

Thank God It's Monday!

How YOU Can Transform
Your Workplace AND
Rock Your World!



Roxanne Emmerich

Thank God It's Monday:

**How YOU Can Transform Your Workplace
AND Rock Your World**

by

Roxanne Emmerich

Thank God It's Monday:

How YOU Can Transform Your Workplace AND Rock Your World

© MCMXCVII by Roxanne Emmerich CSP, CMC, CPAE

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

To order additional copies of this book, contact:

The Emmerich Group, Inc.,
8500 Normandale Lake Blvd, Suite 180,
Minneapolis, MN 55437 USA
Telephone: 1-800-236-5885
Website: www.EmmerichGroup.com

Ebook by:
Prime Concepts
www.pimeconcepts.com
1-800-946-7804

Contents

Leaping over Tall Buildings	1
She Will Be Loved	4
Suddenly I See: Overcoming Limited Programming	6
PollyAnna on the Happy Bus	11
Wool over YOUR Eyes: Short Cut to Nowhere	13
Pocket Full of Sunshine: Happiness DOES Buy Money.....	16
Clean up the Messes	19
Bliss Buffet	21
Unflippin' Stoppable	23
Be the Miracle	26
Results Rule	28

Leaping over Tall Buildings

"The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man."—George Bernard Shaw

Pay off the mortgage on your house within five years. Unreasonable.
Appear on the Today Show to promote your latest project. Unreasonable.

Get your cranky family members to promise to play nice with one another during the holidays. Are you for real?

What do you call unreasonable?

The problem is that most of us live "reasonable" lives. We look at what we CAN do and use that as a guide to what we WILL do. We shoot wildly to attain mediocrity.

But a life worth living is about setting unreasonable goals, doing unreasonable things to make them happen, making unreasonable requests of people every day to stretch them to their undiscovered greatness.

Now there's nothing wrong with reasonable...it's just that it's so...predictable. Plain. Average. Blah. When it comes time to lay back on your deathbed, what are you going to look back at? You retired with a pension? OK. Big deal.

Why should you settle for mediocrity? Why deprive the people around you of the ability and opportunity to be better than they think they are?

"Reasonable" thinking is a poor foundation for your future. It doesn't bring out the best of who you are. If you want to enliven your teammates, your kids, your friends, here's a surefire way to do it: make unreasonable requests of them.

When a person comes face-to-face with and meets an unreasonable request, sometimes they react with fire in their belly. Sometimes their life is altered forever. Sometimes they take the power and know that life can be all about facing a series of impossibilities that they will work to make possible. They develop a "bring it attitude to most everything. And once they leap over tall buildings with a single bound, they know they can do it again. And again. The normal and mundane is altered forever.

Ernest Shackleton, an explorer best known for his Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, also remembered as the Endurance Expedition of 1914-1916, was a most unreasonable man. Obviously.

2 **Thank God It's Monday!**

When his prolonged recruiting process attempted without success to find people to sign on, he put this unreasonable request in an ad:

Men Wanted: For hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success.

– Sir Ernest Shackleton

Okay then. Who else wants to sign up for minimal pay with little chance of return accompanied with the probability of freezing to death? But the ad worked. More than 5,000 applicants applied for 50 available openings!

Why? Well, maybe because deep inside, we want to be a part of something grand. Reasonable goals are based on what's been done before. But if it has been done before, how significant can doing it again be?

Most organizations set their goals based on what is reasonable: "If we grew eight percent last year, then we probably couldn't do more than 10 percent. And if there is a recession, then... "

That dog won't hunt. If you choose to grow 40 percent, then, and only then, can you do the things necessary to meet and surpass that 40-percent mark. One of my clients, already successful enough that their growth more than doubled their industry average, decided to have a huge growth year in preparation of going public. They grew 73 percent in anticipation of going public the same year the industry chugged along at a "reasonable" six percent. Why? At the beginning of the year, they decided to do it.

The best part of an unreasonable request is that people you are asking cannot give you reasons why they can't do it. They already know that you know that your request is unreasonable. Why? Because you tell them.

When you make reasonable requests, it begs a response of reasons why it can't be done or won't be done. Excuses, stories, and reasons for why it can't be done are invited. "I couldn't do it because the market changed." "I would have, but my vendor didn't meet their deadline." "I didn't even try because... blah, blah, blah..." Open that can of reasonableness and there's no end to the worms you find inside.

When you surround yourself with people who KNOW that you don't accept reasons for failure but only listen to correction plans to get back on course, something amazing happens: Your results will rock!

How can you run a breakthrough organization if you have reasonable goals and

reasonable people? How can you raise a family of contributors if you allow them to be "reasonable" and listen to their sad stories of why they couldn't make something happen without interrupting with a "Well, how CAN you?"

Recessions are a great time for unreasonable people. Unreasonable people choose not to participate in the funk-of-the-moment. They just sell more at premium prices by offering more value. But recessions are actually a great time to pull ahead of the pack.

So, does unreasonable thinking mean you don't think? Do you ignore all the rules about what works in your industry? Do you ignore iron-clad marketing principles, accumulated wisdom? Of course not.

"Unreasonable" means you defy conventional wisdom. You challenge the established orderly way of thinking. You create powerful solutions instead of caving in whenever you hear a reason why you "can't." When someone dares to tell you that they can't, you simply respond, "Okay, how can you?" Repeat this each time they give you a new reason why they can't or repeat one they just gave you. At some point, they'll catch on that you aren't interested in why they can't.

Try this:

- Write a headline on the top of a piece of paper that says, "If I knew it wasn't impossible, I would"... Then take the items on your list, and choose one each day and take immediate, and when possible, massive action on it to make it happen.
- Warn people around you that you are committed to living an unreasonable life. This way they can expect you to make unreasonable requests of them. And they won't be surprised.
- When you hit a roadblock, identify the corrective action to get back on track. Then do it.
- Apply the "High Intention, Low Attachment" rule. Eliminate "attachment" to the result but do EVERYTHING (high intention) to make it happen. Low attachment means that there is no need to get upset with any result. You get what you get. The only question to ask is: "Did I do EVERYTHING I could to make it happen?" If the answer is yes, good for you. No pity party necessary. If not, what are you waiting for?
- Along your journey, make sure you celebrate all your wins. These celebrations will program your brain to understand that you actually can do amazing things. Even if it's just a matter of taking a moment to high-five someone or give a fist-pumping "YES!", don't miss the opportunity to celebrate.

She Will Be Loved

We did it every year. We were snow birds. We went to Florida with the kids to celebrate "spring break."

When the house wasn't already filled with other snowbirds who called first, my husband's parents would host us. "Granny," as she refers to herself, has the skin of a woman 30 to 40 years younger.

This is not your ordinary granny who makes cheesy potatoes, Jello salad and bundt cakes. She's a health nut.

This is a woman who eats...well, nobody really knows what she eats. My best attempt at a description would be bee pollen-filled organic sprouted flaxseed topped with seaweed powder with a side of enzyme supplement. Not really—but close.

She boasts she has NEVER eaten at a fast food restaurant, making her the only human I know who can say that with a straight face.

Imagine her disgust when every year, every morning while there, my kids would wake up at her house demanding that we head to Waffle House.

The Waffle House is a Southern phenomenon. We don't have them in Minneapolis. Granny begs. Granny pleads. "Please, let me make you a healthy breakfast." But no, the kids demand the food that makes our aortas gurgle.

Why do they demand Waffle House? Because the food is extraordinary? Nope, after all, it's only waffles. Is it because the bathrooms are so clean? Nope. Enough said.

We go to Waffle House because as we walk in the door, the chorus from all the employees within range begins. "Mornin'!" "Mornin'!" "Mornin'!" "Mornin'!" "Mornin'!"

Five or six people snap to attention, multitasking with a greeting while still waiting on people. And THAT'S why we go to Waffle House.

Humans have an insatiable craving to have others around them show that they care.

So how do you tap into that power?

You show you care when a customer has a problem and you say, "Oh my

goodness, that's terrible. My name is John and I am going to make sure this is corrected right away. Here's my direct line. We'll keep talking until this is resolved."

You show you care when your teammates have a deadline and even though it's not in your "job description," you stay late and do back-flips to make sure they meet their deadline.

You show you care when you spend time with your kid with NO TELEVISION and listen to them tell you what excites them.

You show you care when you tell your boss who demands more of you than you knew you had that you appreciate his critiques of your work because it helps you improve.

You show you care when you challenge someone who hasn't completed their work with the required excellence by going directly to that person and coaching -- as opposed to whining about that person to coworkers behind their back.

You show you care when every customer walks out saying, "Wow. That was amazing! They always make me feel important there."

And, you show you care when you constantly look for ways to go above and beyond in every project you do, ways to make a meaningful difference and add great value for the sake of the team and the vision that you stand for.

Try this:

- Make a list of 10 ways you could make it more obvious to people around you, from family members to coworkers to customers, that you care.
- Live your list with a fervor.
- Repeat. Keep finding new ways to show people around you that you care.

Suddenly I See: Overcoming Limited Programming

The greatest discovery of my generation is that man can alter his life simply by altering his attitudes of mind. – William James

"I can." "I can't." "I'm not good enough." "Good stuff just happens to me." "I always get sick every winter."

Explanatory styles. We all have them—the filters through which we run all of life's events.

And scientists now know that every thought creates a sudden shift in your body. Just reading the ideas above emotionally triggered your pancreas and your adrenal glands to get busy secreting hormones. Different areas of your brain surged with increased electrical currents, causing neurochemicals to be released. Your liver, not to be left out, began processing enzymes that were not present the moment before. Your thymus gland and spleen sent out not-to-be-ignored messages to the body to shift your immune system. There's more...but you get the idea. Thoughts change your body.

Your mind has a tremendous capacity to change your body and your life.

To maximize your experience of life, it's critical to understand that you change you mind by changing your chosen understanding of things.

A friend of mine said that her rhetoric professor in college explained it this way, "Communication is impossible. If you are explaining to a room of people about a cat, each person in the room will have a totally different interpretation of what "cat" means. Unless you pull a cat out of a bag and show the specific cat, you have not communicated."

It's clear we all have filters that we run things through. Even more fascinating is that every person has the ability to reprogram the filters through which they hear things—but first they need to have a clue that what they're hearing is never exactly what is said.

Every thought and image and experience that comes to you is instantly filtered. A college professor writes the same note on the top of the paper of three different students, "There is so much more here."

One student thinks, "Oh my goodness. I'm going to flunk this course. He thinks I missed the point entirely! I always seem to miss what's important. I'd better start packing my bags because I'm never going to make it in college. I'll probably end up working at Uncle Pete's factory, marrying a mean wife and raising ugly,

delinquent kids.”

Another thinks, “He’d like me to explore other parts of this. I’m going to see him after class on Wednesday and tell him I’d like to write another paper on those areas. Maybe he’s thinking he wants to make sure I get an A in the course by going deeper.”

Yet another reads into it, “I have really challenged my professor’s thinking with my paper. I can see how I opened his eyes to there being so much more that he hadn’t even thought of before.”

The list of interpretations in endless!

It is through those filters, though, that great things or complete disasters can happen.

It plays out in every family and in every organization.

A supervisor challenges one of his employees to be more thorough on a project. The employee’s brain, based upon his explanatory style, can come up with a whole range of possible interpretations: “He never likes what I do. Isn’t it ever good enough?” “He’s just picky. I’ll ignore this, and he’ll just let it slide.” “He really wants me to win on this project. I sure appreciate his insights. I’m going to ask him more questions. I think he sees that I’m management material.”

What’s so fascinating about filters is that each individual tends to have a certain “filter twist” through which they run all things—and it’s completely different from every other person’s filter twist. That twist is largely dependent on how they feel about themselves based on the key messages they have received about how lovable or unlovable they are.

They can take one element and twist the message so that it doesn’t even resemble the intention of the presenter. Once, when giving a speech, I covered something I’ve presented more than a thousand times. I talked about how a vision of greatness is so powerful when it comes to enrolling the hearts, minds, and souls of a team. I described how most companies miss the mark when it come to creating and articulating their vision that creates a “cause.”

When I finished my speech, a gentleman came up, slapped me on the back and said, “We have something in common. I used to be an ophthalmologist, too!” Holy smokes! I think this boy took a mental vacation! He definitely was listening through a filter that heard one word, “vision” and defined it through his occupation—missing the entire point!

8 Thank God It's Monday!

Here's what we know about filters. If an individual grew up with a parent, a teacher, a nun, whomever, telling them they were not OK, then when you give them input on something, they will most likely hear it as an attack and blame you for being the person who is wrong in making the request. "How could you be so insensitive!" is what goes on in their mind.

So let's get honest here. If your parents were June and Ward Cleaver and your brother was Wally, and nobody in your family gave you hurtful messages, then it was one of your teachers or some other person who got to you with a "You're not OK" message. My experience has been that NOBODY escapes this little life mess. That's why God invented teenagers. To mess with and be messed with in return.

Our brains, addicted to drama as they are, will hear the most innocent of remarks as accusing, complaining, or blaming. We distort it to the point that it feeds the unhappiness that we're addicted to.

When something happens or a comment happens, people run it through filters.

Here are some common ones:

"Nobody appreciates me."

"I'm not good enough."

"You can't trust anyone."

"I'll never have money."

"I'm not lovable.:"

"Life is hard."

"I can't do anything right."

People have a way of knocking down other humans. As my friend Terry Slattery says, "Most people spend 95 percent of their time in a 'not-OK chair'—they're tired, hungry, angry for whatever reason. The way they try to get to the "OK chair" is by putting someone else in the 'not-OK chair.'" Source if this is Terry's original material.

People who don't feel good about themselves make a point of putting down others. So if you've lived for more than a week, somebody's already gotten to you. There are plenty of people in their own private "not-OK" chairs who want to put you there instead.

When Sherri tells you she needs a report by Tuesday, what she means is that she needs the report by Tuesday—not that you're not trusted that she'd reminding you, that you have to turn it in early so she can check because she doesn't trust you, or any other fabrication. Those are the "made up thoughts" that we attach to otherwise meaningless requests and facts.

But YOU, and only you, can choose your explanatory style. Without an interruption to a negative explanatory style, you may interpret someone telling you the sky is blue as, "Hey, now you expect me to change the color of the sky! What up?" or "That must mean it's going to be a bad day because I always have bad days when the sky is blue."

Most conflict in the workplace, in marriages, and in any relationship is a result of someone's filter misconstruing something as worse than it is.

What's shocking is that the person with the damaged and negative filter can fight for hours, days, and months for their point that the other person is wrong—despite the fact that the other person never said or thought the matter in question! You've been there?

So, that's why we only see world peace on T-shirts!

The good news: once you know you have a filter, you can change it for a powerful shift in results. There is no longer the need to hear the worst, imagine the worst, and therefore, fulfill the promise of making the worst come to be.

Try this:

- As an experiment, for every substantial conversation you have, write down the exact words the person said. Go back to the person and ask, what I think you said was, "Blah, blah, blah." Is that correct?
- Then tell that person what your interpretation is of what they meant. Ask them if you interpreted correctly or if there was anything that you put into it that wasn't there. When they make adjustments, again, repeat those and ask if you heard them correctly.
- Make a log of the findings of misinterpretations. You will undoubtedly find a pattern. For example:
 - You assumed they didn't like you
 - You assumed they were saying you were doing something wrong when you weren't
 - You assumed that they were trying to say something to hurt you.
- Set the intention that whenever you hear a request or a thought from another person, you will run it through the best possible filter, the one that says they are on your side and want the best for you. (Decide to implement reverse paranoia)

10 Thank God It's Monday!

- Breathe. Life just became infinitely better. You're going to have more success in life and in relationships. Why? Because your filter said so

PollyAnna on the Happy Bus

Recently, I drove down to my son's college to take him to lunch. We had a hoot. If there is anything better than having a person you pushed through the birth canal become one of your best friends who intrigues and stimulates you with great thoughts and inspirations. If so, I can't imagine what that is.

He chose the restaurant. Perkins. Why? Because they have huge breakfasts in the afternoon. What could be better for my son, the culinary black hole.

From this kid, I learned one of the biggest lessons in life about explanatory styles. He seems to be walking on a permanent cloud of incredible success in so many areas of life—great grades, great friends, great fun.

As the waitress left with the order, he turned to me with his eyebrows up as if he just saw the Red Sea split in two. He said, "Mom, I just knew they would have exactly what I wanted for breakfast and that thing I ordered had it all—pancakes with blueberries, fried potatoes, a meat, and eggs! All I had to do was ask. Mom, that's how my life works! I just think about what I want and it comes easily. Things just work out for me."

I was floored. Didn't he know that you can pretty much go anywhere to order a breakfast and they have a breakfast meat, eggs, pancakes, and whole wheat toast, for goodness sakes? His is a double major, including physics, so he's clearly not a lightweight in learning how life works. Why, he made the Dean's List. He's no dumbbo.

But I must be. What I learned from him is that the reason his life is so gracefully filled with successes, fun, friends, and happiness is that his filter sees it all that way. He's on the happy bus and Pollyanna is his date!

If he gets a setback, he explains it away as a temporary challenge. Let's face it: If they didn't have pancakes, we would have had to figure out how to get them down the street. He expects things to work out, so, in his worldview, they do!

Yep, his mother—who might instead have whined that they never have the food on the menu I want—just learned a powerful lesson from her 19-year old.

Martin Seligman, author of *Learned Optimism*, has done profound research that shows that optimists, those with a positive explanatory style, tend to be far more successful than those who interpret events as negative and permanent.

His research show that successful people explain good things as positive and

12 Thank God It's Monday!

permanent: "That's how it always is for me."

They discuss less optimal results as not likely to happen again: "That's just not like me."

Wool over YOUR Eyes: Short Cut to Nowhere

Julie was a pile person. Her office was scattered with big and small piles of papers, files, magazine articles she had clipped to read later. Each pile represented a different project. Each project was late. Piles are procrastination. Piles are frustrating. Piles remind you that you have a terrible time when it comes to hitting the ground and running. No surprise then when Julie couldn't complete her projects on time.

One day, her boss said, "I don't care how you do it, but it's time to change your habits. I can't have more of your project delayed. I can't have you miss any more deadlines. When you do, it leads to a chain reaction down the line. It makes you look bad and, worse, it makes me look bad."

So did Julie take the advice? Hardly. She announced to her work team that she was going to go back to school. "I'm leaving the company in a month for a great opportunity," she said. Her field of study? "Botany." Something she always wanted to study.

Casey, a two-year management trainee, had started off with the ambition of a presidential candidate. He was going places and he let people know it. But then the real world intruded. Work was a lot harder than he imagined. When it came time for his annual review, it was no surprise to anyone – except maybe to him – that he scored very poorly on his quality of work. "Your analytical skills need to align properly with your workload," his boss had written.

So did Casey go back to the drawing board and rethink his work habits. Hardly. He cut and ran. A few weeks later, he posted his resume on the Internet. Then he announced his resignation. He bragged to his co-workers that he had found a better opportunity, one that he could scarcely afford to pass up.

Andrea, a translation specialist, had a reputation around the office. Her nickname was "The Troublemaker" because of her repeated run-ins with her coworkers. In her mind, they were all jerks and losers. Rude and untrustworthy. Backstabbers and villains. Gossip was her tool of choice. Hurt feelings was the angel dust she spread everywhere.

After months of repeated run-ins, she figured a way to solve her reign of unpopularity. Andrea resigned, she told everyone, to "travel to exotic places." It was something, she said with a snooty little smile that "I always wanted to do."

In every case, each took the Shortcut to Nowhere—Express Train. Each was receiving critical feedback that they had issues that needed to be addressed. That's not so surprising. Humans ALWAYS have issues that need work.

Each had someone who cared enough to confront them with an opportunity for improvement.

Each negated the intervention and decided to run from themselves, instead of delving into fixing the part of themselves that kept each from succeeding. Each thought they could change the results by changing the circumstances.

There's a problem: when you take the shortcut to nowhere fast, you tend to get there, fast—and stay there. Casey, Julie, and Andrea will no doubt have many repeated announcements to coworkers of opportunities they "just can't pass up" in their lives as they spiral downward into careers that offer them less responsibility, less reward, less advancement and yes, less pay.

As the old saying goes, "Everywhere you go, there you are." You just can't outrun yourself.

You can rearrange the furniture on the Titanic all you want, but it's about to get really messed up and uncomfortably wet to sit on.

My buddy Keith Cunningham talks of the "buffet line syndrome" Life is like a buffet line, Keith says. When you're standing at the end of the line, it seems so long people jump out of line. They quickly find the other buffet lines are longer, too. So they jump back into the first buffet line, which is now longer, and they've lost valuable time. They stay in that line until they can't stand it anymore, then jump back out...only to have to get back in again at a later time.

You know people with this syndrome?

Julie will eventually have to make money after school and can move to another career...but she'll be sure to struggle there as well, because a certain level of organization is necessary for any person who has a career. She learned nothing from an opportunity to learn something.

Casey is sure to discover that detail, quality, and understanding his work will be necessary to succeed at his next job, too. He will be hearing similar words, if not the same ones, on his next performance review from yet another boss who, in Casey's opinion, fails to see his brilliance.

Andrea will soon find herself running into "jerks" even as she travels. Imagine that! Some will ruin her trip. And they'll be at her next job, too! Hmmm. Could it be that it's her own filter causing her to see people as jerks?

Have you heard about the 5-year-old who asked his mother as she drove him to

kindergarten, "Mommy, where are all the buttholes and jerks today?" Mom said, "Oh honey, they're only out when your dad drives."

Until you dance with your devil and commit with all our heart to break through whatever holds you back, your life will be like the movie "Groundhog Day." You'll repeat the same day over and over with the same results.

Running from yourself is the fastest way to secure a mediocre life. The only way to the other side of your struggles is to sprint straight through them.

Try this:

- Openly interview your best friend, your colleagues, your boss, and others who know you well. Before you start, let them know you want complete honesty from them and that you will listen to them without getting angry or defensive. (That's a promise, of course, so make sure to put on your big-boy pants before you start.)
- Ask them to fill in the blank, "If I (blanked) really well, I would have far better results in my life." Ask them what two or three things could fill in that blank. Then, without defensiveness, ask them to tell you more about each of those areas until you fully understand.
- Whenever someone tells you of a weakness they perceive in you, receive it as a beautiful gift of their caring and a powerful opportunity for clarity about what you will choose to tackle and fix.
- Realize that the problem is rarely "out there." Some people who hated their jobs have reported an epiphany that caused them to turn on a dime and love their jobs. The epiphany? That their unrest had nothing to do with the job and everything to do with their own outlook, everything to do with being unhappy with whatever life handed them. Alternatively, people who dislike their jobs and find different jobs learn quickly that they hate the same things about the new job. Living with gratitude and joy is an inside job.
- Surround yourself with people who "stick it out." Eliminate all resumes from your selection pool that have a track record of changing jobs and locations every few years. Choose friends who stick it out, or they will support you into a pointless pattern of bouncing between buffet lines. Real friends tell you the truth and help you stay in the buffet line.

Pocket Full of Sunshine: Happiness DOES Buy Money

You are as happy as you decide to be.

-- Anonymous

Every business, every school, every church, every organization has them—the people who are CRAAAAAABBY—the type of people who would, as the old saying goes, complain if they were hung with a new rope.

I spotted one the other day. Posted in her desk area was a piece of paper with a lovely little message that made her life view very clear: “Life sucks and then you die.” My goodness, let me rush home and cross-stitch that gem on a pillow.

That pretty much tells it all. No raise, no opportunity to work on a fulfilling project, no promotion, no removal of other “losers” who bug her would solve the internal unhappiness that she’s committed herself to. Safe bet her life will be even more miserable next year!

And the latest findings on happiness...

The University of California’s Sonia Lyumbomirsky, author of *The How of Happiness*, says that half of a person’s happiness is predetermined by their genes. That’s a lot...but that’s not all. Ten percent of a person’s happiness is based on that person’s life circumstances—their job, their kid’s behavior, whether their spouse gives them foot massages...okay, so now you know what makes me happy. I digress.

That leaves 40 percent of a person’s happiness that is based on things they can influence—the intentional activities and thoughts you choose that either increase or decrease happiness. We have the opportunity to control 40 percent of our happiness!

So if you’re busily blaming life’s circumstances, stuff a sock in it. Life’s circumstances are NOT what are making you unhappy. You make you unhappy.

Now, what about happiness and money? Will money make you happy? More than 200 research studies show that money does not make people happy. Surprised?

However, research shows that people who are happy do earn more—more than \$750,000 in their lifetime when compared to those who aren’t happy.

So maybe money doesn’t buy happiness...but happiness apparently buys money! These studies have found that people who are happy are also more relaxed,

peaceful, and fulfilled. Go figure. Those darn happy people. They have it all.

What about the antithesis of happiness—depression? One out of five women in America, according to statistics, are on antidepressants. More than 118 million prescriptions for antidepressants were written last year. Now, THAT is depressing.

While researchers are finding that a fair amount of depression has to do with the influence of unhealthy foods on brain chemistry, the astonishing fact is that a good share of our unhappiness has to do with the way you choose to think—how you frame events and conversations in your life.

It is how you interpret events, people, and things on a daily basis that makes the difference.

Is a rainy day a good thing or a bad thing? It's neither. It's neutral. YOU decide if it's good or bad. AND you decide that about all things in your life—that is what determines a fair amount of your mental state of happiness.

When you interpret things as "good" instead of "bad," you must develop a habit of interpreting things as good. That changes the dendrites in your brain; so suddenly your brain finds it easier to interpret things as good. You have rewired your brain for happiness.

When we become clear that most of life's events are neutral and waiting for us to attach meaning, we regain the ability to find happiness.

What is one of the best ways to create happiness according to happiness experts? Find meaningful work. Even better, they say: make your work meaningful!

Florna, a 50-year-old woman whose butt was significantly large in proportion to her other body parts (sorry, but I know of no other way to delicately put this), was a bathroom cleaning specialist. (I'm actually not sure what her title was, but that's what she was doing when I met her, so that's what I'll call her.)

Florna was engaged in her work at an airport bathroom. Now, let's be honest here. This is NOT the job her momma wanted her to grow up to have. THIS job was an excuse to be bumming.

But Florna was not bumming. She was humming.

Florna was a hummer. You know. Like a bumblebee-type hummer. I found that entertaining as I used the facilities while she cleaned. Frankly, it made me smile. Then, when I came out of the stall, she broke into song. Okay. I'll admit it. It made me want to sing too. She knew that. It was part of Florna's game.

Florna didn't stop there. She shuffled toward me as she sang, gesturing for me to sing along. Why not? As I washed my hands, she leapt to reach for my paper towel while she gyrated her abundant hips to "Start spreadin' the news...I'm leaving today..."

That's right. A woman who worked at the airport, cleaning toilets, was singing "New York, New York" to me as I came out of the stall. And I wasn't special. THIS, I could see, is what Florna does.

THIS, ladies and gentlemen, is a human who puts meaning in her work. This girlfriend is spreading the joy as she's mopping the grunge.

Contrast Florna with the millions of people who spend a good chunk of their day complaining: "Nobody tells me what to do." "Nobody appreciates me." "Jeffrey got a bigger raise and he doesn't even know how to do mail campaigns." The more they complain, the more they need to look for evidence why the world is treating them unfairly.

Now they have an excuse for not giving their all. They need to find more complaints to justify their previous complaints. That's how it works for complainers. If they stopped complaining, they'd have to admit that THEY had the problem in making up their previous complaints.

So, the question is yours. Do you choose joy or not?

Try this:

- Make a list of all the things about your job that you can be grateful for. (My boss isn't a screamer. I get a paycheck every two weeks. I hardly ever have to work on a weekend. I get opportunities to learn. My teammates tell me when I'm a doofus...so I'm being coached to grow as a person.) Make the list long. Just decide to keep writing for at least five minutes...keep writing...
- Make a list of your five biggest complaints.
- For each complaint, reframe it. For example, "My boss micromanages me." can be reframed to "My boss cares enough about me and about keeping me out of trouble to step into my work when I need help."
- How can YOU create rituals of joy at work? At home? Try it for a week. See if suddenly the world doesn't miraculously seem to be filled with nicer people!

Clean up the Messes

You're human. Can we assume that? If so, you'll always make mistakes. You can count on that.

You'll miss deadlines. You'll disappoint people by not meeting their expectations and failing to live up to your commitments.

If there are people who evolved beyond their ability to display complete integrity at every waking moment, I haven't yet met one.

Knowing that, it is critical to sustaining great relationships that you possess the ability to clean up your messes as you make them.

Ron, a marketing specialist, missed deadline after deadline. Suddenly, his entire team felt that he had let them down. They began to work around him whenever they could.

Sharon, a loan processor, repeatedly made mistakes in the loan documents she handled. Nobody ever closed a loan without having to spend extra and wasteful time checking her work. Sharon couldn't figure out why she wasn't getting promoted or earning bonuses like the others. After all, she had been at the company longer than most of the others.

Tim, a teenager, told his mom that as a contribution to the family, he would weed the flower garden every week during the summer. But more often than not, he skipped a week. Soon, dandelions outnumbered daffodils.

All of these flaws, taken from the viewpoints of Ron, Sharon, and Tim, aren't very big. Heck, they did many other tasks quite well.

What each of them missed is this: they consistently defied the trust of the people around them. But relationships are built on trust. Without that foundation of trust, there is no basis for a relationship.

What each of them didn't understand is that they breached the trust each time they didn't do what they said they would do. And, of course, they never bothered to come back and clean up the mess.

A cleanup has two parts—acknowledge that the results are not OK, and understand that there must be a commitment to take corrective action.

So when Ron missed a deadline, he owed it to his team to go to them and say, "I'm so sorry I missed that deadline. There's no excuse. It shouldn't have happened. I'm putting a tickler system in place to remind myself earlier in the

process so it won't happen again." (He is acknowledging and explaining his commitment to make corrections so it won't happen again.)

Sharon should say to her boss, "I can see that I made mistakes in this document, and I know that's not acceptable. I will put a reminder at my desk to checklist each document before I submit it to make sure I have each of these as accurate. I want you to be able to trust me."

Tim can mend his problem with his parents by saying, "I blew it. I know we had a deal, and I didn't follow through. That's not okay with me either because I want you to know you can always trust me. I'm going to set a deadline that I will make sure the garden is weeded by each Saturday afternoon."

People will always make mistakes. But others will forgive us if we simply come clean and show we understand that we did not demonstrate integrity in our actions and that we care enough to fix the situation.

When we don't, not only do others lose faith in us, we lose faith in ourselves. In the end, every agreement that isn't properly followed through ultimately weakens our own self esteem. Our self-esteem tumbles into a downward spiral which, once begun, leads to more unkept promises and an even worse sense of self worth.

A short message of "I blew it and it isn't okay. Here's what I'll do to correct it." is all people need to hear to restore faith in us and to have us restore faith in ourselves.

Inspired action:

- Make a list of everyone who is hurt by an obligation that you recently did not fulfill. Tell each of them that you know you blew it and it's not OK. Tell them what corrective action you plan to take so it won't happen again.
- Clean up your old messes. A simple call to a sister saying, "I know I was mean to you growing up because I didn't know any better. I just want you to know I know that I now understand it was not the right way to treat you."
- If someone doesn't forgive you or responds with a "Yep, that was a bummer, but that's OK and I'm glad you brought it up," understand that you still did you part in cleaning up the mess. You are not responsible for another person's reaction. The important thing is you tried.

Bliss Buffet

A Cherokee elder taught his grandchildren through stories:

"A fight is going on inside me. It is a terrible fight. It is between two wolves: One wolf represents fear, anger, envy, sorry, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other stands for joy, peace, love, hope, sharing, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, friendship, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. The same fight is going on inside you, and inside every other person, too."

One of the grandchildren asks, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee replies simply, "The one you feed."

Unemployment. Recession. A towering pile of credit card debt.

Looks bad, doesn't it?

How you interpret each will be highly predictive of the results you get. You've probably heard that most fortunes are made during recessions. Those who yank their head beneath the hard shell of the word "recession" tend to feel the full-blown negative experience of that crisis.

But there are others who say, "Thank you for sharing with us the fallout that comes from a recession. But we're not signing up for that."

They then outsell, out service, out innovate and pull ahead of their competition in remarkable ways. They make themselves invaluable, even during the worst of times (when it matters more).

Life will always have ups and downs—it's the nature of our existence. It's how you choose to deal with those setbacks that will determine the results of your life.

Difficulties seldom defeat people; lack of faith in ourselves usually does it.

Gandhi once said, "When I despair, I remember that all through history the ways of truth and love have always won. There have been tyrants, and murderers; and for a time they can seem invincible. But in the end they always fall. Think of it. Always."

You choose which wolf to feed. Better darn well choose wisely.

Try this:

22 Thank God It's Monday!

- Make a list of the limitations you have bought into because it is conventional wisdom. Circle a few that you are going to choose to use as your motivator instead. Use these negative inclinations to help you overcome.
- Regardless of the circumstances, decide to feed the good wolf. This will do more to help you get great results, regardless of the circumstances, than the bad wolf can ever do for you.

Unflippin' Stoppable

He knew his whole life what he wanted to do. He wanted to act in movies. He saw movies as a vehicle not only to escape reality, but also as a way to inspire people to overcome their personal obstacles.

He constantly visited with movie agents. If he had 700 meetings with them, he was thrown out 700 times. He was told by some that he looked stupid. Others didn't even bother to tell him anything.

Most people with his dream would have quit.

Once, though, after one more rejection, he stayed overnight at the site and, because of his insistence (he tried again in the morning), he eventually received his first offer.

He was cast as a thug. His job was to get beat up. He was only on camera for 20 seconds. Not exactly a breakthrough. But at least it was something.

He imagined it might be the beginning of a wonderful acting career. But it wasn't. His rejections continued.

He couldn't pay for heat in his apartment. His wife screamed at him to get a job. He didn't listen.

One day he went to the public library because it was warm. There, in the reading room, he read the work of Edgar Allen Poe.

He said, "Poe got me out of myself. I learned how I could touch other people and help others."

He decided to write a script.

He sold a script called Paradise Alley for \$100. For him, it was a ton of money for him. But that, too, didn't lead to anything.

By then, he was so broke he hocked his wife's jewelry. After that, she really hated him. But his dog still loved him. He loved his dog, but he couldn't feed him.

He stood outside a liquor store trying to sell his dog for \$50. He ended up selling it for \$25. He cried as he took the money.

Two weeks later he was watching a fight and got an idea. He wrote for 20 straight hours. He was shaking at the end because he was so excited.

24 *Thank God It's Monday!*

He tried to sell his new script. He received rejections. People said, it's predictable. It's sappy. It's a cliché, man.

He wrote down all the things they said and decided he would read them the night of the Academy Awards when he won an Oscar.

Still nobody would buy his script.

Finally, he met some people who actually liked his script. They offered him \$125,000. A jackpot for a guy with no money at all. He agreed to the deal – but with one provision. He said, "Just one thing, I have to star in it."

They said, "You're a writer." But he knew he wanted to play a starring role in his own money.

The producers didn't like the idea. They wanted Ryan O'Neal.

The scriptwriter left with no money and no deal.

The producers came back with a counteroff. They offered the man \$250,000 if he agreed not to star in his own money. Again, he answered, "No."

Then they offered \$325,000 as long as he would stay out of camera range.

"No."

They compromised. They were afraid to take the risk. They didn't think it would work with him in the starring role, but they loved the script. So they paid him only \$35,000, but at least he was allowed to play the lead role.

For two days, he went back to the liquor store hoping to find the guy who bought his dog.

On the third day, a guy walked by with his dog. He offered to buy him back because he missed his dog so much. The guy told him there was no way he would sell the dog.

The man offered more money. After some negotiations, they had a deal. Sylvester Stallone bought his dog back for \$15,000.

True story. The movie Rocky cost \$1 million to make. After it opened in 1976, Rocky made more than \$100 million

The movie earned 10 Academy Award nominations and won three.

P.S. The dog in the movie is actually Sly's real dog.

Difficulties seldom defeat people; lack of faith in themselves usually does it for them.

Most people are taken out of life's game by the little things. What ever is inconvenient or uncomfortable is accepted as a reason to give up.

Are you willing to be unstoppable in your attempts to get what you want? Do you stand by your principles so much so that you are willing to take huge risks for what you know is right?

Try this:

- Write down something that you want to commit yourself to accomplish.
- Make an oath to yourself that nothing and nobody can get in the way of achieving what you want. (Even if you never get it, you will live with such power that the other blessings that come as a result will be powerful, too.)
- Make a list of the things that, in the past, haven't taken you "out of the game." Each one of us has patterns that we repeat about why we give up. Whether it's not enough time, questioning whether you really want it, or it's just too hard, chances are that your life has consisted of a repeated pattern of the same trigger switch that takes you out of the game. Decide to conquer that pattern. That and only that is the way you are gonna fly now.

Be the Miracle

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other as though everything is a miracle.

-- Albert Einstein

The invention of the television—a miracle. Man walking on the moon—a miracle. A railroad speeding across the nation—a miracle.

As every one of these ideas was pondered, there were many who said, "That can't be done." And yet each one happened. And remember that each day, thousands of other miracles happen. Wonderful stuff. Amazing stuff. Stuff that often doesn't make the 6 p.m. news on TV, but they are miracles nonetheless.

Whether it's putting a man on the moon, meeting an "impossible" deadline, or exceeding a stretch sales goal against all odds, we thrive when we commit to create our own miracles. Working toward our own miracles stretches us in every way to be more than we have been in the past. And to pull it off, we can never shrink back.

What if you lived like you it was your responsibility to create miracles?

Besides, who wants to go to work and shoot for ... mediocrity?

"I'll meet you in the middle." "Let's reach for the middle." "It's lonely at the middle." None of those even sound good.

There is a gnawing in our souls to be a part of something great. Great philosophers write about the desire to be great. Of course, the only other great desire, they say, is the human desire for sex. But that's one chapter that I'll save for another book. (Once you digress down that road, it's hard to get your attention back.) So let's stick to the desire to be great.

We are all called to make an impact. To shake things up.

And then the rational mind interferes. You can find 100 people who will tell you something is impossible for every one who thinks it can be done. And those 100 are absolutely right, as far as their own horizons are concerned, because at their level of understanding of how life works, it is impossible.

Possibility thinking is available to all of us. But it's only used by a few. The ego preserves a feeling of safety by refusing to stretch our understanding of what is possible. But safety is an illusion. From our health to our money to our relationships, every thing can change in an instant, no matter how safe it feels

right now. History books are filled with examples.

So let's get over the illusion of safety. It's not real. If you think it is, you're diagonally parked in a parallel universe. Better park it right.

The only thing that is real is that you are here, in this time and place, and you have this moment to dream big and live life to the max.

So dream about miracles. Decide to create them. Plan on making them happen. Don't contaminate your energy or your dream by listening to those who will tell you it can't be done. They haven't yet learned this secret—that miracles are given to those who choose them.

Try this:

Look for an opportunity for an "impossible" challenge that would inspire you—one that stirs butterflies in your belly just thinking about it.

Ask yourself, "Who would I have to become to make that happen?"

List the action steps you would need to take to make that happen. Transfer them into your calendar and decide to meet each as a commitment.

Once you've stretched your "miracle creation" muscle, keep raising the bar to find new and better miracles to pursue. Make sure each "miracle" inspires you as it will be the fuel that keeps you focused.

Results Rule

"I didn't have enough time." "Nobody told me." "The competition undercut our pricing." "I couldn't get that done; I had a hang nail." "The power went out and I got trapped on the escalator." Get my point?

Excuses. You've heard them all before—the stories and excuses people use when they don't get results.

Excuses are the food of the weak. Some think an excuse justifies everything, and they always find one to suit them. "He's just got more experience." "She gets all the breaks." "I think I exfoliated too much in the shower this morning." Enough, already. Gee whiz.

Successful people don't make excuses. Successful leaders don't allow them. Sure, people will make mistakes and miss deadlines. Humans aren't perfect. But when you blow it, there is only one acceptable response: "I blew it and I'm taking corrective action so it will never happen again!"

This means avoiding the most common excuse, which is (drum roll, please): "It's not my fault." People use it everywhere. "The school failed my child; it's not my fault." "The weatherman was wrong; it's not my fault." "The traffic was terrible; it's not my fault." "The client was impossible; it's not my fault." A bad result plus an excuse does not equal a good result! Only good results equal good results.

RESULTS RULE! If you need to jump over tall buildings in a single bound, start backing up to give yourself enough runway.

One high-tech company did excuses so well they could have written the book.

The sales manager asked me to speak to 160 of his sales reps on the topic of change. That seemed like an easy enough task. There was only one problem: they didn't need a speech on change. But I didn't know that at first.

Preparing a talk, I always ask each leadership team what's working and what's not. Usually I get straight answers. Not this time. It was obvious on the morning of the speech that something big was going down.

On the way into the meeting room, I walked past one of the angriest looking men I had ever seen. He scared me.

"Who's the guy in the red polo shirt?" I asked a sales manager. The color drained from her face as she whispered, "I can't believe you spotted Herb. I told my

husband, 'If they ever find me dead, it's Herb!'" She didn't laugh. Neither did I. I was now getting more nervous than a Star Trek fan talking to an Earth girl.

Odd circumstances sometimes have a way of getting odder. Herb sat off to my left in the last row of seats. That's the place where the disengaged always sit. Glancing at him, I thought, this can't get any more awkward. But it did.

The meeting began. The CEO stood behind the podium, talking completely from his head and not at all from his heart. He read aloud his PowerPoint slides. His voice was a dreadful monotone. "These are the new territories for this year," he droned. "The new product releases include..." He might as well have been a mime. Imagine Al Gore on Demerol.

He was disengaged—and, not so coincidentally, his audience was, too. Without the slightest inflection of voice, he continued, "And last year, we had half the sales we had the previous year."

SALES DROPPED IN HALF?! YIKES! To me, this would signal a problem. Not so hard to connect the dots on this one. Yet not a single eyebrow was raised. No one person looked concerned. All I saw was what I would call emotional constipation!

The CEO seemed oblivious to the reaction or lack thereof. He continued with a miserable attempt at humor. "Last year we lost half of our sales force. Must be mad cow disease."

No chuckles. No smirks. Dead silence.

At this point, I wondered if I might be lucky enough to have the ground swallow me up so I wouldn't have to follow him.

They didn't need a speech on change. They needed to fix this downward spiraling mess—and fast!

The CEO finished. People seemed glad. Not me. Hardly.

Without even a break, he segued right into my introduction. Perfect! An audience filled with people with full bladders contemplating the end of the world, and I have a prepared speech on a topic that could evoke the use of notepads as weapons.

I had to do something dramatic. I thought about digging into my bag of circus tricks, but I've lost my edge since that nasty Jello-juggling accident.

Here is what I said:

"Suppose I divided this room into two groups—on my left, put those of you who would do whatever it takes to turn this business around, and on the right, those with résumés flying through the fax machine on a regular basis. I have a funny feeling we'd be a little—lopsided." I leaned right. I paused, listening for the cocking of triggers. Nothing. I continued.

"But the reality of life is that we face the same lessons over and over again until we learn from them. So you can leave, but you must own the fact that each of you created this result. If you go someplace else, you'll get the same result if you haven't learned the lesson."

They looked at me like a dog staring at a ceiling fan.

"So please—give me two hours of playing as if. Let's act as if we could fix this. Then, you can go back to normal after that if you choose, but let's see what's possible."

A few heads nodded. Pity for me? Maybe, but still no cocking of the triggers, so I rolled on.

"Write down the things that are wrong with this company." All heads turned downward. Pencils were smoking. Novels could have been written if I gave them the time.

They covered their answers as they wrote. Hmm. Clearly, this wasn't the safest place to tell the truth. Wonder what happened to the last guy that spoke out? He's probably working as a snake bite tester in Ecuador or something.

"Now, please tell someone near you what needs to change." Jaws became tight. Faces became animated. All conversations were punctuated with passionate hand gestures.

"Good. We have that out. Now, it's imperative that you NEVER complain about what isn't working again. Successful people talk about what they will create instead of complaining about what is. Their language advances the situation instead of stalling it. Now what do you want to change?"

One by one, they stood to say what needed to change. Although they didn't always stay positive, ideas flowed.

"I'm hearing repeats. Is there anything new?"

Nothing.

Then hearing nothing new, let's get busy. Ground rule number one: from this point on, only state things in the positive. Every comment must be about a solution—not a regurgitation of what isn't working. Companies that allow people to whine about what isn't working get stuck in what isn't working. Once in that trap, there's no way out." It's like when you plug up the toilet at your friend's house. You're trapped. There's no way out. You gotta step out of the bathroom and explain it.

"Powerful companies have all people aligned in the same direction toward a powerful vision of an extraordinary result."

I took them through a 15-minute exercise to develop their vision. The second they hit on their vision they KNEW they loved it and KNEW they could do it.

In that moment, EVERYTHING changed.

The responsibility fell onto the shoulders of EVERY person in the room. It was electrifying.

The sales manager got on the horn to the president, who, unbeknownst to me, had bee-lined it to his hotel room bed with "the flu." More likely the "sales report flu," I thought to myself. The manager was persistent with him. "Bring a puke pail if you must. You've got to see this."

We continued. One guy in the room interjected, "These ideas are great, but we have to have some concrete goals."

"Okay, let's create them. Who wants to start?," I asked, wandering out onto the plank.

"We must grow at least 20 percent," one guy volunteered.

"Twenty percent, are you kidding me? We have to grow at least 50 percent," the guy next to him said.

"Fifty percent! No way. We have to grow at least 100 percent," a woman in front chimed in. They were tossing out numbers like The Price Is Right. I was Bob Barker trying to keep the enthusiasm rolling.

The room filled with noise and a newly-found emotion. Caring. They now remembered how to give a rip. We finally had a little passion in the room.

Thud!

A dead silence fell suddenly, and all eyes turned to the back table. It was Herb, the scary guy, now on his feet. His fist pounded on the table in front of him. Veins in his neck bulged.

Nobody breathed.

"I run marathons," he said. "And when I say I'm running to the finish line, I don't quit until I'm through the finish line. You guys have more darn excuses and stories for why we can't because you haven't decided. I say we DECIDE to grow this company 100 percent and just do it. No stories. No excuses."

Dead silence again. I was beginning to like Herb. He was direct. He took ownership. He neither made nor accepted any excuses. And since I knew I couldn't outrun him now, I wanted him to like me, too.

Finally, from the front of the room, someone said, "OK, then." And everyone agreed. It was really that simple.

Nine months later, the company's sales results came in for the 6-month period. Sales were up 109 percent!

Why? Because they had DECIDED.

You are your word! If you say you're going to do something, do it. If you hit a roadblock, find your way over, under or around it. Or maybe even ram right through it.

Get people trusting your word so well that if you've made a commitment and it doesn't get done, they call out the bloodhounds, figuring you must be bleeding in a ditch somewhere.

People who have lives that work well never blame their colleagues, their bosses, or their friends and family. They own accountability. Whatever happens is their responsibility, good or bad. The buck stops with them.

When you stop accepting excuses from yourself, you'll be far less tolerant of people around you making those same lame excuses. By vowing to yourself that you will never utter another excuse, you are teaching those around you that excuses are not acceptable from anybody.

If there's no way possible to overcome a roadblock, re-negotiate with others who are affected so everyone knows you will miss the deadline BEFORE the deadline hits. As one of my favorite bosses said to me at the start of my career, "Tell me the good news, tell me the bad news, but never surprise me."

And if you just plain blow it, instead of giving an excuse say, "I blew it. Here's what I'm doing so that won't happen again."

Hold yourself accountable. Most things that happen to you are things you have control over—even a bear attack. Huh? Most bear attacks occur when the bear is surprised. So don't surprise a bear. Don't throw him an unannounced birthday party. Don't sneak up on him and yell "Boo!" And don't surprise him by giving him some lame excuse about why you didn't meet your goals. Bears hate unaccountable, excuse-spouting losers. So do people. So let's learn from a bear attack. No surprises, no excuses.

The abundance of living a life of power will happen when you stop buying excuses and stories from yourself and from others.

Try this:

To form the habit, for the next week, immediately stop yourself whenever an excuse starts. Simply say, "That doesn't matter. I just want you to know it's not okay that I missed that, and here's what I'm doing so it doesn't happen again."

When people around you start tossing excuses at you, release the little boy or girl inside of you. How? Put your fingers in your ears and repeat out loud: "I'm not listening. I'm not listening. I'm not listening." They'll get the point.