

REVIEWS

Happiness

The Art of Living with Peace, Confidence and Joy — Smith, Douglas A.

After his cancer diagnosis, a big company's CEO explains how he became a student and teacher of the practical skills of happiness.

Smith describes happy people as being grounded in three things: remembering the past with peace, anticipating the future with confidence and living in the present with joy. He then identifies 13 specific skills, for which anyone can become proficient with practice, to create and support happiness, all of which are underpinned by love.

The clarity and thoughtfulness that Smith brings to this book have been distilled through years of teaching a class on happiness at DePauw University, and he offers clear advice with quiet authenticity, grace and none of the distasteful aggressiveness that can be found in the methods of some self-help books. Smith's tools are simple but not simplified, aiming for, in the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, "simplicity on the other side of complexity." He neither turns his back on his corporate past nor insists on applying a CEO's toolset to a more mindful approach to life, making his words more broadly appealing. Smith tells his own life story, sharing the challenges and successes he found in articulating and manifesting the skills of happiness, and how he enriched his life by spending time alone in nature and with his wife and two sons.

He shares his journey confronting the realities of his illness—chronic lymphocytic leukemia—while trying to nurture five things in life: "*grace, gratitude, courage, peace, and time,*" each with deep sincerity. Yet he doesn't infuse his own narrative with a much grander meaning, as can be common in books written by those who teach from their own lives. Instead, his well-articulated though not quite groundbreaking story helps by sharing one way to find personal joy by focusing on how we relate to ourselves and others.

A big thinker turns his mind to the essence of his happiness in a memoir that's easy to read and maybe even follow.

—**Kirkus**

REVIEWS

Health & Fitness

The actionable advice that Smith presents in this part memoir, part guide is bolstered by his clear, vivid writing style.

Baby Boomers will find guidance when looking to make sense of their lives in Douglas A. Smith's autobiographical journey toward happiness. The brief prologue presents obvious or not-so-obvious facts: "Everyone wants to be happy" and to gain a skill set that will lead to contentment. *Happiness: The Art of Living with Peace, Confidence, and Joy* is written in a level-headed and heartfelt manner, explaining that while the skills of happiness can never be fully attained, with happiness, "we have better physical and mental health."

The structure of *Happiness* starts in the present with Smith's musings while watching a sunrise from a mountaintop, being present and thankful. His life changed when he was diagnosed with cancer, and his emotional devastation was neutralized by the support of his wife, family, friends, and doctors. This support helped him live beyond the prognosis and find a new purpose in life. The following chapters return to his earlier life, sharing personal anecdotes that catalog his missteps, material successes, and growing self-awareness.

Thirteen chapters under group headings cover his journey through growing emotional awareness of people and the world about him. For instance, he begins showing gratitude and acknowledging people that once were invisible to him, like thanking washroom janitors for keeping things clean. Quotes from researchers and experts are used throughout *Happiness* to support Smith's observations.

It is refreshing to read a book on awareness that is free of new-age jargon or references to precepts from ancient belief systems; this is a twenty-first century Walden. Set in Middle America, Smith's story is well told, cherishing what he has and remaining aware of the natural world. On the personal side, without being preachy, he suggests scheduling a colonoscopy.

Common experiences, worries, vulnerabilities, and Smith's responses to them are well written. The writing is focused, flowing, and free of grammatical errors. The rustic-style woodcuts of natural scenes match the tone of Smith's writing.

An appendix offers a list of skills that can lead to happiness by helping people cope with the past and present and prepare for the future. It's followed by a skills summary that uses boldface to emphasize subheads, making it easier to find important information. Smith's personally developed acronym, FOFO (Faith, Optimism, Flexibility, and Openness), helps him look to the future. These skills are ones everyone can learn, and, with practice, they can lead to happiness.

—Mark Laiosa, ForeWord

What People Are Saying about *Happiness*

A 21st Century *Walden*

—**ForeWord**

In confronting life's triumphs, as well as personal challenges, Doug Smith emerges with a balance and view that is remarkable. His book draws you into his personal journey and his insights have application to our everyday lives.

—**Richard P. Mayer, Former CEO of Kraft Foods, Former CEO of KFC**

Doug Smith is a gifted writer, lecturer, and teacher in the art of happiness. His wisdom and compassion, his humility and candor are beacons of light that shine through every page of this important and compelling book.

—**Gail Harris, Author, "Finders Seekers" and "Body & Soul" (PBS Series companion)**

Doug Smith brings great insights to an extremely important topic. It makes terrific reading for anyone going through life changes and challenges.

—**Stephen Sadove, Former Chairman and CEO, Saks**

From a ledge on White Pine Mountain, the oracle of happiness identifies the secret sauce of life, and shares it in poignant stories and easy-to-follow teachings. Carve out some quiet alone time, and let Doug share his journey and teachings with you.

—**John Lowe, CEO, Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams**

Doug has approached the subject of happiness in the same way he solves business problems: with humor and analytics, intertwined with razor-sharp thinking and writing.

—**Parker MacDonell, Principal, Invergarry Partners**

This book is a gift that has made me a better father, better friend and better leader. This book is the most important book I have read in years.

—**Tom Krouse, President, Donatos**

Doug Smith's generously honest book offers wise guidance to readers interested in pursuing a happy life. His infectious optimism and love for the world are reflected throughout this book, and his open and genuine narration of his own journey towards happiness is inspiring.

—**Brian Casey, President, DePauw University**

With a business leader's smarts, a father's love, a husband's devotion, Doug tackles the questions of happiness in his own life and gives away the secrets to his readers.

—**John P. Schuster, Author of "Answering Your Call" and "The Power of Your Past"**

5 Star Reviews from Readers at Amazon and GoodReads

READ THIS BOOK!

This book should be read by everyone. It gives valuable insights on getting rid of the baggage and leading a happy, productive life, stressing the need, not only to understand these concepts, but to monitor your progress on a daily basis...

A Great Perspective Changer!

This is a well-written and insightful book on happiness. The author's moving personal story is interwoven with much helpful advice. Read more

Written so everyone can understand.

First "self-help" book I have read which has been written with examples that I could clearly identify with...

Advice I believe

I have read quite a number of books on this topic and this one is one of the best. It is a honest opinion given from personal experience...

A must read for all happiness seekers

I have read many self-development books, the classics and the modern best sellers, and this is one of the best...

A deep and loving look at ways to achieve a happy and fulfilling life...

This book came into my life at a perfect time and SPOKE to me. (and I KNOW that sounds INCREDIBLY corny because I'm NOT usually a self-help, new-agey kinda girl. In fact, I would classify myself more as a skeptical, hard-working, deep thinking realist.) While I've always considered myself to be a "happy" person, it's seemed like life has been conspiring against me the last few years. Aging, illness, family concerns, and financial uncertainty have combined to transform me...

This book is amazing. It is so honest and deeply moving to follow the author on his path to defining, understanding and living the components that make up happiness.

I am very touched, and learned a lot from this book.

This is a simple must read that is not overwhelming at all. I love how the author shares his personal journey about his health, family, and work. Glad he includes God as part of the experience to happiness...

Douglas A Smith delivers such an intimate and honest view of his journey to understanding and striving towards happiness. His book provides a blend of his story with academic research. Well studied and well written, he frequently reminds his readers that he has yet to figure it all out, but continually works to build more happiness in his life. It is this honesty and vulnerability that makes this read so enjoyable.