

LifeMapSM



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

March 21, 2006

This Week's Message:

**The Pursuit of
Happiness.**

Paths Forward

Resources

**Have Dr. Paul speak
at your next meeting
or conference.**

Greetings!

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The Pursuit of Happiness.

Everyone wants to be happy. Just take a look at the best-selling titles in any bookstore. Some tell us that the key to happiness is having more money or better investments, or getting a new job, or finding Mr. or Ms. Right, or developing comforting religious beliefs, or even having the ideal, high-

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tech kitchen. Certainly everyone is entitled to his or her own ideas about what will make them happy but I have found that many people confuse happiness with having fun – much in the same way our society confuses celebrity with achievement. Now, anyone who knows me will tell you I’m all in favor of having fun. But when I talk about happiness I’m not talking about entertainment or recreation – both of which are great in the proper proportion.

From interviews with hundreds of people over 25+ years I’ve discovered quite a bit about what makes people happy. One thing I’ve learned is that a more accurate, a more meaningful word for happiness is satisfaction. This takes happiness out of the realm of momentary pleasure and raises it to the level of assessing and improving the overall quality of one’s life. I’ve learned that the acquisition of things, while sometimes bringing immediate pleasure, has little long-term effect on people’s happiness. Some very wealthy people have shared with me that the level of happiness or satisfaction in their lives is in no direct proportion to the amount of money they have in the bank. I have learned that as long as there is no pathology involved (such as clinical depression) people have the ability to improve their level of happiness regardless of many of the external factors in their lives. Here’s the key –

Those folks who have honored me with the why’s and how’s of their happiness and life satisfaction all have one thing in common: they do not make a major goal out of being happy. Sure, like all of us they want to be happy, but the most satisfied folks I’ve met are those who focus on something other than their own happiness. And it’s not that they wear sackcloth and ashes all the time or never have any fun. It’s that by steering towards something of value – often larger than themselves – that they find happiness and satisfaction along the way. Happiness is not an end in and of itself; it is the by-product of an engaged life.

Paths Forward

Using the elements of the LifeSpace Model I introduced in an earlier LifeMap, here are some ways to get more happiness and satisfaction into your life.

- **Work Life.**

Engaging in work that uses your skills and talents, that helps you focus on goal achievement and where you are

working with people you respect helps raise one's job (and thus, life) satisfaction. If your work is boring, unchallenging or a poor match for your abilities then you will suffer from job (and thus, life) dissatisfaction. Taking direct action (e.g. training, mentoring, job hunting, career changing) can lead to a job you care about, then to a job you love and then onward to a higher level of personal happiness and life satisfaction.

- **Home Life.**

With the hectic pace of our lives it's easy for family relationships to get out of whack due to miscommunication. Emotional distance, friction, conflict and, ultimately, unhappiness will arise from not regularly making time available to connect with those closest to us. Add to the satisfaction in your home life by making one hour a week available for conversation with a loved one. It's a small investment that will pay big dividends.

- **Societal Life.**

Get connected. Studies show such activities as helping others, smiling at or saying hello to a stranger, phoning a friend with whom you've lost touch all lead to feelings of increased happiness. Think of activities that are good for your health, or your career, or your family, or your community that might be fun for you and fun to share with someone else.

- **Individual Life.**

The most often overlooked element of your LifeSpace is the one that can, most quickly, increase your level of happiness and life satisfaction. Take an internal inventory: identify 5 or 6 things you should be thankful for and mindful of every day. Laugh – tell a joke, listen to a joke, read the comics, visit a web site you find funny. Say a prayer (formal or ad hoc) as you fall asleep. Listen to music (whatever type you like): it makes you more relaxed, optimistic and friendly. Breathe & Smile: when stressed, close your eyes for 1 single minute, take 30 deep breaths during which you force yourself to put a smile on your face. Open your eyes. Your mood will have improved within 60 seconds.

LifeMap

is about helping you chose – and get – the life path you want. In our modern world we are fortunate to have many

"unalienable rights." But the key to a satisfying life is less about "the pursuit of happiness" than it is about the happiness of pursuit.

dr Paul

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Resources

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Sincerely,

Dr. Paul

Email: drpaul@drpaulpowers.com

Phone: 781-237-0550

Fax: 781-237-5721

Web: <http://www.drpaulpowers.com>

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Dr. Paul Powers | 30 Ledyard Street | Wellesley Hills | MA | 02481