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Being Unhappy with Yourself

By Etienne A. Gibbs, MSW, Management Consultant and Trainer

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I am always bothered whenever I see someone criticizing another person in a loud, angry, and boisterous manner. It bothers me because, although it may have been meant to be constructive, it is, in reality, destructive for both parties. And I know that the experience does not have to be destructive.

What the criticizing person fails to realize is that he is showing his ignorance. He is demonstrating his unhappiness with himself. He concentrates on what is wrong with everything instead of what is right. He does not see the sky; he sees the rainy clouds. He does not see the true potential of his wife, children, or employees; he only sees their tiny natural mistakes.

This person concentrates on the specks of dust that may be found on a masterpiece and misses the masterpiece, itself. As a result, he goes through life missing the beauty and gusto of life.

That is why real love, real, well-adjusted and true love, is so great. It stops to smell the roses, to see the ducks in the lake, to see the butterflies on the flowers. The total image is so wonderful that the little flaws become insignificant; they are not noticed.

The truly loving man smiles and understands when his wife, children, or employees make a mistake. He realizes that making mistakes is one way of learning from experience.

Warning: Criticize the important people in your life and you expose your ignorance about making and keeping positive and healthy relationships. Establish, instead, positive and healthy relationships by:

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- * leading the way.
- * setting positive examples.
- * listening closely to what they say and don't say.
- * showing your spouse, children, friends, or employees your love for them.

Actions speak louder than words, they say. And your positive actions will show others that you truly care about them, not their mistakes. When your positive message is frequent and consistent, they will follow your lead.

Train yourself to see them not as people who make mistakes, but as totally whole images who are

capable of so much more. Accept the doer, not the deed. After all, everyone makes mistakes and it is in making those mistakes that we tend to grow the most.

Remember: When you maximize your potential, everyone wins. When you don't, we all lose.

Etienne A. Gibbs, MSW, Management Consultant and Trainer, conducts seminars, lectures, and writes articles on his theme: "*... helping you maximize your potential.*" Reach him at

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Plow Your Own Happiness

By Deanna Mascle

Perhaps it is because I am a gardener at heart, but for me the new year really begins in the Spring. Even though Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow, I am beginning to see signs of Spring here in Kentucky. There are sprouts of that wonderful fresh spring green in my garden today. The sight of those hopeful leaf points makes me smile and reinvigorates me in a way that New Year's Day can never achieve.

So it seems natural to me to begin thinking in terms of gardening and farming. Also because I am happier it makes me want to spread the joy. I have come up with this four-step plan to help you achieve a happier life.

Step One -- Plan For It

Too many people expect to win happiness in the lottery of life. Happiness is not a prize, it is a goal. Happiness does not just happen, it must be welcomed. If you do not expect and look for happiness

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then you most likely are missing opportunities to be happy every day.

Make a life plan for your own happiness. What do you want? What will make you happy? Make a list, check it twice, and then move on to the next step.

Step Two — Let It Happen

Many people are afraid to be happy. They are unwilling to take risks or even make choices because all they can think about is the potential for loss. That is a perfect recipe for unhappiness.

If you are unable to put yourself in the way of happiness then you will miss it every time. Take a chance or make a choice. What is the worst that can happen? If you don't risk then you lose by default. If you risk then at least you have a chance at success.

Many people discover happiness during their pursuit — don't overlook that potential as well. Happiness can be found in unexpected places if you open yourself to opportunity, so move on to the next step.

Step Three — Open Yourself To It

The unhappy people that I know are usually unhappy for two reasons. One group believes they do not deserve happiness and the other group actually undermines their happiness by closing themselves off.

Everyone deserves to be happy and it makes me so sad when I see people settle for anything less. It also causes me worry because I believe that so much of what is wrong with our world today is caused by unhappy people. Happy people, as a rule, do not harm others. Happy people cause good things to happen which then creates more happy people. What a wonderful synergy!

I find the other group even sadder. It is bad enough to think you do not deserve happiness, but to actually refuse to allow yourself to be happy is definitely worse in my book. It is horribly destructive and

obviously self-perpetuating, but some of these unhappy people, I believe, are to blame for the unhappiness of others — or at least contribute to it.

Step Four — Wave Good-bye To Your Troubles

One of the most frustrating things for me is when someone is unhappy about something specific — and yet they refuse to make a change to do away with the problem.

Your job makes you unhappy? Get a new one! Your husband makes you unhappy? Work on your relationship? Your child makes you unhappy? Correct their behavior.

I know it is not always that simple but even in the most desperate situations there is some element that is subject to change. Focus on that one area and you might find the whole picture changes. If you surrender to your unhappiness then it will take over, but fighting it gives you the potential to win your own happiness and change your life. I know which path I'll choose every day.

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In the end you and you alone have the power over your own happiness. You choose to be happy or to be unhappy. Which will you choose?

If you want to be happy then the recipe is simple:

Plan For It Let It Happen Open Yourself To It Wave Good-by To Your Unhappiness

If you can follow this plan then you can indeed PLOW your own happiness.

Deanna Mascle is an inspirational freelance writer. You can find more inspiration at

and

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