes.
5) By volunteering where I can meet the people I'm helping.

- How would you describe yourself?** 1) I hide in my shell. 2) I'm an introvert.
3) I'll speak to anyone who speaks to me first. 4) I'm an extrovert. 5) I'll talk with anyone I can..

- When you do someone a favor, what do you think?** 1) I just earned a favor I can collect later.
2) That person will like me now. 4) I've cemented a good friendship.
5) I just love seeing other people smile.

TOTAL:

~ My Plan ~

I will smile at more people in elevators and waiting rooms ... and anywhere else I find people.

I will keep my eyes open for opportunities that people around me might welcome.

I will leave little notes complementing people for something they have done for me or for others, or simply for a job well done.

When my children enter the room, I will welcome them with love and complete appreciation.

I will smile at store clerks and say "Have a nice day" even if they do not smile at me.

I will let someone else in line or merge in front of me on the road with a friendly wave.

I will volunteer to help a charity ... and ask to work directly with the people I'll be helping.

I will bake cookies for the homeless.

I will adopt the motto of "random acts of kindness."

I will keep a candle lit as a reminder that I can shed a little light on this world through my actions toward others.

When I feel down, I will smile.

When I feel down, I will improve my posture.

When I feel down, I will walk fast, using big steps.

When I feel down, I will nod.

Other:

Other:

Other:

My personal action plan for happiness

List here all the action items you selected on the previous pages. Feel free to use the box on the left to prioritise to tick off actions accomplished or to identify a target date for completion.

Habit #1: Throw a parade in your honor

Habit #2: Distinguish yourself

Habit #3: Count your blessings

Habit #4: Learn, then burn

Habit #5: Carpe diem

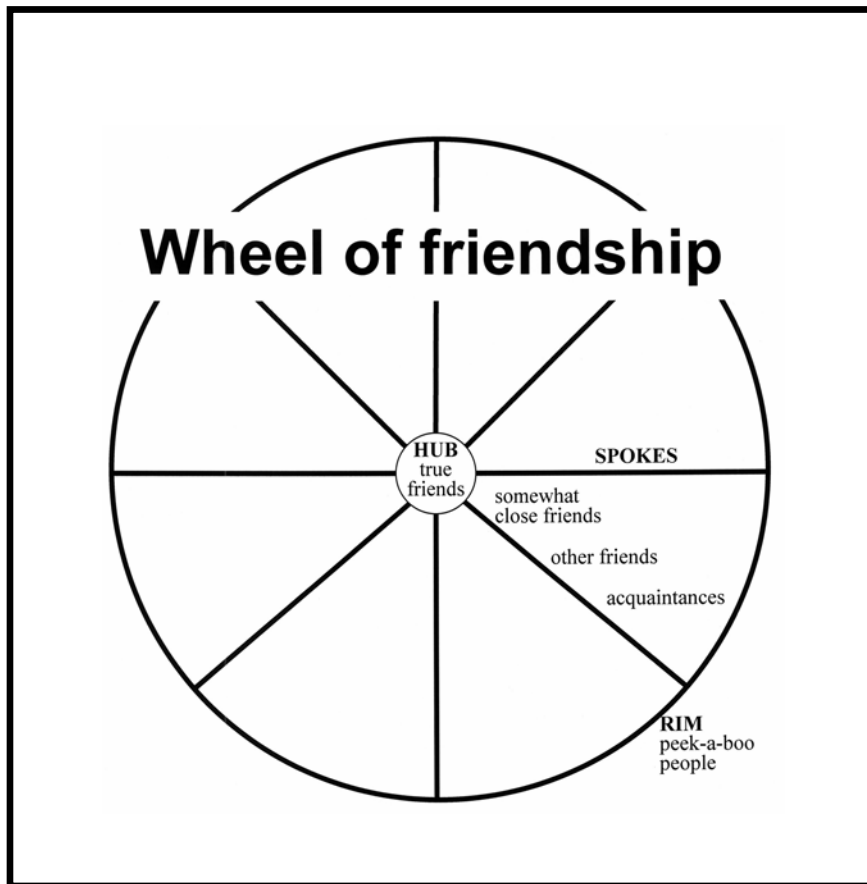
Habit #6: Slow it down

Habit #7: Pump it up

Habit #8: Choose YouBet people

Habit # 9: Spread the joy

Now it's time to play ...



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THE RULES:

1. Decide how close you are now to each person you know? Who are the few kindred spirits or soul-mates in the hub of your wheel? Who are those people who just pass through your life (the local store clerk, someone you politely nod to in the office lunch room, etc.)? Who are the people in between, and just how close to the hub are they? Parents don't count; siblings do. Write their names on the wheel where they fit (make extra copies of the wheel if you know lots of people.)
2. For each person you know, ask yourself: "How much is this a positive, supportive, upbeat YouBet person who brings out the best in me, and how much is she a negative, complaining, downcast YeahBut person who snuffs out the best in me? Use a scale of one to 10 or one to 100 or whatever works for you.
3. With this new information on each person, decide where you would like each person to be on the wheel. Use a different colored pen to write their names where you want them to be. You may find that most people are already where you want them to be, or you may have a lot of names to move.
4. Now go out and get find ways to get closer to and spend more time with those who bring out the best in you. And find ways to spend less time and share less of yourself with those who snuff out the best in you.

Just when everything falls apart it's time to play ...

What kind of day is it anyway?

For each hour, list the major events and then rate how those events went on a scale of one (lousy) to five (exceptional). Were you sleeping? Was it a good sleep? Often you'll discover the day went pretty well, even if things seemed to fall apart in the last hour.

HOUR	MAJOR EVENTS	RATING
Midnight		
1:00 a.m.		
3:00 a.m.		
4:00 a.m.		
5:00 a.m.		
6:00 a.m.		
7:00 a.m.		
8:00 a.m.		
9:00 a.m.		
10:00 a.m.		
1:00 a.m.		
Noon		
1:00 p.m.		
2:00 p.m.		
3:00 p.m.		
4:00 p.m.		
5:00 p.m.		
6:00 p.m.		
7:00 p.m.		
8:00 p.m.		
9:00 p.m.		
10:00 p.m.		
11:00 p.m.		
TOTAL: Total possible points = 5 X number of hours so far in the day		

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About David Leonhardt

David Leonhardt is The Happy Guy. He delivers informational and motivational speeches, spreading the word about happiness, spreading the joy. His keynote presentations are as interactive and entertaining as his workshops. He also runs workshops on presentation skills and media relations. Reserve him now for your next event at www.TheHappyGuy.com.

Critical acclaim for David Leonhardt

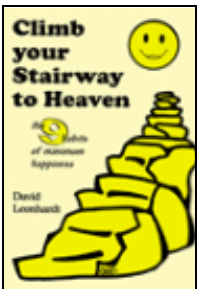
“His highly energetic and personal manner ... knocked our socks off.”
Phil Trudelle of the Legal Services Plan

“The audience participation was lively and most enjoyable.”
Daniel Sullivan of the Buffalo Rotary Club

“You were a dynamic, energetic speaker.”
Bruce Gravel of Ryerson University

“I can, without reservation, recommend David Leonhardt as a public speaker.”
Rhonda Glenn, Talk Show Host

About *Climb your Stairway to Heaven*



***Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness* is The Happy Book.** It is one of the few self-help books that is both entertaining and psychologically well-researched. Educational and fun ... the kind of book you just can't put down.

Buy *Climb your Stairway to Heaven* at Amazon.com, the iUniverse.com bookstore, through any bookstore or at www.TheHappyGuy.com.

Critical acclaim for *Climb your Stairway to Heaven*

“... enthusiastic, original, uplifting, motivating, and highly recommended ...”
Midwest Book Review

“If you are searching for a happiness that seems to elude you, pick up this book.”
MyShelf.com

“Insightful, informative, and fun to read.”
Independent Publisher

“Climb your Stairway to Heaven combines useful advice and psychological science with a provocative, entertaining and interactive writing style.”
Carleton University Magazine