



Rifka Schonfeld **STRATEGIES**

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

STOP FEELING MISERABLE!

Dear Readers,

There's a reason we have spring-cleaning and Pesach at the same time. The air is getting warmer and it's time to take stock and refresh!

In that spirit, I have started a newsletter to send out tips, questions and answers, and interesting articles to those who are looking to refresh and restock their educational or emotional pantries.

This week's newsletter includes a question and answer about happiness – something on a lot of people's minds these days.



STRATEGIES FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

Rifka Schonfeld

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CAN YOU CHOOSE TO BE HAPPY?

I am successful in my career and if people looked at my life, they would argue that I have a good one, but I just don't feel satisfied.
WHAT CAN I DO?

Well, Raj Raghunathan lays out a bit of a blueprint or plan for happiness in his book *If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You Happy* by detailing the seven happiness habits that you should acquire and the seven happiness "sins" that you should avoid. Below, I've explained those sins to avoid – check out the book for the corresponding habit to pick up!

- **Devaluing happiness.** As we go about our daily lives, we create mental "wish lists." We wish we could lose a little weight, we wish we could make more money, or we wish we could make up with that old friend. Do we ever put "happiness" on our wish list? Do we wish that we were happy? Probably not because it seems such an intangible thing – something we will get to after we lose that weight, make more money, or have more friends. Instead, we need to stop devaluing happiness and start actively putting it on our wish list.
- **Chasing superiority.** We live in a competitive society which often translates in our wanting to be better at others at something. We want to have the best job, the most well behaved children, the best hair or the tastiest challah. We make comparisons with other people and often weigh our own worth in relation to those comparisons. Research shows that the tendency to see how you stack up against others is the biggest deterrent from happiness.
- **Desperation for attention.** If we always want to be the center of attention, we are constantly looking for approval from others and for outside recognition. This can also greatly reduce the level of your happiness. It can also lead you to avoid relationships that you don't believe you will be the star of, and therefore shy away from social interactions.
- **Being overly controlling.** When we desperately feel the need to control others or outcomes (which of course is out of our control), we are taking away from our ability to be happy. Making a plan and sticking to it, is a great way to attempt to achieve happiness, but thinking that we can control all elements of our lives will ultimately lead to disappointment and unhappiness.
- **Distrusting others.** As I mentioned above, a large part of happiness is positive social interactions. If we don't trust those around us, then we cannot have positive social interactions. In fact, we will be insulated and isolated. This in turn can

lead to missing a key piece of the happiness equation.

- **Indifferent pursuit of goals.** When we set our minds to being happy, when we create a plan to get there, we need to pursue those goals. This means that we need to care about the different steps of the plan. If we indifferently pursue different goals, then we will not be able to achieve happiness.
- **Ignoring or underestimating our instincts.** Sometimes we mistakenly think that if we have a plan, we need to stick to it no matter what. It's great to pursue that plan, but if you see that it is not making you happy or you have a niggling feeling that something is wrong, take a moment to reevaluate. Don't just rush headlong in any direction!

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Rifka Schonfeld Presents

Dr. Ross Greene
Ph.D.

RETHINKING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

OF
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TUESDAY
NOV. 14. 2017
8:30AM-4:30PM