Your Why

## A how-to guide for holistic happiness

Let’s start with a fun scenario. Imagine you found a pile of money. I’m sure you could find a few fun things to do with it - and you may already be dreaming about how those things will make you happy forever. If that were true, why do we hear stories of people winning the lottery, receiving a big inheritance or being a highly paid sports or movie star who are still not truly happy? The reason is simple. For a short period of time, money can provide all the entertainment and fun you can dream of, but the reality is, there is more to acquiring true happiness in life than money alone. While money impacts all areas of our lives and can provide the freedom to do more, experience more and have more, it doesn’t buy us happiness on its own. A good balance needs to exist with relationships, physical health, love and more.

By following the steps in this guide and completing the activities, you will be on your way to establishing a strong foundation. Combine this with the habits, behaviors and financial knowledge you’ll learn from coaching and you will be equipped for success!

# What’s Important to You?

Have you ever met someone who is really passionate about something? It could be their collection of memorabilia, a sports team, a hobby, a cause that they care about or their faith. Their passion for whatever they are into is contagious and it is energizing to see them light up with excitement as they talk about it. The key to acquiring that sort of happiness is to have a healthy balance of things you enjoy most in life. A common pitfall that people experience is that they can get too focused on what their friends or family may think of them. They see their seemingly happy peers posting on social media wearing their new clothes or doing certain activities and want to mimic them hoping to acquire the same level of happiness, or worse, try to outdo them. While their peers may be enjoying themselves, it doesn’t mean it will bring you the same joy. The key to creating real happiness is that it must be genuine and unique to you. Remember when you loved watching the same cartoon over and over or playing with your favorite toy all day? These became less interesting as you got exposed to new ideas and options over time. As you grow older and get exposed to new hobbies, activities and friends, your perspective changes. This next exercise will help you start defining what is important to you, keep balance with all the priorities in your life and develop a way to become and stay happy throughout life.

The primary categories that impact our lives and our overall happiness include:

* Relationships
* Fun & Entertainment
* Reputation
* Public Service & Giving
* Personal Health
* Personal Growth
* Physical Environment
* Career
* Finances
* Spirituality

Let’s review each category and then identify where you find happiness within them. With this exercise, you’ll find ways to balance your resources into each category and identify what matters to you to help you develop a healthy balance and improve your overall happiness.

# Relationships

Healthy relationships are a vital component of our overall health and wellbeing. Studies show that strong relationships contribute to a longer, healthier and happier life. On the other hand, the health risks that come from being alone or isolated in one’s life are comparable to the risks associated with cigarette smoking, high blood pressure and obesity. Relationships with family and friends provide us with someone to share life experiences with while also developing a deeper meaning to life.

The first step toward building great relationships is to identify what you value in having a relationship. To do this, answer the following questions by describing in detail or tell a story to paint a picture:

* How do you define “great” friend relationship?
* How do you define what makes a “great” family relationship?
* How do you treat your friend(s) and/or family and how do you expect to be treated in return?
* What interests (hobbies, passions) do you have that you’d like to share with your friends and/or family?

Now that you’ve taken a moment to think about what are important qualities in relationships to you, take a moment to reflect on your current relationships.

* Could you do anything different to improve this area of your life to make you happier?
* Is there anyone in your life you should be spending more or less time with?

Wealth Habit Tip: Wealthy people surround themselves with positive, uplifting and encouraging people. They avoid negativity in relationships and the media they consume (TV, music, social media).

# Fun and Entertainment

Who doesn’t like to have fun? We totally agree that life should be fun and have found that those who manage their money well have even more fun because they don’t waste it on things that don’t really matter to them. Because they are intentional with their purchases, they rarely have “buyer’s remorse” which is what happens when you spend money on something that seemed to make sense in the moment, but you later wish you didn’t purchase it. With an intentional plan, you’ll be able to save and allocate some of your money to having fun.

Oftentimes unplanned purchases result in immediate gratification, but the long-term effects tend to have a negative impact on your happiness. Impulse buying is an unplanned decision to buy something in the moment to fill a want or desire at that point in time. The key to finding balance is to plan for spending money on things that align with your Why, you actually want and will find enjoyment from.

* Can you list the top 3-4 activities that you get the most enjoyment from doing?
* Now, can you list 1-2 things that you wish you could do, but don’t currently have the money to afford?

A “Bucket List” is basically a dream list of activities you want to experience sometime in the future. It could be one year or 10 years. It’s a fun way to hope and dream.

* What are some things you want to do or see in the future?

Wealth Habit Tip: When you write things down, especially “Bucket List” items, it can be amazing how many of them actually happen. Writing things down is a simple way to build a plan. Your list should be visible to help you stay focused and accountable. It’s good to have a mix of short-term and inexpensive targets while others are longer-term and require more patience and diligence to save up for. Wealthy people are able to balance short-term entertainment targets while aiming toward longer-term dreams by saying no to some things today.

* What are some things you can say no to today that will help you save for something really cool in the future?

# Reputation

Everyone has some desire to be liked and respected and it is common for people to make money decisions with the intent to increase how others might think of them. For some people, this means acquiring the newest technology, nicest clothes or the coolest car. While there is nothing wrong with buying stuff that makes you happy, the key is to do it in balance with the other things that are important. Having a bunch of cool stuff to improve your reputation while you are building a pile of debt will eventually backfire and your level of happiness will suffer. Building a positive reputation doesn’t always require spending or having a lot of money. Here are some things that will help you build your reputation and level of popularity that require little to no financial investment:

* Go out of your way to help others #dogoodfeelgood
* Make the people around you look good
* Be happy for others; don’t be greedy, selfish or jealous
* Be positive; don’t complain about your situation in life
* Can you think of other things you can do to improve your reputation that don’t require much money?
* What behaviors can you change start improving your reputation?

Wealth Habit Tip: Contentment is a state of happiness and satisfaction. It’s also the feeling that people receive when they have acquired true wealth. They are comfortable with themselves and the decisions they are making. Make sure you balance the things that make YOU happy and not strive to impress or make others happy.

# Public Service and Giving

The act of giving is often forgotten as an important provider of happiness. Whether it’s donating your money, time or conducting a small selfless act of kindness, giving to others can have a major impact on your level of happiness. Scientists believe that the act of giving lights up areas of your brain that give you pleasure…“Helpers High.”

* What are some ways you can build happiness through service or giving?
* What are some of your best talents that can be used to help others?
* What causes (world, local, social, religious, etc.) do you want to help?

# Personal Health

Personal health and happiness are two things that greatly impact each other. If you eat healthy and exercise regularly, you’ll likely be in good health which will boost your happiness. Additionally, when people are happy, science shows that these positive emotions result in better health, longer life and creating a greater sense of well-being.

* What does physical health mean to you?
* What behavior changes can you make to improve your physical health?

Wealth Habit Tip: Having a plan and being intentional with your money has a large impact on your personal health. Having a spending plan, an emergency fund and savings set aside will give you peace of mind knowing that most of life’s curve balls can be handled. This financial stability will make you less stressed and in turn you’ll have fewer health problems because you’re not worrying about money.

# Personal Growth

Think of your favorite professional athlete. It’s likely that she or he became one of the best athletes in the world because they trained for several hours a day, six days a week for 12 months of the year. Just like your favorite athlete, you will get better at whatever you intentionally focus on and spend time doing. To find personal growth in any area, you must first discover your strengths and passions and then dedicate time to develop them. The worlds most accomplished people got to where they are through focus, hard work and commitment. Believe it or not, the wealthiest people became wealthy because they have been very intentional with where they spent their attention and time.

* When you have free time each day, how do you choose to spend it?
* What interests do you have that you’d like to learn more about & get better at?
* What behaviors can you change so you can spend more time focusing on improving your strengths and passions?

Wealth Habit Tip**:** Visit with someone who has reached extreme skill or knowledge in a certain area and ask them to share how they stayed so focused and committed to their dream. Many wealthy people will tell you that they enjoyed spending their time and energy doing what they are passionate about and that it actually didn’t feel like extra work. If you follow your passion, it’s easy to put in the time and effort necessary to achieve greatness. Find something you are passionate about and go after it with all that you’ve got!

# Career

If you earn a living doing something you love, you won’t work a day in your life! Choosing the right career can take time and with thousands of options available, it’s important to know that you may not discover what career will bring you the most happiness until you actually try it out. One great way to find out if a career is a fit for you is to do informational interviews or shadow someone doing what you think you want to do. You’ll be able to ask them what their typical day at work entails to help you determine if it’s something you think would bring you joy. It’s never to late to go after your passion!

* As you noted earlier, what are your strengths and passions?
* What jobs could you someday have that leverage your strengths and passions? If you’re not sure, how will you find out?
* What steps will you take now determine if these jobs will make you happy?

Wealth Habit Tip: The connections that you make during life are very important and can later prove to be a springboard to success. Sometimes finding your perfect career requires making personal and professional connections with others in the same line of work you think you may be interested in. If you represent yourself well to these people, they will be more likely to help you advance your career exploration process when you are ready to do it.

# Finances

Financial Independence is having enough income to pay your desired lifestyle for the rest of your life without having to work full time. You may achieve this through savings and investments and/or building a successful businesses that can generate income without daily supervision. Financially, this is the ultimate wealth building goal. As stated earlier, money can impact all factors of creating happiness. For some people, they lose sight of a healthy balance and become too focused on increasing their income and forget about all the other factors that contribute to achieving happiness. Healthy money management allows you to spend your time, energy and resources where you value them most. When you are out of balance and don’t have focus, it will impact your happiness over time.

* What do you think it will take for you to become financially independent?
* What behavior changes will you make now to help you get to where you want to be in the future?

Wealth Habit Tip**:** Compounding interest is a powerful financial concept that helps your investments grow faster. Compound interest is the financial effect when you collect interest from your original investment and it is added back into to your funds so you can earn even more interest over time. For example, if you were to invest $100 per month at age 16 and continue until you were age 60, you would have invested a total of $52,900. Because of compound interest growth, you would have accumulated more than $430,000 based on an 8% return.

# Spirituality

Spirituality is about seeking a meaningful connection with something bigger than yourself, which can result in positive emotions, such as peace, awe, contentment, gratitude, and acceptance.

* What does spirituality mean to you?
* Write down two things you can start doing today to grow in this area.

# Review

As you just learned, there are many factors that contribute to your overall wealth and happiness. It’s important to find balance among all things that make us happy and bring us wealth. It’s a process, not an event, but if you focus on improving one small piece of each of the factors we just reviewed, you’ll progress to being wealthy and finding happiness at a much faster rate.

Use the following space for any other thoughts, ideas, inspirations. Be Bold!

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