

**7 PATHS TO
LASTING HAPPINESS**

WORKBOOK

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Chapter One

Happiness is a Choice!

Take Action

Where have you sought happiness in the past? List five areas where you've sought happiness in the past. (Some examples might be money, material possessions, travel, relationships with people, and even drugs.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now briefly describe the results of seeking happiness in each of those five areas. To what degree did you find true happiness (as opposed to pleasure)? Completely, somewhat, or not at all?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Chapter Two

Let's Get Started!

Take Action

Respond to the questions in the following Life Satisfaction Survey. The insights learned will give you an indication of how happy you feel on your current life's path. Responding to the survey should take a maximum of 5 minutes.

Life Satisfaction Survey²

Please answer the following questions, using the criteria below. Please choose the number which most closely fits how you feel at this time in your life, and write it in the box to the right of the question:

- 0 - Never feel this way
- 1 - Rarely feel this way
- 2 - Sometimes feel this way
- 3 - Often feel this way
- 4 - Always feel this way

	- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 -
1) I know what my purpose in life is.	
2) I am excited about learning new things and developing my skills and talents.	
3) My life is in balance physically	
4) My life is in balance emotionally.	
5) My life is in balance spiritually.	
6) When life feels "out of control," I choose healthy behaviors to help me re-center and renew. (i.e. I do not use shopping, eating, sleeping, television / internet, or other substances to escape and cope).	
7) I am aware and enjoy living in the moment (I don't dwell on future or past events).	
8) I have fulfilling relationships with family and friends.	
9) I have fulfilling intimate relationships in my life.	

	- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 -
10) Humor, laughter, and playfulness are a big part of my daily life.	
11) My partnerships are fairly and equally balanced (work and personal).	
12) I find positive ways to deal with stress. (i.e. exercise, talking, meditating, etc).	
13) I exercise appropriate control over the things that I can in my life.	
14) I live life with an attitude of gratitude.	
15) I live my life with passion and joy.	
16) I have exciting dreams and aspirations to look forward to.	
17) I am an optimistic person.	
18) I enjoy hearing other people's insights and points of view, even when they are different from my own.	
19) I find it easy to forgive others when I have been hurt.	
20) I apologize and make amends quickly when I have hurt someone else.	
21) I am good at keeping events in my life in perspective.	
22) I live with integrity and honesty in all my dealings.	
23) Kindness and compassion are virtues that I practice daily.	
24) I perform acts of service daily.	
25) I have a strong faith which sustains me throughout my life.	

Next step: Calculate your score

Assign the following points to your answers to the questions:

- 0 points for each "Never" response.
- 1 point for each "Rarely" response.
- 2 points for each "Sometimes" response.
- 3 points for each "Often" response.
- 4 points for each "Always" response.

Add all of the points together to calculate your total score and then write it here:

Interpreting your score:

There are two ways to interpret your score. The first is your cumulative score, which gives you an indication of your overall sense of fulfillment and happiness in life:

81-100: I am generally contented and happy in my life. Feedback in specific areas might be useful.

61-80: My life is okay, but not always what I would like it to be. I could use some direction in making my life happier.

41-60: My life is not going in a direction I would like it to go. I need guidance in learning how to find happiness.

40 and Under: My life lacks fulfillment and joy. (Don't give up – this is a great opportunity for growth!)

The second way to interpret your score has to do with the individual areas which are covered in the survey. Research has shown that the twenty-five areas addressed in the questions are specific indicators which contribute to one's overall sense of happiness. So, for example, if a score was less than four on a particular question, it shows room for improvement *in that specific area*. The lower the score, the greater the opportunity for growth.

Chapter Four

The First Path: Love Yourself

Part 2 - Achieve Balance in Your Life

Note to the Reader: This chapter has more Action steps than does any other chapter in this book, because loving yourself is so vital to overall happiness. Before moving on to the next chapter, you may want to devote two or three weeks (or longer, if necessary) to incorporating into your life the SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) you make when completing the following Action Steps.

Take Action

Think about one aspect of each of the following areas of your life, and compare yourself to where you were 20, 10 and 5 years ago, last year, and now.

1. Self-Assessment: (Don't forget to ask Positive Leading Questions!)

What are the top priorities in your life? _____

Which of those priorities are you achieving? _____

Which priorities, if any, are you not achieving? _____

Are they still priorities? _____

Write SMART goals for each priority you are not achieving. _____

Write the name of the person you will ask to help you be accountable for achieving those goals: _____

2. Physical Balance: (Examples: are you taking care of yourself? Are you maintaining a healthy weight, exercising, eating right, and getting enough sleep? This is so important, you should do this exercise for each one of those factors.)

20 years ago: _____

10 years ago: _____

5 years ago: _____

Last year: _____

Now: _____

Assessment: Have you improved? If so, congratulate yourself and give yourself a tangible reward!
Is there room for improvement? Consider whether the areas where you have slipped are still a priority.
What would you like to see happen over the next year? _____

Make an action plan using SMART goals and write it down here: _____

3. Emotional Balance: (Examples: Do you make time for yourself? Are you overwhelmed by all the electronic noise in your life, or do you feel the amount in which you engage is appropriate? Do you have social interaction regularly? Is your stress level manageable?)
20 years ago: _____

10 years ago: _____

5 years ago: _____

Last year: _____

Now: _____

Assessment: Have you improved? If so, congratulate yourself and give yourself a tangible reward!
Is there room for improvement? Consider whether the areas where you have slipped are still a priority.
What would you like to see happen over the next year? _____

Make an action plan using SMART goals and write it down here: _____

Chapter Five

The Second Path: Be Grateful

Take Action

1. Why not start the gratitude habit right here and now? In the space below, write down ten things you are grateful for.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

2. Developing the Habit: Starting a Gratitude Journal

Now that you're beginning to think about the things you're grateful for, it's time to start a gratitude journal. You can start with the ten things you wrote above. They have to be in writing – not just in your mind! The process of writing them down releases endorphins in our brains. Although you can do this at night, I like to do it first thing in the morning. For me, it's like putting the key in the ignition and turning it on. It shapes my perspective for the coming day and helps me to start out uplifted, feeling grateful and happy for my life.

Your gratitude journal will become a place for remembering and appreciating all the things that are good in your life. Think of blessings you received; people you connected with; beautiful things you saw; something you learned; moments you felt God nearby. If you write them down, they will not be forgotten or unappreciated.

You may want to write about a relationship in your life that you treasure; or an idea of how you can bless a family member or friend today; acknowledge and appreciate your talents; reflect upon a favorite memory of a time spent with a loved one, or describe a favorite teacher who made a difference. Say a prayer of gratitude, without asking God for anything. All of these things will buoy your spirits and encourage an attitude of gratitude.

You may want to include in your gratitude journal special cards and notes you receive from friends or acquaintances, such as thank you notes or birthday cards that express love or appreciation for you. A friend of mine keeps such cards and notes in a box she calls her "silver box." Your gratitude journal will become something treasured, not only as a record of what a truly wonderful person you are, but also as something you can turn to in moments of sorrow or despair. Reading previous entries will always bring you comfort and validation. It will help you to

keep your focus on the positive aspects of your life. You will begin to see yourself differently. As you write about the good things in your life, you may be surprised by how much you have to say! This journal will become a special place you can visit any time you need to feel better about yourself.

3. Eliminate Negative Thoughts.

When's the last time you thought, "I don't have time for that" or "I can't do that"? Write it down here:

Now consider what happens if you change the question to a positive one such as, "How can I find time?" or "How can I make that happen?"

Write down the possible answers here: _____

The crucial difference is in how the thought is phrased. If you change the question, you change the path – the direction of your mind is different, and you will therefore come up with different answers. All kinds of possibilities will occur to you if you give your mind the opportunity to come up with creative solutions, responding to "how" questions, instead of closing the door on ideas by thinking "I can't."

4. Consider the last time you did something for someone out of love: who was the person, and what did you do for them?

Write it down:

How did it make you feel? _____

Did it make you feel closer to that person? _____

Plan to again do something out of love for someone.

For whom will you do it? _____

What will you do? _____

When will you do it? _____

Chapter Six

The Third Path: Extend Forgiveness

Take Action

1. Name all the people in your life that you have not forgiven as of this date. Start with the people who are easier to forgive, who require less energy.

2. With regard to each person, ask yourself “Why am I withholding forgiveness and holding on to these bad feelings?”

a. What are the benefits?

b. What is the price I’m paying by not forgiving “X”?

c. What resentments do I still have?

3. Commit to forgive each of these people, whether face-to-face (which is ideal), or in writing. Write down the plan for how you’ll forgive each of them.

4. In what areas of your life have you not forgiven yourself?

a. List specific incidents, things that you’ve done – and write them down. This is important!

b. Use the picture of you as a child to remind yourself who you really are, take the steps as explained in this chapter and then choose to forgive yourself for each of those incidents. Start with the easy ones to let go and forgive. (That way, you'll gain both momentum and practice in forgiving.) Now list the incidents (from part "a" above) for which you've forgiven yourself.

Chapter Seven

The Fourth Path: Follow Your Passion

What were your dreams and aspirations when you were young?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If those dreams are still important to you, how can you fulfill them now?

What are your dreams now?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are you going to do to fulfill them?

Take Action

II. Making a Course Adjustment

The following process is described in the book *Your Best Year Yet*, by Jinny Ditzler.⁶

1. Think about the last 12 months, 10 years, even 25 years of your life – depending on how deeply you want to get into it. Now write down all the things that you feel proud of and have accomplished; things you did well. It can be anything, ranging from “I paid off some debts,” “I lost some weight,” “I moved into my dream house,” “I got married,” “I got certified in something,” “I did volunteer work;” whatever you can think of. Write them down.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

2. Look at the successes you wrote down above. What can you learn from them? Write down the reasons for your greatest success:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

3. Next, looking back at that same time period, write down some of the biggest setbacks, disappointments, or things that didn't work out. Whether it's a failed relationship, getting fired from a job, or not getting the promotion you thought you were going to get, the loss of a loved one, not being able to have a child, or getting into a car accident; whatever it is, write it down.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

4. What can you learn from those disappointments? Using the same principles that brought your greatest success, write down your potential lessons:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

5. Look at the different roles you play in life. Write them down below, and be sure to include the role of the self-caretaker.

Assign a number between 1 and 10 to each of the roles you wrote down, to evaluate how well you are fulfilling those roles. 10 would indicate you're happy with the job you're doing; a 1 means you're pretty dissatisfied.

6. If you were to make an improvement in one of these areas of your life, which would have the greatest impact on your lifestyle? Look especially at the area where you gave yourself the lowest score. Determine where you are the strongest – where you are doing okay – and where you need to focus some energy. Write down the area of your life you want to improve – the area to be your main focus in the coming year.

7. Are there old patterns and habits that are weighing you down? Write down what you're going to let go of:

III. Intellectual Development: What are you doing to stimulate intellectual development in your life? Are you taking adult education classes or working on getting a college degree or post-graduate degree? Do you read regularly? Are you working to enhance skills necessary for your career?

What would you like to see happen over the next year? _____

Make an action plan using SMART goals and write it down here: _____

Chapter Eight

The Fifth Path: Nourish Your Spirit

Take Action

1. Pray and Meditate every day. Pray for 5 minutes every morning: first express your gratitude, then pray for things you need, then listen for 5 minutes: this is your time to receive inspiration, personal revelation, answers to your prayers. Next, read something that's spiritually uplifting for 5 minutes. Whatever you read, put it into practice that day. For example, if you read a scripture about peacemakers, make it a goal and priority to be a peacemaker all day, at home and at work. Implement/act upon the thing you read. This will bless your life and the lives of others. Do this every morning, to start out your day.

Write about your feelings as you're praying or meditating.

How did it affect your day?

2. Adopt an admirable character trait.

If you have a religious role model or a spiritual leader, whether it's Jesus Christ, Buddha or the Dalai Lama, look at their attributes: consider which of those attributes you'd like to adopt. Write it down, and start practicing it, every day. Apply it in your life until it becomes one of your own attributes. Then pick another trait and start working on that.

The attribute I'm going to adopt is:

Is adopting this attribute making a difference in my life or in the life of others? If so, how?

3. Read spiritual, uplifting books, including the Bible, on a daily basis.

What are you reading?

What are you learning?

4. "Fast" from media and electronics.

Try eliminating all the electronic over-stimulation in your life for a period of time. Depending on how ambitious you are, try for a day, a week, or longer to live without using the Internet, your cell phone, or having the TV or

radio on. If you're serious about doing this, do it for a week or longer. One day isn't enough; even an alcoholic can go a day without alcohol. After a week, you'll really feel it.

This is the reason this chapter is so vitally important to living a balanced life.

How did you feel after a week of no electronics?

Chapter Nine

The Sixth Path: Loving Relationships

Take Action

1. If you were to take an accounting of all your vital relationships, after what you've just read, are they thriving? Are they emotional "paychecks"? Or are they negative and destructive? Make a list of parents, siblings, kids, relatives and friends, and do a little mini-survey with a rating scale of 1-10 for each of them. A "10" means the relationship is thriving, a "5" is doing okay (they don't detract from us, but they may not add that much, either), and a rating of "1, 2 or 3" means the relationship is toxic and dysfunctional. It's time to identify toxic relationships and decide what you want to do with them. Will you cut them off? Or move them into the "middle zone," make them more tolerable?

My relationships:

Rating:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

2. Consider the relationships you rated as a "5" or less. Are these relationships worth preserving, or do you need to remove them from your life? Typically, a relationship that would get rated as a "5" is okay, it doesn't add a lot to your life, and it takes work, but it is tolerable. Contemplate why you are holding on to such relationships. Either make changes that will improve the relationship's rating, or get rid of it. If you have relationships in your life that you rated a "3", "2", or "1", the question to ask yourself is, "Why do I have them in my life? They are detracting from my happiness. They are toxic to me." Review the section of Chapter Nine that discusses Toxic Relationships as you evaluate each relationship you rated a "4" or less, and with that specific person in mind, ask yourself: "What am I willing to do about this?" If your response is "nothing," you need to realize that it takes away from your overall happiness. "Nothing" is not the right answer! You either cut that person out of your life or improve the relationship

to at least a “5” or a “6,” to make it tolerable. **Remember, the best use of this book is as a call to action in order for you to be happier in your life**

3. Consider a relationship you feel is in jeopardy –not bad, but not great – yet you don’t want to downgrade it to a “toxic” rating because you want to save it. Remember that asking for that person to make a change and then follow through with their promise is not always an easy process. There is, however, a very powerful way to get individuals to choose the healthier behavior on their own. An exercise with which I’ve had very good results goes as follows:

(a) Ask the other person to consider carefully the way a particular behavior (assuming that it is negative and therefore a withdrawal from the relationship) has affected the relationship. Next ask them to write down what their relationship with you would look like in a year if this is not corrected...then in five years... and then ten... and eventually for the rest of their life.

One can imagine that the above-mentioned scenario gets increasingly darker as the years go by. Most people by the time they write the last part, (that being the rest of their lives), are quite depressed about the future of their relationship. This of course is the whole point of the exercise: to recognize how one uncorrected negative behavior can have a devastating effect on a relationship.

(b) Next ask the other person to consider what could happen to the relationship if this negative behavior were completely eliminated and replaced with a healthy, kind and loving one. The individual then writes down the results after a year...five years...ten...and for the rest of their life. The outcome of this scenario becomes more and more positive and uplifting as the years go by.

(c) Finally, ask the person to put these two documents side by side. Have them consider, “What will the rest of my life look like if I keep acting this way vs. if I eliminate the negative behavior and replace it with a positive behavior?” I actually have clients read these two documents out loud, back to back. The first brings about tears of sadness while the second one brings tears of joy. My final statement to them is, “You are looking at the future, written by your very own hand! Which will you choose?” I have never met anyone who said, “I’ll choose to keep doing the same behavior...” It’s usually, “Now that I’ve seen the potential destructiveness and the potential for growth and improvement, I can’t wait to get started!”

4. The following is a fun exercise to do, particularly for your romantic relationship.

Ask your significant other/spouse to do this exercise at the same you’re doing it. As described by Gary Chapman in his book, *The 5 Love Languages*, people express love in five different ways: 1) through words of affirmation, 2) by spending quality time together, 3) by giving gifts, 4) by performing acts of service, and 5) through physical touch. Each of you should divide a piece of paper into two columns. In the first column, make a list of the love languages in hierarchical order of their importance to you. Put the language that is most important to you at the top, and that which is least important to you at the bottom of the list.

In the second column, make a list of the love languages in hierarchical order of their importance to your partner. When you and your partner have both completed the exercise, compare your lists and discover whether you truly understand how your partner needs to be loved, and whether they really know how you need to be loved.

I’ve done this exercise with clients hundreds of times, and only one time was a couple able to identify each other’s love languages in the correct order for each other! It was at a marriage seminar, and they were sitting right next to each other. I think they must have been cheating!

Chapter Ten

The Seventh Path: Serve From Your Heart.

Take Action

1. Review your response to Question #24 in the Life Satisfaction Survey. If your answer was “sometimes,” “rarely,” or “never,” that’s an indication that service has not been a big part of your life. Since this is the only “Path” that is focused outside of ourselves, it is vitally important for you to make service more of a priority, and you will be happier as a result.

2. When was the last time you did something out of love? What was it? Write it down. Do you remember how you felt? Write that down, too. How does it feel now, even as you’re writing it down? It should bring back the warm feelings.

(a) What’s the last thing you did out of love for someone?

(b) How did you feel while you did it, and after it was done?

3. Do something with love for somebody, and observe the difference it makes in how you feel when you do it, as well as how you feel afterward. Write down your plan for what you’re going to do.

(a) Write the name of a person for whom you want to do something.

(b) What are you going to do for them?

(c) When are you going to do it?

4. Make a commitment to provide service in some way to someone on a monthly basis. Look for an opportunity to serve somebody you wouldn’t normally serve.

Write down your plan for the first month:

5. Daily Spiritual Success Habits Checklist

Review the following checklist at the end of every day and rank your performance in each area. If you didn't do the task, give yourself a "1." If you did it somewhat, give yourself a "5." A "5" isn't terrible – you still did it, but maybe you didn't apply it. If you did your very best, give yourself a "10".

Daily Checklist: Week of _____	Su	M	T	W	T	F	S
Did I have a heartfelt prayer?							
Did I have meaningful scripture study?							
Did I have an attitude of gratitude?							
Did I keep God in my mind and heart today?							
Did I serve someone else today?							
Was I kind and loving to everyone?							
Was I patient with myself and others?							
Did I spiritually exercise?							
Did I use my time wisely?							

10: I did my best

5: I did it somewhat

1: I didn't do it at all