



JENNIFER SPARKS
Bestselling author of WTF to OMG

Praise for *Happy on Purpose*

“*Happy on Purpose* will change your life! Jennifer Sparks has written another fantastic book on how to live life more fully and more wisely. Changing perspective can change your life, and this book shows you how.”

Cara Lockwood
USA Today Bestselling Author

“I am honored to have a first peek at *Happy on Purpose*, before it’s rolled out to the masses. Jennifer, off a successful first book, *WTF to OMG: The Frazzled Female’s Guide to Creating a Life You Love*, has done it again with a heart-felt yet tough love approach to being *Happy on Purpose*. Using her real-life experiences and proven tools for success, Jennifer practices what she preaches. She is a shining example of what being happy means, what being happy looks like and what being happy can accomplish. *Happy on Purpose* is a sure path to happiness!”

Shelly Drymon
Co-Founder The Rescue Yourself Project
www.pattyandshelly.com

“Jennifer hits the nail on the head with *Happy on Purpose*. She gives a step-by-step guide on how to create lasting happiness from the inside-out that works! Jennifer breaks down the process of how happy people think and act and proves that happiness is accessible to everyone and anyone, no matter what your current circumstance.”

Mary Sabo
Life and Happiness Coach, RYT & Blogger
www.Mary-Sabo.com

THIS IS A SAMPLE CHAPTER FROM THE SOON TO BE RELEASED *HAPPY ON PURPOSE* BY JENNIFER SPARKS – THANK YOU FOR READING!

Chapter 3: What Can I Do to be Happy?

Breathe.

Be open to new ideas.

Breathe again.

“I am determined to be cheerful and happy, in whatever situation I may be; for I have also learned from experience that the greater part of our happiness or misery depends upon our dispositions, and not upon our circumstances.” ~ Martha Washington

Some people truly don't believe we are “supposed to be happy” and they never buck the status quo to actively create their own happiness because of this belief system. People like this will continue to toil away in dead-end jobs, and suffer through shitty relationships feeling totally unfulfilled because “no one said life was supposed to be easy.” Or they would stay in a situation that was personally unfulfilling because they feel totally obligated to someone or something else, even at the cost of destroying themselves.

Unfortunately, this can impact you as you begin making changes to create your own happiness, so be prepared. When you construct your own happiness, these non-believers may be watching and judging you. They might even get in your face to let you know they think you are crayyyzeeee! “Who do you think you are to want these things?” “How the hell are you going to pay the bills being an ‘artist’?” “Who told you life was supposed to be good or fair or happy?”

Understand they come from a different place and that their current belief systems are interfering with their understanding of happiness. Know it. Accept it. Create your happiness anyway.

Your Happiness Matters

I remember the struggle I had when my son was born. My former spouse and I were living in the United States while attending graduate school. I had a few social connections, but I didn't have any really close friends. My family and my social network were in Canada and I had already been worn down by my struggles with infertility.

As luck would have it, I finally did become pregnant. My pregnancy was difficult and morning sickness extended to include all day and all night. I become a pro at whipping out my plastic puke bags behind the wheel or in mid-step at the mall. At four months along, I defended my thesis with a mouthful of soda crackers and I left the room periodically to vomit into a garbage can I had thankfully placed in the hallway. That entire experience fell substantially short of glorious.

Eager to have a perfect birth story to make up for the rough pregnancy, I was devastated when the delivery became an emergency C-section. When I woke up from the surgery and my former spouse told me we had a son, I didn't believe him! I had no memory of the birth or much of the labour. I had also developed toxemia and was holding onto enormous amounts of fluid. My head was huge. My fingers were like little sausages. Trying to bend my legs was like trying to bend a hot dog in half. I met a lady in the elevator three days post C-section (as in the baby was out of me) and when she wished me good luck with my delivery, I let the elevator doors close behind her and then burst into tears. In addition to this sudden fluid gain, the C-section left me with limited use of my core and I was a mess. I couldn't even get in and out of bed myself and now I had this little person to take care of as well! I was sent home with my OBGYN's wife's cell number. While at the time I thought that was really kind of him, I think my OBGYN was maybe trying to derail what he knew was likely headed my way.

An emotional and mental shit storm was waiting for me. He knew it, and I was still trying to live out my dream of this ideal "pregnancy/delivery/new mom" scenario with my head firmly planted in the sand. I was very disappointed that I couldn't even get the whole pregnancy thing right, after all, isn't that the one thing women are supposed to be able to do?

Following the birth of my son, I was troubled with some serious postpartum depression and anxiety. I didn't even recognize it in myself, and it was my mother who mentioned it when she came to visit three weeks later. I ignored her. In hindsight, I couldn't even make a decision about what to eat and I was quite disabled by my thought processes. I then developed mastitis and had to stop nursing my son the moment my doctor made that diagnosis. I know now that in some strange way I was grieving the experience I wanted to have so badly, and was disappointed that I couldn't seem to get anything right.

I ended up in my OBGYN's office discussing treatment options for mastitis. He stopped mid-sentence and addressed my state of mind. He told me that if I was struggling around my son, that even as a baby, he would pick up on it and it could influence his development. I have never forgotten his warning. I listened, as tears streamed down my face, and I surrendered to him for help. Xanax, Ambien and Zoloft followed.

I hadn't slept for months because I had anxiety about endless irrational fears that came out of nowhere. That voice inside my head never shut up. It was on Speed. I have never felt more useless or messed up in all my life. Clearly, my happiness mattered to my family as well. It makes total sense now. I just couldn't see it at that time, because my thoughts seemed so scrambled.

I hated accepting the fact that maybe I needed help. I hated that what I wanted so badly had ended up messing up my head. I reluctantly took the medications and promised myself I would use them as a hand up and that I was going to take charge of getting better. If not for my own sake, I would certainly do it for my son. Remember, your happiness matters AND it can impact others as well.

A few foundational items here to consider:

1. Put Yourself First

You need to understand putting yourself first is not selfish and you should not feel guilty about it. Why? Well in my example above, what if I had NOT put myself first and gone to the doctor to get help? Not only could mastitis have caused a serious health threat to me, but the depression and anxiety could have a serious impact on me, my spouse and my child. Your loved ones want you at your best. Strive to be your best and they will thank you. If they don't, there are other issues at play there.

2. Look at the Big Picture

Try to think in terms of the big picture and don't get snagged on the little details that make you crazy. This is the same as "don't sweat the small stuff." Learn to see the bigger plan and how life events have lined up along the way to bring you where you currently are. Look for the lessons. When I stopped zeroing in on little incidences and was able to see a bigger plan, it made letting go of things that didn't serve the bigger plan much easier. This made me less bitter and more accepting of what came my way. For example, did it really matter that I didn't have the ideal birth story? No. I had a healthy son to be grateful for and that is really what mattered.

3. Dream BIG

Get yourself some kickass dreams. *Dreams are the lighter fluid and opportunity is the flame.* If you don't have dreams when the flame comes by, nothing catches fire. And for goodness sake have some fun here! Dream big and don't worry about the 'how' of things. Once you decide you are going to move to a tropical location and work, your brain takes in the environmental stimuli in a different way. It seeks out the opportunities for you and starts laying them at your feet and suddenly it all seems like a big coincidence. This is where it gets scary good because all you have dreamed about starts happening and you can't believe it! Your job? DREAM BIG. Dream big, exciting, mind-messing, enormous dreams.

4. Define What Makes You Rich

If you only consider money as a means to riches, I beg you to reconsider. I am rich because I have two great kids. I am rich because of the amazing friends and family I have in my life. I am rich because I have love. I am rich because I love to write and I am able to do it! I am rich because I see the value in experiences over things. Are you rich? List the ways.

5. If You Want to Really Mess People Up - Be Happy

We all have been there when someone who is happy leaves a room and everyone looks at one another and someone cracks the joke about wanting what he or she smokes! Why is it so unusual to be happy? Why is it socially acceptable to be cranky? Why is it socially acceptable to brag about working twenty-hour days (and missing out on family things to do that)? But if you manage to balance your life fairly well, make time for yourself and

create a happy life that isn't filled with "material possessions" people look at you sideways? They might even call you lazy or unmotivated! And all you are is happy!

6. Happiness is About You

Happiness does not come from other people. If you are searching for the "one" person that makes you happy, look in the mirror. I remember a client telling me that she had a major breakthrough in terms of her relationships. She told me she had blurted out to her boyfriend, "I wouldn't be any less happy if you were not in my life. You are not my happiness, I am." When she realized her happiness was up to her alone, she let him go. She no longer attached being happy with being with him. She was hanging onto him because she thought if she lost him, she would lose her happiness. She told me she felt incredibly powerful when she realized her happiness was not dependent on him, because it made her understand she could be alone and still be happy.

7. Change Your Outlook on Disappointments

If something doesn't work out, expect that something better is on the way. We all have dreams of things happening that will change our lives for the better and when something doesn't work out, we can be so emotionally attached to that event we lose hope. When something doesn't happen for me and plans fall apart, I ask myself what might be coming instead. When shit really hits the fan and things seem bleak, instead of asking myself, "Why is this happening to me?" I ask myself, "Why is this happening FOR me?" What is it that I need to take away from this to improve my life? What is my lesson?

8. Choose Your Words Carefully

Emotions are attached to words so if you use a string of profanity to describe your ex-spouse, expect that those words are going to drop little emotional grenades in *your* body. You speak shit. You feel shit. Express praise where possible and if you can't then hush up. Look for the happier parts of your world to speak about and clean up the emotionally charged words you use to elicit a more positive emotional response. **Ranting about something is like spewing negativity all over the place.** It's messy! It gets all over you and other people and impacts everything. Complaining about your "asshole" boss or that "stupid" professor or "idiot" store clerk doesn't change anything other than YOUR emotional well-being. I am so sensitive to people ranting that I have been known to hang up phones or walk away in mid-conversation just to stop the flow of ickiness! As Tony Robbins says, "Simply by changing your habitual vocabulary – the words you consistently use to describe the emotions in your life – you can instantly change how you think, feel and how you live."

"The key to happiness is letting each situation be what it is instead of what you think it should be." ~ Mandy Hale
