

Chapter 5

Happiness is produced, not found.

I love good chocolate chip cookies. I *really* love them if they have walnuts and when they are still warm. My wife, Patricia, knows this and, over the years, has experimented with various cookie recipes and now has one that is dynamite. Part of the whole chocolate chip cookie experience is the wonderful cooking cookie aroma that fills the house when they are baking. It is such a delicious, warm, and comforting aroma, isn't it? The aroma is not only marvelous in itself but it is also the signal that warm, chewy cookies are soon to be placed on the cooling rack and, almost immediately, into my mouth. The aroma is a two-fer: it is wonderful and it communicates something else wonderful that is soon to come...cookies!

Think about the chocolate chip cookie aroma with me for a bit because I want to use it as a metaphor to explain the subject of this chapter and the law that governs it: happiness. This may sound like an odd way of approaching the topic of happiness but since no one has yet come up with a truly good definition of happiness and so incredibly many people seem to have big problems experiencing happiness in their lives, I need to try something new to help explain it. So hang in there with me for a few paragraphs.

From where, or what, precisely, does the fantastic cooking cookie aroma come? "Well," you might say, "it comes from the cooking cookies, of course." Yes, that's right but think more specifically. Think about each ingredient in the cookie dough before baking. Does the flour have that aroma? No, on its own flour doesn't smell like much. How about the butter—does it smell like warm cookies? No, not much aroma there, either. The baking soda and eggs don't have scents to speak of and neither do the pinch of salt or walnuts. The chocolate chips have a mild chocolate aroma but it isn't that delicious cooking aroma, is it? Actually, once you think about it, none of the separate ingredients have the cookie aroma. OK, how about when we mix all the ingredients together in the correct amounts. Does that carry the smell? Nope. The mixed cookie dough has a mixture of the scents of each ingredient but not much more than that.

"The aroma," you say, "must come from the baking process, right?" Well, that depends. If you bake the cookies at 100 degrees Fahrenheit for two minutes will that produce it? No, you will still have raw cookie dough plopped in little piles on your cookie sheet. How about if you bake the raw cookies at 500 degrees F for twenty minutes—will that do it? Well, you might get a little nice aroma for a bit but that will quickly be followed by the horrible smell of burnt cookies, lots of smoke, and little inedible black carbon discs. The bottom line is that cooking without careful attention to both the length of time and the temperature is not enough to produce the delicious aroma. Only the right ingredients mixed together in the right amounts, formed into the right sizes, and cooked for both the right time and the right temperature will produce the aroma. All these factors work *together* to make delicious smells and delicious cookies—no one factor can do it. The invisible aroma comes, then, as a byproduct of doing each important thing in the cookie making process and allowing these things to work together.

Lasting happiness is very much like the aroma produced by following the correct steps in making cookies. Happiness, like the aroma, cannot be seen, grasped, or even *directly* produced. As with the warm cookie smell, happiness arises as an *indirect* byproduct of doing important things well. “Looking” for happiness and “hoping” you will somehow “find” it is like spending your life sniffing around in search of cookie aroma—it is really a waste of your time and energy. You can produce, however, both delicious sensations as the *indirect* results of your actions and behaviors. In the case of cookies, the actions are measuring and mixing the ingredients and correctly cooking the dough. In the case of happiness, the actions are taking specific, real steps to achieve goals that are meaningful to you. The fact is, if you want either warm cookie aroma or a warm awareness of happiness, you are going to have to take the steps that make them. The 5th law of life nicely sums up this reality: “*happiness is produced, not found.*”

Before we move on, we need to make sure we are talking about happiness in the same way. Because, you see, there is more than one kind of happiness. There are at least three very different classes of what you and I label “happiness” (described nicely in Daniel Gilbert’s book [Stumbling on Happiness](#)). Let me illustrate the differences in the three types of happiness and reinforce which, of these three, the 5th law of life describes.

Let’s say that your neighbor has a 10 year old daughter and she has been helpful taking care of your pets when you are away. You like her. She is a good kid. One day she comes knocking on your door and tells you she would like you to buy some raffle tickets that she and all the other students in her school are selling. The school needs some new computers in the science lab and they are running the raffle to fund the purchase of the computers. She is a good kid, she’s been helpful to you, this is a good cause, and you want to help her out. So you buy ten \$1 tickets for the raffle drawing to be held in two months. You put the tickets behind a magnet on your refrigerator and sort of forget about them. Two months later, after the raffle drawing you had forgotten, you get a call from the school principal telling you that you have the winning ticket! She also tells you that she would like you to come to the awards dinner at which she will formally present you with a check for \$25,000. You just won \$25,000! Feeling happy?

At the awards dinner you are handed the check and you are one happy camper. You are thrilled to have won the money and feel a lot of joy about how this money will help you. The emotion of joy you feel would be described as “happy”, wouldn’t you say? Something happened that was good for you, it pleased you, you felt joy about it—you are happy. This is “happiness” as an *emotional* response. It doesn’t take winning a raffle to produce this response, though. You might feel some emotional happiness when you eat one of those cookies we have been talking about or when you hear an old favorite song that reminds you of a previous time when you were emotionally happy. You might feel emotionally happy when you run into a friend you particularly like or your pet does something exceptionally cute. It could be anything to which you respond, albeit temporarily, with happiness as a somewhat fleeting emotion. *Emotional happiness* is the first of the three types of happiness. To understand the next type of happiness, let’s go back to your winning the raffle.

You decide to take your \$25,000 and use it wisely. So you put enough of it in your savings account to cover the taxes on it you will have to pay come tax time. Then, you take \$2,000 or so and buy yourself the sound system you have always wanted. You take the remaining cash and split it between paying off your car loan and investing in your retirement fund. You've spread the \$25,000 between a little pleasure, wise tax planning, a nice reduction in your debt load, and investment in your future. As you think about how you split up the money, you say to yourself "I am *happy* about the way I did that." Here, "happy" is not about jumping up and down with joy or even bubbling over in a temporary emotional high. No, this kind of happiness arises as a judgment or *evaluation* of something. We use the word "happy", in the evaluation sense, to say of whatever we are evaluating: "I am satisfied with...", "I am content with...", "I approve of the outcome of...". This sense of approval *might* be much more long lasting than a fleeting feeling of emotional happiness but it is also less effervescent or exciting. What we are describing is *evaluative happiness*. It is the second of the three types yet neither it nor the first type is the focus of the 5th law.

The third and last type of happiness is the one the 5th law of life describes. This law "*happiness is produced, not found*" deals with the type of happiness that arises as a sort of aroma—an invisible and pleasant awareness produced (as suggested earlier) when we move forward in achieving goals that are important to us and in generally living the kind of life of which we are proud. If you want a label for this type of happiness, the best is probably *moral happiness*. It is a stable sense of well-being and satisfaction produced by keeping your promises to yourself and others and by acting with integrity and honesty when it might have been easier and more self-serving to act in opposite ways. Moral happiness is the kind of deep acceptance and contentment you may have seen or felt in a person or two in your life whom you considered generally "happy". You might have even wished you had their contentment as your own since it is more substantial and lasting than the temporary high of *emotional* happiness. Although moral happiness shares some qualities of judgment with *evaluative* happiness, (looking at one's life and evaluating/judging it as "good") it is much more than just a judgment or evaluation of something. *Moral happiness* is a permeating sense of "rightness" regarding the direction your life is going even if there are still many things that are not yet as you want them to be.

This deep sense of peace and contentment, of overall life satisfaction, is what many, many people today say they lack. These folks may be "happy" when someone remembers their birthday and gives them their favorite cake and they may be "happy" with the way their new living room wallpaper looks. But if you ask them, "overall, are you happy?", they will immediately go to the place inside themselves where moral happiness resides and, upon reflection, tell you "no, not really." Sure, the surprise birthday cake left them smiling and bubbling for a little while and they really do like their wallpaper but, deep down, they are not really happy.

You see, humans like you and I do want to feel the very appropriate and necessary feelings of emotional happiness and we do want to be satisfied with things or situations in our lives. All of that is perfectly reasonable. But beyond these types of "happiness" we want to feel that our life and what we do in it matters, is important (even if just to ourselves

and maybe one or two other people), and that we are satisfied with it. This is the kind of happiness people hope, in vain, to “find.” As we have seen, though, it cannot be “found” *because it does not exist until you perform the acts that produce it.*

This lasting kind of happiness is what many hope money will buy them and yet, it cannot. This deep and powerful feeling of living a meaningful life is what people yearn for and the wise among them learn that, to produce it, yearning alone is insufficient. Drugs and alcohol, ever-popular ways to either attempt to get a temporary good feeling or drown bad ones, don't do it, either. They may produce a temporary “high” that feels like happiness but they don't deliver real emotional happiness and certainly not this deeper form of moral happiness. In fact, the outcomes of drug and alcohol use actually erode both. Sex feels great and produces temporary “rush” feelings but not that permanent sense of contentment. Actually, the research says pursuing sex for pleasure alone also winds up eroding long term contentment. Jobs and promotions at work don't lead to this deep happiness, much to the chagrin of those who have devoted so much of their time and energy to work. Fame doesn't produce it, either. Just look at the steady parade of Hollywood and sports stars as they go in and out of rehab, next marriages, jail and hospital emergency rooms. Do these overpaid “celebrities” really seem deeply happy to you?

Nothing—not substances, sex, money, fame, status or power—none of these produces the kind of happiness we seek. Yet people very consistently and completely ignore the repeated failures of others who have tried these methods over the millennia and think that, somehow, it will be different for them. It isn't. It won't be. Wise up. The reality is that the deep, abiding sense of peace and contentment, the deep happiness you want and need cannot be found or purchased with any of the available “currencies”. As above, it comes only as an indirect byproduct of achieving things that express your sense of meaning and purpose on this planet.

If you do not know your meaning or purpose, you are going to have a very hard time knowing what, specifically, to work on and your undirected activity won't kick off the happiness you seek. That is why, when discussing happiness, you must first get very clear on your meaning or purpose because it is your polar north and knowing where you are with respect to it tells you in which direction to move next. Movement toward fulfilling your purpose produces the satisfaction and contentment (as indirect byproducts) that characterize moral happiness. Movement away from your purpose produces the opposite. It ain't rocket science but it *can* seem difficult, especially with respect to discerning your purpose. Because that is so often the nut on which people break their teeth, let's spend some time on it.

People tend to struggle quite a lot with the issue of "what is my purpose?" and "what is the meaning of my life?" Frankly, I think a lot of the wrangling is needless and occurs because far too many of us overshoot and look in the sky for some secret insights to "deep purpose". We make it too difficult and too esoteric and it really doesn't have to be. Try hard, when thinking about your personal sense of meaning or purpose, to avoid getting tangled up in the age-old and totally insoluble question of “what is the meaning of life?”.

People have wasted their lives searching for the meaning of life. Philosophers, poets, songwriters, theologians, and a variety of other people who should have known better have chased that question around like a puppy chasing its tail. The fact is, for you and me in our everyday lives, what does it matter what the “meaning of life” is? Think about it. Imagine you were somehow to figure out the answer to this impossible riddle and, next Wednesday at precisely 10:04 a.m., the answer popped into your punkin head. Does that substantially change anything for you or make anything vastly different? Actually, I think you might find that not much changes at all. Let’s take a look at a fictional example.

In the marvelously funny book and movie, The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, the great question of the meaning of “life, the universe, and everything” is posed to the massive computer *Deep Thought*. Upon hearing this ponderous question, *Deep Thought* thinks about it for a bit and decides it’s quite a tough question indeed and one that needs plenty of time to consider. Therefore the computer tells the inquirers to come back in seven and a half million years for the answer. And they do. When, after this long lapse of time, they again pose the eternally confounding question and ask if *Deep Thought* has an answer it responds (and I am paraphrasing here):

“Yes, but you’re not going to like it.” “That doesn’t matter” the inquirers excitedly say, knowing they are only seconds away from hearing the answer, “we must know it! Now!”

“Alright,” *Deep Thought* responds...” the answer is...forty-two.”

“Forty-two!?” the inquirers repeat in the most dejected and incredulous voices possible. “That’s it?” “Forty-two?” “Yes, I checked it very thoroughly...and that quite definitely is the answer,” *Deep Thought* replied.

The inquirers got the answer to the meaning of life! What did it do for them? Nothing. They had to deal with life immediately after their most disappointed reception of this most disappointing answer just as they did immediately prior to it. Same problems, same struggles, same hopes, joys, dreams, issues as before...and the garbage still needed to be taken out. The answer gave them nothing and the extreme likelihood is that any answer to the “meaning of life” would be just as disappointing and anemic to you IF there even *is* an answer at all. Net result: seeking the answer to the “meaning of life” as a philosophical issue is a waste of time. But getting clear on the meaning of your life—now that will get you somewhere.

For the sake of argument, which, we will later find, turns out to be the way things actually are anyway, let’s say the purpose or meaning of your life is right in front of you and, in fact, can be discerned from what you are doing on a daily basis. I know, I know, already you are feeling disappointed and think that all this is a bit of a drag because you had your heart set on having to go to Nepal for three months to consult with a prominent sage to work it all out. If you had this or any similar thought about needing to go somewhere exotic, do something special, or “get the insight” from some holy person of questionable personal hygiene, you are looking in the wrong place. Look closer to home. Look at what you are

currently doing and the roles you are currently fulfilling. That's important because it is through thinking about the roles you have now that you can begin to discern the purpose and meaning of your life. As I describe how you can do this I want to make the process a little easier by using another word for "purpose" and "meaning". Those words tend to get us off track and back into thinking we need to consult with a *Deep Thought* of our own. So, for "purpose" and "meaning", I suggest you substitute the word "mission."

"Mission" is what your life is about, the overall goal of it, *and* the direction you want it to go to get to that overarching goal. Companies, teams, organizations of all types, and smart individuals spend time making sure they are clear about their mission and communicate it to themselves and others. This is because they know what I hope you will soon learn: "mission" acts like your very own "compass". It will point you toward where you have determined you want to go. In order to use this compass you must first select your destination and then you can formulate a plan for getting there using the knowledge of your mission as your compass-guide.

For example, if you select the North Pole as a travel destination you will find that it is not only your desired end-point but that it also exerts a magnetic power to which your real-life compass needle responds. This frigid travel destination is both where you want to wind up and its power guides you to that place if, that is, you are using your magnetic compass. Mission is like that. Once you set a definite end-point for your life it serves not only as your ultimate goal but, by keeping that end-point firmly in your mind and heart, it also serves as a direction guide as you move through life. Your mission is both destination and compass. That is good news because life is very challenging, often quite difficult, and it is easy to get sidetracked. With a very firm mission in mind, however, the detours that you might have to take in life no longer matter as much. You will know how to restore movement in the right direction even if you have to follow a different path. That is because your mission gives you a very clear "destination" to aim for and you use the attractive power of that "destination" to help you make decisions about next steps. Even when there is fog all around you, your compass will not fail.

OK, so how does "mission" as destination and compass relate to happiness? As we discussed earlier, achieving steps along the way to fulfilling your mission is the *activity that indirectly produces happiness*. That is why formulating your mission and using it to guide you is so important. Human beings just happen to be constructed such that as they take specific steps in keeping with the unique reason they are on the planet (their mission), they experience peace, satisfaction, and deep happiness. I didn't set it up this way but I can see why it works. We receive what we most *want*, happiness, when we act in accord with what we are *meant* to do.

Do you have to discern your mission to be happy? Earlier I mentioned that you might have noticed some people in your life who seem quite happy, satisfied, and content. Some of these people may never have described their mission to themselves or anyone else. "My grandmother was really happy," you might say "and she never did any of this stuff—she could no more tell you her mission than a man in the moon and she was just fine." I have seen those people as well and, perhaps like you, I envied them. There

definitely are people (although not as many as you might think, at least in Western societies) who are deeply happy without consciously crafting a clear mission. If you ask these people about their mission they might look at you as if you just stepped off a spaceship. They would have no idea about what you are asking. If they are polite, they might say, “well, dearie, I just do what I have to do and what I feel I am here to do and that’s it.” They might make some references to their spiritual beliefs as well to describe to you what they, themselves, don’t even bother thinking about because it is just “who they are”. They know their mission at some deep, almost cellular, level without consciously thinking about it. If you are like them and are *already* deeply happy, then I would say “good enough is good enough” and you can just skip to the next chapter. But, if, like millions and millions of people in our world you don’t have even an unspoken but firm internal sense of why you are here and you aren’t really all that happy, then I’d suggest you do some extra homework on the topic of your mission. Since discerning your mission is key to your experience of happiness and since the process of crystallizing this mission can seem hard, I want to offer some specific suggestions for approaching this task. By the way, you can find more about all this in Steven Covey’s terrific book The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, *Habit Two: Begin with the end in mind*.

The best way to approach discerning your specific mission is to imagine yourself near the end of your life (say your 90th birthday) or even imagine your funeral. Think about who you would like to hear from at your birthday or who you would like others to hear from about you at your funeral. Who are the people you would like to hear get up and speak about you? What, specifically, would you like them to say? What kinds of statements would you like to hear about your character, your achievements, and what you meant to them and others? What kinds of feelings would you like them to communicate about their having known you? Imagine how you would like your life to have turned out and let that guide you as you develop a mission for yourself that you will fulfill in the various roles of your life. To start you off well, let me suggest following these steps:

1. Write down your current roles (examples: spouse, parent, child, sibling, employee, church member, volunteer, friend, etc.). Any role you are currently fulfilling goes on the list. You might put something specific about work roles if you have more than one such as coach, leader, supervisor, direct report, team member, inspector, etc. Think about all the roles you have now even if you don’t like one or more of them and make a list of all of them on paper. I’ll admit that discerning your mission from the constellation of roles you are currently playing may seem like a backwards way of going about it. Wouldn’t it be more straightforward to determine a mission first and then create the roles needed to fulfill it? Yes, that would be a very economical way of doing things but it just isn’t the way life operates. Humans are handed or take on a number of roles long before they can even begin thinking of their “mission”. You took on the role of “child” without asking for or choosing it, didn’t you? If you were born into a family that already had other children, you also took on the uninvited role of “sibling”. There you are, one second old, and you already have two roles! At 5 or 6 years old, at least, you took on the role of “student” (your 3rd role) and, if you played with any non-family kids, you accepted your 4th role: “friend”. Starting even a childhood romance with someone gives you the role of

“boyfriend” or “girlfriend”, your 5th role. Joining any sports team means you accepted your 6th role as “teammate”. You can see that even by the time someone is a teenager, when they might start thinking about their mission, they *already* play a variety of roles. You will have some of these roles your entire life. It would be silly to ignore these existing roles because: (1) they are already there; (2) some of them can’t be changed, and; (3) they contribute important information about your mission. You may wind up changing one or even many of these roles to facilitate your work in keeping with your mission but you need to start with the roles you currently have and work from there. So, list them all on paper.

2. Now imagine that latter life birthday party of yours or your funeral. Imagine someone who knew you in each of these roles as they get up to share their impressions of you in that role. What, exactly, would *you* like them to be able to say, quite honestly, about you? More precisely, what would *you* like to know as true about yourself in that role? Go through each of your roles and write something you would like to be true of you at least at the end of your life (if not long before).
3. What is the common theme? Think hard about this because this common thread is the essence of your mission. The clearer you can get about your mission and, later, the roles you will need to play to fulfill it the more specific you can be about the goals you want to achieve in each role. Remember, happiness, at least moral happiness, *arises like an aromatic byproduct as you achieve the goals that drive you toward achieving your mission* (your meaning and the reason you are here—your purpose). Begin formulating this mission in words even if it does not feel quite “right” to you as you write it down the first time. Don’t give up on this no matter how hard it is because this work is some of the most important work of your life. Having a good understanding of your mission makes the difference between a life that is well lived and one that just goes from day to day without much direction or deep happiness.

To help you focus on and formulate your mission there are some questions you can ask of yourself as you look at the current roles you are already occupying and the things you are doing in those roles. Some of these questions are:

- What do I really enjoy doing?
- What am I doing when I feel like I am making a difference?
- What am I doing when I feel that what I am doing is important?
- When am I doing something that feels like it connects to my religious or spiritual beliefs? What is it I am doing when I have that feeling?
- Whom do I admire and what about them do I find admirable?
- Who is doing the kinds of things I feel matter? What are they doing?
- When and what am I doing when I feel like things just flow?
- When and what am I doing when I feel the happiest because I am doing it?
- What really matters to me, in terms of the things I would like to be the focus of my life’s activities?
- What qualities in others or their achievements inspire me?

4. Look at the current roles you have written, the answers to the above questions, what you hope will be true of you at the end of your time on this planet, and your tentative mission statement. Given where all this seems to be heading, are the roles you have now ones that you really need or want in terms of that mission? What do you need to do differently in one or more roles to get you closer to fulfilling your mission? Which roles, of the ones that you can change, need changing? Which roles do you want to keep? Which ones do you want to relinquish? Are there roles that need to be added? If so, what are they and what are some things you need to do in those roles to move toward your mission?

If you have done all of the above you have made some very good progress in describing your mission and the roles and goals you will need to fulfill to achieve it. Working on a mission statement can be tough and you need to know there is help as you continue to refine it. If you go on the internet and type the words “how to write a personal mission statement” in any search engine, you will get loads of free assistance. Use it. Keep hacking away at this mission statement until you have something on paper that you can edit, change, expand, and modify as you get closer and closer to an unambiguous statement of your mission. Such a crystal clear mission statement will burn like a lamp in your mind and heart and will guide you when you are unsure of where to focus your time, energy, love, and money (all the resources you have to invest). You will want to invest these on important things rather than just on whatever happens to pop up in your day. Having a clear mission will help you determine what is and what is not important and will save you lots of wasted resources and needless wandering.

To give you an example of how this works, I’ll share with you my mission. I have spent a lot of time working on this and started out some years ago with a mission statement that was way too long and far too wordy. Frankly, it wasn’t anything I could remember. That told me that I didn’t have it concise enough. If I couldn’t even remember it or bring it to mind in non-stressful times, how would that mission serve as my compass to help me know which direction to go when I was facing tough decisions about what to do? It wouldn’t and didn’t. Although I had a “sense” of my mission, I couldn’t communicate it easily to myself and so could not use it to help guide me on a daily basis. So, I looked again at my roles as I have encouraged you to do. Also, like you may have to do, I had to keep bashing away at it until I boiled it down to its essence.

My past work as a priest, as a psychologist working with individuals, couples, and families, and as a consultant working with organizations and their leaders has been about one central thing. It wasn’t an accident that I had assumed these roles and I always knew, at some level, that they were all about helping people move ahead with their lives. It took me a while to distill it but, after lots of effort, I discerned that my mission is, and always has been, “*to grow leaders.*” That is it in three words: “to grow leaders.” Now I can remember *that* in a pinch. This mission is not only my “heading” *and* compass that helps me stay on that heading; it is, at a very basic level, what I am “about”—my meaning or purpose. It is so important to me that it is what I want others to talk about when I am old and gray at the end of my life and/or at my funeral. I want to know that people in the world, at least the

ones I worked with, were able to lead themselves (first) and then those around them (second) just a bit better because of what I did with them. It describes why I feel I am on this planet and no matter what roles I fulfill, I want at least part of what I do in each of those roles to help move me a tiny bit closer to fulfilling that mission.

My three-word mission statement is also my compass and helps me figure out where I want to spend my resources. It also reminds me where not to spend my resources. Like you, I have many little things I have to do each day just to have a life. For these little issues, I don't really need a compass to help me. But when bigger decisions need to be made such as the overall direction of my day and which things will get my resources, the mission is my compass. Having made the "big" decision about my mission actually makes almost all the other large decisions I have to make much easier since I look at them through the lens of my mission and the answer is often obvious.

With every extra little achievement I rack up in keeping with that mission I feel...happy! It is not bubbling over *emotional happiness* necessarily although sometimes that feeling comes, too. The happiness that is kicked off as I take each step is also not exactly a feeling of *evaluative happiness* because the contentment and satisfaction is much deeper than my saying "I am happy with how this or that turned out." It is a feeling of profound *moral happiness*—a deeper sense of contentment knowing that I am doing what I am meant to do. I am acting in ways that drive my sense of meaning forward. It is the feeling that so many people today lack and want so much. It is the feeling of happiness that cannot be *found* or *discovered* by any means available because it does not exist until I perform the acts that create it. It emanates from my continuous meaning-directed movement like an invisible but very delicious aroma. This happiness is *an indirect byproduct that arises as I achieve things that are meaningful to me*—things that move me toward fulfilling my mission.

Determining or discerning your mission, selecting roles and goals that will help you fulfill it, and making other choices about your life that create alignment between who you are and what you do are all factors that are under your control. You choose them. Conditions that we can choose or change, as we need to, are an important determinant of happiness according to the work of Martin Seligman and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania. They have spent years looking at happiness, optimism, and the positive side of human psychology and described a formula that they think sums up what contributes to human happiness: *Happiness = S + C + V*. In this formula, "S" stands for the genetic set point. Research, most notably by David Lykken, has demonstrated that our level of happiness appears to fall within a range that is determined by our genes. While we can do things to move toward the top of that range, like working toward our mission, it is tough for us to move far above or below our inherited range. Although I know Lykken's research is valid I must confess I don't like this finding very much. It just seems so unfair. Like me, you have probably noticed some people in your life who just seem relatively bubbly and happy without much reason almost independent of what is going on in their life. Their genetic range is on the high side. Others tend to be much less happy, no matter what is going on in their life. Their genetic range is on the low side. Both the high range and low range person can move themselves within their ranges. The best way

is by doing what I have described in this chapter to create, indirectly, more happiness in their lives within their genetic range.

In the formula, "C" stands for conditions that are relatively unchangeable like your sex, race, height, family, other inherited characteristics, etc. These are things you get at birth and cannot do too much about. But you can work with what you are given without allowing any of these to limit you and still make a happy life for yourself. The last factor in the formula, "V" stands for variable conditions. These are factors like where you live, marital status, the job you have, educational level, etc. You can see that many of these variable factors can be addressed as you formulate your mission and work on the roles you choose to fulfill and the goals you want to achieve within those roles. I wanted to mention the formula to you because it represents the fruit of important research about happiness. As you look at it again you can see that two of the determinants of happiness, S and C, are really out of your control and are factors you will just have to work with as you create happiness in your life. The last factor, V, is the one you *can* change as you choose and so I suggest you spend your time working on this by working on crafting your mission, roles, and goals and then setting about actively engaging in the ongoing process of living accordingly.

This happiness that comes from living out your mission can be yours as well. First, though, you must completely give up the idea that you can *find* it, *pursue* it, or *obtain* it. With all due respect to Thomas Jefferson, the main writer of the *Declaration of Independence*, the "pursuit of happiness" is impossible and you will do well to honor these words in our national document but entirely erase this misdirected idea from your mind. Second, don't confuse this deep form of moral happiness with the the emotion or evaluation types of happiness. They are wonderful to have but will not last as long or mean as much to you as moral happiness. You will recognize it as a sense of a deep "yes" that you say to yourself, an awareness of the "rightness" that arises as you become very clear on why you are here and make some daily movement toward satisfying or fulfilling your mission. Third, this happiness resonates in your life as you discern what *you* are about, what you want *your life* to be about, and then *actively set* about doing it. As you continually express your mission in activity, you will notice the presence of happiness arise like an invisible, intangible, yet marvelously delicious aroma. And as you do you may find yourself silently nodding and acknowledging quietly to yourself, as the fifth law of life so clearly states, "*happiness is produced, not found.*"