



By Gayle Crist,  
Life Coach, Healthy Life  
Planning

## Are You Capable of Creating Your Own Happiness?

When I started my life coaching business—Healthy Life Planning—in 2002, my goal was to help people create healthier, happier lives. I envisioned assisting folks with sticking to healthy lifestyles and achieving the goals they believed would make them happy in their personal and professional lives.

Of course, each person is unique in his/her definition of what's needed for a happy life, but most commonly agree on these:

- A rewarding job that brings financial security
- A safe, comfortable place to live
- A loving, supportive family/partner
- Plenty of friends
- A balance between work and play so there's time for fun hobbies
- The ability to travel and see new places...lots of external things that are mostly about physical happiness in the outside world.

What they don't usually talk about until we're deeper into the coaching process is their **inner world**. About their need for good self-esteem, a sense of purpose, and peace of mind. About making a positive difference in the world. About how their perceptions and attitude may be working for or against them in achieving happiness.

In truth, these are the most important ingredients in the happiness formula. As the 1991 book of the same name by Barry Neil Kaufman says, *Happiness Is a Choice*. In every moment and every situation, you can choose how you perceive what's happening and how you want to react to it—in a way that causes inner turmoil or discontent (or keeps you stuck in sadness or depression) or in a way that results in contentment.

What you may not realize or remember during challenging times is that you have the power to choose contentment every day—through acceptance of things just the way they are and a belief that everything is happening for a reason. And that reason is your personal and spiritual growth.

**Outside things, situations, and people can neither make you happy nor steal your happiness. Happiness is an "inside job" that you're in charge of.** You create it by:

- First, deciding you'll take responsibility for your own happiness
- Getting clear on what you need to feel happy

Gayle Crist, M.S., is a life coach and divorce support coach in Ambler, PA. She helps people balance their personal & professional lives, navigate life transitions such as separation/divorce and job layoff, start a business, get organized so they can complete an important project, or write/edit their first book. Gayle is the author of *How I Met My Second Husband Online at Age 50*. Information about her life coaching services is at [www.healthylifeplanning.com](http://www.healthylifeplanning.com). Contact her at 267-245-3023 or [coach@healthylifeplanning.com](mailto:coach@healthylifeplanning.com).

- Loving yourself enough to feel worthy of doing what makes you happy
- Promising yourself you'll do those things on a regular basis
- Not expecting others to make you happy

This last point is key. As one of my favorite personal growth authors Louise Hay says, "When you have expectations, you set yourself up for disappointment." And, as I've written in other articles in this paper, having expectations of or seeking validation from others are "happiness busters."

So, what are the keys to happiness? An article I keep pasted to my computer lists these items:

- Don't worry about pleasing others
- Work less
- Travel more
- Play with your kids
- Spend more time with your parents
- Say "I love you" more often
- Take a risk
- Stay in the present moment
- Realize how beautiful you are.

And, to that list I've added my personal happiness bringers:

- Dance!
- Sing!

I can fondly remember many times in my life when listening to, dancing to, or singing along with the music I love snapped me right out of sadness, loneliness, or boredom and transported me instantly to a happier place.

What activities do that for you? What makes you feel warm and happy deep inside? Make a list right now of 5

deeply satisfying activities or aspects of your life that lift your spirits, warm your heart, touch your soul.

Examples might be:

- Sitting on your deck or porch with a cup of your favorite tea listening to the birds
- Volunteering at an organization you care deeply about, where you're touching lives in an important way
- Writing in your gratitude journal
- Sharing a meal with a very dear friend
- Taking a walk in the woods or near a body of water and looking for wildlife
- Going on a photography excursion to shoot pictures of beautiful things that catch your eye
- Cooking a special meal for yourself and/or your loved ones
- Calling an old friend on the phone to catch up
- Beautifying your surroundings at home or the office with special items that bring you joy
- Immersing yourself in a creative project that always makes you lose track of time
- Doing anything that piques your curiosity and teaches you something new

I'm sure you could add many more items to this list. When your list is complete, make a solemn promise to yourself that you'll do at least one of those things every single day from now on. No exceptions.

You deserve to be happy, and I believe you know how to create your own happiness (or, as I often say, "make your own fun.") Be your own "fun committee" and Chief Happiness Officer. Then, see how your outlook and situation change. Email to let me know how that went. I'll be rooting for you!

*struggling to get through the divorce process?*

A Divorce Support Coach can help!

Healthy Life Planning

- Moral support getting through this difficult transition
- Advice & resources to ease the process for you & your kids
- Help creating & sticking to a new plan for a happier future
- Cheerleading to stay positive & focused as you move forward



**Gayle Crist, M.S. 267.245.3023**  
**Life Coach & Divorce Support Coach**

**MAKE A HEALTHY NEW START!!**

*Create a game plan for a happier life*

**SAVE 20% on a 30-minute coaching session**

Normally \$50...now just \$40! • Offer good through September 30, 2019