

## MONEY CAN'T BUY HAPPINESS

Earn More, Work Less, Be Fulfilled. That is the core of my training program. And I always, ALWAYS, start with Be Fulfilled. Why? Because if you're not happy it doesn't matter how much money you have. Money can't buy happiness.

I know that money doesn't buy happiness. You know that money doesn't buy happiness. Everyone knows that money doesn't buy happiness. Yet we lie to ourselves and keep buying stuff hoping it will make us happy.

Then every so often we're reminded of the truth. I'm writing this article the day after Anthony Bourdain, celebrity chef and Emmy-winning host of "Parts Unknown," committed suicide. He had fame and fortune yet couldn't buy happiness. A few days ago designer Kate Spade committed suicide. She had a net worth estimated at \$200 million and she couldn't buy happiness.

But it's not just celebrities. No one, not even attorneys, is immune from the universal law of money can't buy happiness. I'm sure you know someone that has plenty of money and isn't happy. Maybe you know that person intimately?

So if money can't buy happiness, where can you find it? You find happiness on the inside. It's an inside job that no matter how big your house, fancy your car, or how many toys you have can never come from the outside. Happiness is a state of mind that you create on the inside.

The good news is you already know the formula for happiness.<sup>1</sup> You may not have seen it in writing, but you know the formula: Happiness = Perceived Reality  $\geq$  Expectations. When your perceived reality is better than or equal to how you expect life to be, you're happy. But when your perceived reality is worse than how you expect life to be, you're unhappy or worse.

Don't take my word for it, take a few minutes and apply the formula to different areas of your life. Does your perception of your health meet or exceed your expectations of the way it should be? If yes, are you happy with your health? If no, are you unhappy? What about your relationships? Your law practice?

And if you're not happy what can you do? You can change your perception or change your expectations. I don't believe in lowering expectations to make things easier so let's focus on changing perception.

An easy way to change your perception is to change your focus. As an attorney, you're trained to focus on the negative and to find what's wrong or could be wrong. If you just change your focus to look for the positive and find what's right or could be right, your perception of the situation will change. This doesn't mean to be Pollyanna in the face of adversity. It means to look for the silver lining and find what's good in what actually is. When you can find the good in every situation your perception of reality changes to meet or exceed your expectations which leads to happiness.

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<sup>1</sup> This is not a substitute for professional help. If you or someone you know is struggling with depression or has had thoughts of harming themselves or taking their own life, get help. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) provides 24/7, free, confidential support for people in distress.

Imagine coming home to your spouse or significant other and while speaking with them focusing on everything they've done wrong. After a few minutes, what will be your perception of the conversation? Was it a good conversation or a bad one? Now imagine the same conversation but with you focusing on everything they've done right. After a few minutes, what will be your perception of that conversation? It's the same conversation – it is what it is - you're just changing your focus which will radically change your perception of the conversation. By changing your focus you can change your perception of any situation and create your own happiness.

Now that you know that happiness is an inside job – and free – what are you going to do with all the money you save?