

Be Happier: 10 Things to Stop Doing Right Now

Sometimes the route to happiness depends more on what you *don't* do.



Happiness--in your business life and your personal life--is often a matter of subtraction, not addition.

Consider, for example, what happens when you *stop* doing the following 10 things:

1. Blaming.

People make mistakes. Employees don't meet your expectations. Vendors don't deliver on time.

So you blame them for your problems.

But you're also to blame. Maybe you didn't provide enough training. Maybe you didn't build in enough of a buffer. Maybe you asked too much, too soon.

Taking responsibility when things go wrong instead of blaming others isn't masochistic, it's empowering--because then you focus on doing things better or smarter next time.

And when you get better or smarter, you also get happier.

2. Impressing.

No one likes you for your clothes, your car, your possessions, your title, or your accomplishments. Those are all "things." People may like your things--but that doesn't mean they like you.

Sure, superficially they might seem to, but superficial is also insubstantial, and a relationship that is not based on substance is not a real relationship.

Genuine relationships make you happier, and you'll only form genuine relationships when you stop trying to impress and start trying to just be yourself.

3. Clinging.

When you're afraid or insecure, you hold on tightly to what you know, even if what you know isn't particularly good for you.

An absence of fear or insecurity isn't happiness: It's just an absence of fear or insecurity.

Holding on to what you think you *need* won't make you happier; letting go so you can reach for and try to earn what you *want* will.

Even if you don't succeed in earning what you want, the act of trying alone will make you feel better about yourself.

4. Interrupting.

Interrupting isn't just rude. When you interrupt someone, what you're really saying is, "I'm not listening to you so I can understand what you're saying; I'm listening to you so I can decide what *I* want to say."

Want people to like you? Listen to what they say. Focus on what they say. Ask questions to make sure you understand what *they* say.

They'll love you for it--and you'll love how that makes you feel.

5. Whining.

Your words have power, especially over you. Whining about your problems makes you feel worse, not better.

If something is wrong, don't waste time complaining. Put that effort into making the situation better. Unless you want to whine about it forever, eventually you'll have to do that. So why waste time? Fix it now.

Don't talk about what's wrong. Talk about how you'll make things better, even if that conversation is only with yourself.

And do the same with your friends or colleagues. Don't just be the shoulder they cry on.

Friends don't let friends whine--friends help friends make their lives better.

6. Controlling.

Yeah, you're the boss. Yeah, you're the titan of industry. Yeah, you're the small tail that wags a huge dog.

Still, the only thing you really control is you. If you find yourself trying hard to control other people, you've decided that you, your goals, your dreams, or even just your opinions are more important than theirs.

Plus, control is short term at best, because it often requires force, or fear, or authority, or some form of pressure--none of those let you feel good about yourself.

Find people who want to go where you're going. They'll work harder, have more fun, and create better business and personal relationships.

And all of you will be happier.

7. Criticizing.

Yeah, you're more educated. Yeah, you're more experienced. Yeah, you've been around more blocks and climbed more mountains and slayed more dragons.

That doesn't make you smarter, or better, or more insightful.

That just makes you *you*: unique, matchless, one of a kind, but in the end, just you.

Just like everyone else--including your employees.

Everyone is different: not better, not worse, just different. Appreciate the differences instead of the shortcomings and you'll see people--and yourself--in a better light.

8. Preaching.

Criticizing has a brother. His name is Preaching. They share the same father: Judging.

The higher you rise and the more you accomplish, the more likely you are to think you know everything--and to tell people everything you think you know.

When you speak with more finality than foundation, people may hear you but they don't listen. Few things are sadder and leave you feeling less happy.

9. Dwelling.

The past is valuable. Learn from your mistakes. Learn from the mistakes of others.

Then let it go.

Easier said than done? It depends on your focus. When something bad happens to you, see that as a chance to learn something you didn't know. When another person makes a mistake, see that as an opportunity to be kind, forgiving, and understanding.

The past is just training; it doesn't define you. Think about what went wrong, but only in terms of how you will make sure that, next time, you and the people around you will know how to make sure it goes right.

10. Fearing.

We're all afraid: of what might or might not happen, of what we can't change, or what we won't be able to do, or how other people might perceive us.

So it's easier to hesitate, to wait for the right moment, to decide we need to think a little longer or do some more research or explore a few more alternatives.

Meanwhile days, weeks, months, and even years pass us by.

And so do our dreams.

Don't let your fears hold you back. Whatever you've been planning, whatever you've imagined, whatever you've dreamed of, get started on it today.

If you want to start a business, take the first step. If you want to change careers, take the first step. If you want to expand or enter a new market or offer new products or services, take the first step.

Put your fears aside and get started. Do something. Do *anything*.

Otherwise, today is gone. Once tomorrow comes, today is lost forever.

Today is the most precious asset you own--and is the one thing you should truly fear wasting.



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