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A "Taker" Searches for happiness

By David Leonhardt

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"There are two kinds of people in the world: givers and takers. Takers might eat well, but givers sleep better at night." Aha!

Your humble scribe has had a tough time sleeping lately. I thought it might have something to do with the happiness of keeping pace with a tornado toddler and an almost bursting-at-the-seams, more-than-pregnant wife. Or the joy of fending back the weeds threatening to overrun the house and take over the kingdom in a bloody coup. Or the excitement of renovating an old room with crooked walls and a slanted floor to become a perfectly straight, modern nursery for our Beany-Baby-to-be. Or the thrill of somehow trying to earn a few dollars to keep my ever-so-friendly and oh-so-understanding bank manager from gleefully slapping past-due stickers all over my front door.

Now I learn that my lack of sleep is from taking too much and not giving enough. So I set out to give as much as I could.

I decided to start by giving advice. "The blue would look better on you."

"What?" my wife asked. "You never comment on what I'm wearing, at least not voluntarily."

"It's my new sleeping therapy," I explained with excitement. "Givers sleep better than takers, so I just gave you some advice."

"Well, while you're at it, is there anything else you want to comment on?"

I saw my chance to give a compliment. "Overall, you are really beautiful."

"Why, thank you."

I was on a roll. I was really giving. This was my chance to give her my opinion. "Your hair is kind of ugly like that."

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"What?! You take that back!"

"No, I can't," I protested. "That would make me a taker and I won't be able to sleep."

"Then you can just take your silly opinions and get out of here."

"No, I can't do that. I can't take ..." My sentence was cut short by the hard realization that my nose and a door could not occupy the same space at the same time.

I decided to call my mother. "Hi mom. I thought I would give you a quick call."

"How sweet. You took the time to call your mother."

"No. No. I didn't take anything," I protested.

"Oh yes you did. You even took my advice to call more often. And you took account of your mother's happiness. And you took ... Hello? Hello?"

I just could not take any more. I scrambled out the door, the receiver still dangling from the table.

I had to take off. No, that would just keep me from sleeping. I saw my neighbor. Surely I could give him a hand.

"Sorry. Today I'm just relaxing." He studied the stress etched upon my face. "You look like you should take a break, too."

"No, I can't take a break. Takers don't sleep well at night."

"Well, at least you're taking a stand on something."

"I am NOT taking a stand," I protested. I was beginning to feel like a career protester.

"Take it easy, fellow."

Yikes! My neighbor was making me into a champion taker. I darted back toward my house.

"Take care," my neighbor called after me.

"Noooooooooooo" I screamed with my hands over my ears.

Crouched in the safety of my favorite closet, I tallied up the day. I gave advice, a compliment and my opinion. I took it back, my silly opinions, the time, my mother's advice and account of my mother's happiness, off, a break, a stand, it easy and care. I gave three times and took ten times.

No wonder I wasn't sleeping well at night. I was truly a taker. There was nothing left to do but to take a

sleeping pill. That should give me at least five hours of sleep, give or take a few.

David Leonhardt is The Happy Guy. Pick up a copy of his free daily motivation and inspiration ebook at <http://www.thehappyguy.com/l/daily-motivation-inspiration.php> or visit his website at <http://TheHappyGuy.com> .

## **Three Inspirations for Happiness**

### **By David Leonhardt**

The following three inspirations were adapted from A Daily Dose of Happiness, and they represent three key ways to increase our happiness.

#### **1. FORGIVING FOR HAPPINESS**

We like to think we are better than our friends below us in the food chain, such as the octopus and the snail. After all, we have love. We feel happiness. We have empathy. We have a conscience. We can reason.

We can also hold onto grudges.

Grudges are, in fact, prickly little creatures that worm their way into our hearts. Holding onto them is a self-defeating exercise.

Fortunately, forgiveness is also uniquely human. Forgiveness cleanses the spirit. Forgiveness let's us get on with enjoying our lives instead of being preoccupied with someone else's. Forgiveness opens the door to happiness.

#### **2. SUPPORTING FOR HAPPINESS**

When things seem to be very bleak, it does not take much to lift someone's spirits. Sometimes all it takes is to let somebody know they are not alone.

That is why it is so important to smile at people, especially if they look down. And if you know what is weighing the person down, let them know they are not alone. Don't go burdening them with all your miseries, but let them know you have been there.

Guess what? You will feel happiness for having helped them, too.

#### **3. ACCEPTING FOR HAPPINESS**

There is no such thing as happiness if you are not at peace with yourself. Too many people just don't know how to make peace with themselves.

Peace begins with acceptance. Whether we agree with everything we do (like the environmentalist

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who sometimes throws out a recyclable container), it is important to accept what we do.

Do we always make the best choices? No. But they are the choices we make.

Do we always treat people with the most respect? No. But it is how we treat people.

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Can we improve? Yes, and we should. But that is a project for the future. First we must accept who we are now, rather than condemning ourselves. Then we can move to improve the person we will be tomorrow. Both acceptance today and improvements tomorrow will increase our happiness.

This inspiration first appeared in A Daily Dose of Happiness:

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on happiness:

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