

# COMMENTS BY DOUGLAS A SMITH

DEPAUW UNIVERSITY,  
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**I love this university.** I can trace the origin of my love to this exact spot, exactly 100 years ago when in May of 1908 my grandparents sat where you do today and began a long, long family tradition of attending ... and sometimes even graduating from .... DePauw.

**I love this university.** I can trace my love back to room 114 in East College and a hot, sunny early September day, the first day of classes in 1966. I am a junior as I head to French Class. I enter room 114 and spot a beautiful woman sitting across the room. She has beautiful blue eyes, a blue and white sun dress on and a blue scarf in her hair. I have noticed you all don't dress like that anymore. I want to sit next to her, but she is sitting in the front row and I don't do front rows ... particularly in French class. I take the chance. I sit next to her. I think maybe she could be my friend. And she could be, would be, has been, is and **will always be** my best friend, my partner, my dear wife of nearly 40 years.

**I love this university.** More recently I can trace my love for this university to room 157 in Percy Julian Science Center where I have had the privilege to teach a winter term course for the past three years ... ***"Choices That Lead to Happiness ... Building a Considered and Consequential Life"***. So with my remaining one minute and 58 seconds I want to share with you three things I have learned about the subject of happiness with the help of 95 wonderful DePauw students, several of whom sit in the audience today.

1. **First, happiness is worthy of pursuit.** I'm not talking about the giddy happiness of kids on the playground. I'm talking about a much more enduring form of happiness, the kind that comes to those who have serenity about the past, optimism about the future and purpose and passion in the present to pursue something they perceive to be meaningful. With this kind of enduring happiness we are more creative and expansive in our thinking, we do better in our careers, we are more tolerant of others, more accepting of diversity and differences, less likely to harm or trespass on others, we have better relationships, better marriages, we have better health ... we actually live longer! Don't let anyone tell you enduring happiness is not worthy of pursuit or of study.

2. **Second, happiness is achievable** ... by almost everyone. Yea, I know, genetics plays a role and so do events that occur in our life that are beyond our control. But you know it is less the events that occur in our lives that lead to happiness or unhappiness than **our response** to those events. Happiness is an attitude, a perspective and those are things we have a large degree of control over.

3. **Third, happiness is only found in one place.** If you are like me you will look in a hundred different places before you find its true source. Yogi Berra said it well: "Whenever we look for something we always find it in the last place we look." You're going to look for happiness in going to the right school, getting the right job, finding the right spouse, having kids, getting promoted, getting promoted again, buying a house, buying a bigger house, buying a bigger house still. All those things are fine, they just are **not** the source of happiness. Happiness is strictly an inside job. Happiness does not depend on **something** or **someone** else. Happiness is a friend that exists deep, deep inside of each of us.

President Abraham Lincoln was a man that most historians would agree suffered from genetic based, chronic depression almost his entire adult life. In the darkest days of the Civil War, in August of 1864 he turned to his diary and wrote these little known words: ***"I desire to so conduct the affairs of this administration such that when it is over and it is time for me to lay down the reins of power, should I have lost every single friend on the face of this earth, I will still have one friend left. And that friend will exist deep, deep inside of me."*** The friend that Abraham Lincoln was writing about was courage, fortitude, grace, gratitude, forgiveness, charity for all ..... It was serenity about the past, optimism about the future and purpose and passion in the present to pursue something he perceived to be meaningful ....the preservation of the Union. The friend that he was writing about, I believe, was enduring happiness.

**I love this university.** It enabled me to find a friend in French Class. More importantly, more profoundly, it enabled me to find a friend deep, deep inside myself.

May it enable you to find the same.