

Mining for Happiness Nuggets! by Helen Macdonald

Consider for a moment the process involved in mining for gold. While we all love the end result, we seldom consider the effort and the refining that goes into them. Gold mining is a difficult, challenging, sometimes dangerous business where failure occurs more often than success, and in which you have to work your way through enormous amounts of dirt to get to the good stuff.

Imagine being a miner in the gold fields in the early parts of the last century. They crouched beside a stream and poured hundreds of shovel loads of dirt into their screening pans, staring determinedly into the sludge in the hope of a glimmer of gold! Some of them were fantastically successful, discovering huge nuggets and creating instant wealth. Most struggled to keep food on the table as they continued to search for the elusive rewards.

It's a bit the same with our search for happiness. Sometimes we have to sort through lots of sludge to find the nuggets of good stuff. Sometimes we have to dig deep to locate them.

**Happiness doesn't depend on how much you have to enjoy,
but on how much you enjoy what you have. Ziggy**

We tend to keep an eye on our physical and financial assets, but it is our emotional assets that will make the difference to our lives. One of these is our "store house" of happiness. It can be very beneficial to regularly assess what it is in your life that makes you happy. This will help you to identify the priority of things in your life, but it can also operate like a flotation vest on low days. It's the kind of asset register that can pick you up when you are feeling down and lift you out of the fog on dreary days.

Take a few moments each day to write down ten good things that happened in that day. Of course, some days this is easier than others - birthdays, promotions, good times, good news - easy!! The challenge is to make it to ten on the bad days. Sometimes, we need to look for the smaller items to find the happy glow. A conversation with a friend; a smile from a stranger; a safe home; food on your table; a bed to sleep in - small pleasures and important nuggets of happiness.

At a deeper level, we need to look at a more complete list of happiness assets. In her book, "Simple Abundance" Sarah Ban Breathnach suggests that we locate 100 things in our life that make us happy. This is a great exercise because it forces you to go mining for happiness nuggets. Once you've found them, and brought them up to the surface, it is easy to polish them and increase their glow and their value - just like our old-fashioned miner friends!!

Part of this asset evaluation process includes being grateful for the small "nuggets" of happiness that you are able to dig out. To develop an attitude of gratitude, you need to constantly be mining for opportunities. Seek out the good in people; look for the learning in challenges; search for the light in the darkest of times. While sometimes this feels impossible, it is sometimes in the most unlikely places or situations that you will find the best happiness treasures.

It is sometimes through adversity that we have the greatest chance to grow. We should also be grateful for the difficulties that we overcome, and search for the learning that is usually buried within them - occasionally buried very deeply and every now and then, hidden completely.

Helen Macdonald gets maximum results for her clients through happy, productive employees and satisfied, loyal customers. As a speaker, author and master facilitator, she has worked with companies large and small throughout the Asia Pacific region. This is an extract from her first book, "SM.I.L.E. your way to Success!". Her message is that happiness is a magnet which will help you attract more of what you want - more customers; profit and success - in your business and your life! For more information, call 03 9533 4568 or visit www.helenmacdonald.com.