

Happy Lawyer Happy Life

The Course Week One



What makes you Happy?

We are all different and my concepts of happiness may not be the same as yours. In this week's module you will work out just what your personal goals are when it comes to being a 'Happier Lawyer'. This will become really important as we work our way through the next few weeks and really start to work on your career or business goals. As an example, I know that being creative- writing, designing, making and dreaming are all things that make me really happy. Over the past few years I have worked hard to ensure that those things are a big part of my work day, giving me the best chance of happiness at work.

Having clarity around the things that make you happy will ensure that you are again designing a career that aligns with this. If there is an area or style of work that brings you great unhappiness then it makes sense to look at how you can minimise or even avoid this in your practice.

My business and marketing plan all stems from clarity about who I am, what I am great at and what I love to do. So once you work this stuff out, everything else will stem from it.

Why Happiness?

Many studies have shown that being 'happy' improves all aspects of our lives. The University of Berkeley's 'Greater Good Science Centre'- one of the world's leading 'happiness research centres' reports that happy people-

- are healthier
- have improved relationships with others
- are more productive at work
- cope better with stress
- are more creative

So why wouldn't we all want to be happier lawyers!

Happiness is different for all of us. However, there are some common themes - a sense of belonging, purpose and meaning. A feeling of contentment, pleasure and joy.

Your happiness and my happiness might be different, and the beautiful thing about the world is that this is more than okay - what makes you 'you' will be different from what makes me 'me'. We may have some similarities and perhaps many differences.

This week your goal is to focus on just what happiness means for you and to help you do that I have put together a few questions that should assist you in getting to the bottom of it!

To properly answer these questions you will need some peace and quiet so perhaps grab yourself a cup of coffee (or iced tea if you are in the middle of a heat wave in Brisbane like me!) and take your time to really contemplate what happiness means for you.



What has made me Happy today?

Wherever you are today grab a pen and find somewhere quiet and take a few moments to write down anything and everything that has made you feel 'Happy' today. Don't overthink this and just jot down anything that comes to mind.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the entire width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

So now you have a list of what has made you happy today. I hope there are a few small things- a child or partner's smile, a nice coffee in the morning or a beautiful sunny day. Try to fill the page- you might be surprised what you find!

What has made me Happy this week?

This time you are casting your mind over the past week. Same as before, write down all of the things that immediately come to mind that have made you feel happy this past week.

How are you going? Are you starting to see a few themes when it comes to what is making you happy? What are they?

What has made me Happy this past year?

This time I want you to think back to January 2016 and take a few moments to write down all of the things that have made you happy over the past year. If you need a prompt and are like me and keep a detailed calendar then go back to this date last year and scroll your way through as a bit of a reminder of just what you got up to! You could work through each week or each month as you go.

When I did this exercise I found that as I looked over the past year it was the 'bigger' moments that came to mind- holidays, events, parties and celebrations. Compare your happiness moments from the past year to today- what did you find?

What are some of the Happiest moments in my life?

And my favourite list- this time take your mind back over the entirety of your life and find me at least 10 moments when you can say you felt truly happy. They can be from any stage of life, so do take your time with this one. This time I want you to not only think of the moment but also record just what it was about the moment that meant you felt happiness. An example for me is my wedding day- it was everyone who was important in my life being in one place at one time that really brought me happiness that day.

[illegible]

Your Happiness Themes

So now it is time to look back over the lists you have created and look for some themes. If you had to put all of the moments you have recorded into 4 or 5 themes, what would they be? What is it that brings these moments together? Is it a feeling, or perhaps it is the people or place.

[illegible]

Choosing Happiness

You might be wondering why I have asked you to invest so much time in reflecting upon the happy moments in your lives but I do hope doing so of itself has been helpful. We often don't take the time to reflect about those moments of happiness- particularly over the whole of our lives- but here is the trick- if you can start to train your brain to see the beauty in the everyday your chance of happiness will increase exponentially.

When it comes to being happier there are elements that we can control and there are of course parts that are well outside of our control. In her 2007 book 'The How of Happiness', positive psychology researcher Sonja Lyubomirsky, described happiness as "the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile."

Sonja found that roughly 50% of our happiness is determined by our genes and 10% by our life circumstance, but 40% depends on our daily activities.

So we may not be able to tamper with the 50% of our happiness determined by our genes, and some might say that sometimes life's circumstances may be out of our immediate control too, but I love that 40% of our personal happiness is entirely affected by how we choose to spend our days.

So this week I want you to take your Happiness Themes and stick them on your wall at home and at work. Take a few moments each day to reflect upon just what you have done that day that connects with any of those themes. More importantly, take the time to think about what you could change in how you work or live each day, each week and each month- your routines- to include more of what you know makes you happy. And I would love you to take out a planner for the next 12 months and schedule in a few of the things that make you happy that just don't fit into a 'normal day'- that might be a holiday, a marathon, a catch up with some one important... Whatever it is, plan now to fit some of those things into your year.

What changes could I make to include more 'Happiness'
Daily

Weekly

Monthly

This year

And just for fun, one crazy audacious goal for this year would be...

In Law

In Life

Week 1 Summary

The things that make me happiest are...

The things I will do more of each day are...

The things I will do more of each week are...

The things I will do more of each month are...

The things I will do more of this year are...

And just for fun, my crazy audacious goals for this year are...

Happiness is...