

The Happiness Solution Newsletter

January 2008



Quotes of the Month

"Nothing is worth more than this day."

-Goethe

"If you're going through hell, keep going."

-Churchill

"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself."

-George Bernard Shaw

Happy New Year

May 2008 be the best possible year it can be for you. Get enthused about something! Put things on the calendar to look forward to, short-term and long-term. Brainstorm. I want to remind you of my 2007 message to you. This is a new year. It doesn't have to be "same old, same old." If you're not as happy as you'd like to be, don't just recycle your typical ways of thinking about and relating to yourself, others, and your day. Make changes. It's not about procrastination or waiting for the perfect time. It's about right now. Act wholeheartedly and decisively. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe said, "Whatever you do, or dream you can, begin it." Have the courage to become who you're capable of being. That's the plan for 2008.

A Bit of Humor?

Recently, a woman came to my office for her first visit. She told me, "I feel as washed out as an old pair of curtains." I told her, "Pull yourself together!"

Recent Research

Seminary students exposed to lectures and philosophy dealing with being a good Samaritan are no more likely than others to be of help to a person in need. Experiments confirmed this, but the main factor that influenced their not being helpful was a feeling of being rushed. It seems, that when we are oversubscribed and hurrying and scurrying, we're not as nice. Maybe we all need to slow down a bit and be less rushed. We'd probably treat ourselves and everyone else a bit better.

Story of the Month

"Over the Wall"

Peter Conradi, Professor Emeritus at Kingston University in London, tells a very moving story that is both heart breaking and heart warming. It is hard not to be deeply touched by this story that he heard while living in Poland:

Around 1943, Jews were being rounded up and herded into cattle trucks going to the gas chambers of Treblinka. They knew that death was imminent. The square was filled with horrified, malnourished mothers and their children. They passed their babies over their heads from one pair of upraised hands to another until the babies got close to a high wall that contained them. The babies were then thrown over the wall, where caring Catholic Polish women waited. These Catholic women caught the Jewish babies and brought them up as Gentiles.

Can you imagine what it must have been like for the women to throw their babies over the wall? In their terror, they found the courage and wherewithal to act boldly and decisively. How many conflicting feelings must they have had simultaneously? In the most horrible of times, they were able to make a commitment that saved their babies' lives. And the Catholic Polish women's courage, compassion, and commitment were all also necessary to save those lives. Humanity and love transcended the labels of Jew and Catholic.

Tal Ben-Shaher, who teaches a course on happiness at Harvard, poses the following:

Imagine your life as a journey. You are walking, knapsack on your back, making good progress, until suddenly, you reach a brick wall that stands in the way of reaching your destination. What do you do? Do you turn around and avoid the challenge posed by the barrier? Or, do you take the opposite approach and throw your knapsack over the wall, thus committing yourself to finding ways of getting through, around, or over the wall?

The importance of commitment cannot be overstated. If you believe you can get over the wall and make a commitment to doing so, you greatly increase your chances of it happening. If you've ever had the feeling that you can move mountains, so to speak, or that the gods were smiling upon you, it most likely stemmed from the decisiveness of bold action. Is there a situation in your life now that is frustrating or confusing? Have you waffled with regard to what to do? Is it diminishing your happiness? Make a decision. Committing yourself whole-heartedly to that decision will turn it into the right decision for you. Go ahead. Throw your knapsack over the wall.

[Nutrition Corner](#)

Think leafy greens. Kale, spinach, endive, romaine, and collard greens. They lower your risk of cardiovascular disease. Men have always been in the forefront with respect to getting heart attacks, but heart disease is actually the #1 killer of women, much more so than breast cancer. Leafy greens not only promote heart health, they have also been shown to reduce the risk of developing certain cancers, including ovarian and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. An added benefit - in a study at Tufts University, diets high in B vitamins (such as the folate in leafy greens) protected 50-85 year old subjects against cognitive decline. Popeye was ahead of his time.

[Closing Thoughts](#)

The stories on the website have been changed. Check them out at www.thehappinsssolution.com.

My new book is tentatively scheduled to be released around mid-2008. The working title is:

The Solution

(7 Steps to Taking Charge of Yourself, Your Happiness, and Your Life)

I am very excited about 2008. I hope you are too. I'm writing down some goals for the year. Putting them on paper seems to make a difference for me. We are always evolving. What worked for us in 2007 may or may not work in 2008. Sometimes, the answers change each year, even though the questions are the same. As the year begins, I feel pregnant with ideas and possibilities. I'm determined to create a great year and delight in the process and the journey. The optimist that I am, I hope for the best, but I won't be surprised by anything. Yes, I am very enthused about 2008. I hope you are too. Don't forget to write me at drgettis@aol.com.

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