

## Are You Thwarting Your Own Happiness?



By Gayle Crist,  
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*“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.” – Albert Schweitzer (theologian, writer, physician, philosopher, and humanitarian)*

*“Love is the master key that opens the gates to happiness.” – Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. (poet, physician, and Renaissance man)*

*“There is no key to happiness. The door is always open.” – Mother Teresa (St. Teresa of Calcutta, nun, and missionary)*

These are 3 of my favorite quotes about happiness, and I think all of them are true. Yet each person quoted has a different perspective on the topic. Let's explore those a bit...

First, Schweitzer encapsulates in his quote something I've believed for many years and always reiterate to my life coaching clients: Do what you love, and the money will follow. Your passion for something, whether a pastime or a career, will keep you pursuing it—and that perseverance and commitment are important ingredients for success.

I'm sure you have seen this in your own life and/or can cite examples of people you know who focused their lives on what they enjoyed most—and found both success and fulfillment as a result.

Second, Holmes points out that love is the secret to happiness. I strongly agree with this perspective too. When wearing my other coaching hat as a dating coach, of course, I help people find the romantic love they believe will make them happy. And love with a partner often IS a major source of happiness.

But I'm sure your life experiences have shown you that romantic love is not the only kind of love that “opens the gates to happiness”. Giving love to others by doing volunteer work can bring happiness. Loving a child or a pet or a friend can make you very happy. And simply being kind

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every day in everything you do brings joy and contentment beyond measure.

Third, who can disagree with Mother Teresa? The door is always open to invite happiness into our lives. We don't need a key. Happiness is a choice we make in every moment. Our attitude toward what is happening to and around us and those we care about is the most important ingredient in the recipe for a happy life.

“The door is always open” means that the potential for happiness is always available—we just need to seize the opportunities to grasp it whenever they come our way. Sadly, oftentimes we don't.

To summarize these 3 famous people: Being happy makes you successful. Love brings happiness. The door to happiness is always open. These are truths that can certainly help you find more joy in life. But only if you don't get in your own way.

Unfortunately, in my life coaching practice, I see many clients who are thwarting their own happiness by doing one or more of the 4 things I've seen described as “happiness busters”:

- Overthinking things
- Taking things personally
- Seeking validation from others
- Having expectations

I've written about some of these before. The second one—taking things personally—is the one I've struggled with the most. How about you? Are any of these happiness busters preventing you

from embracing the happiness you deserve? How can you stop blocking the path to happiness?

While I don't have all the answers for everyone, I do know this from my own experience and that of my clients: Once you're aware of which happiness buster is causing you the most problems, you can more easily notice when you're doing it and work toward modifying your behavior to eventually stop doing it. Or at least do it a LOT less—so you'll ultimately be a LOT happier.

For example, let's say you're a “people pleaser” who habitually looks for validation from other people—putting their happiness above your own. How long can you keep doing that before you realize that ignoring your needs is making you miserable, not to mention resentful? I did that for 16 years in my first marriage before I finally hit a breaking point, which soon led to a divorce.

I learned the hard way that my happiness mattered too. As time went on, I then learned how to ask for and pursue what I wanted and needed. It was tough at first and is still a work in progress, but I've been a lot happier ever since.

You probably know the keys to your own happiness. But are you using them? If not, maybe there's a happiness buster blocking your way. In that case, a life coach can help you uncover and overcome it. Or maybe you need moral support in regularly focusing on your happiness and making and sticking to a game plan to create it. A coach can help there too. I'd be honored to serve you in that capacity. Let's talk! [coach@healthylifeplanning.com](mailto:coach@healthylifeplanning.com)

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