

It's Up To You – Part II

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Nine Lessons on Happiness, Learned from a House

The source is "From HAPPINESS@THESPEEDOFLIFE, by Jim Smith, The Executive Happiness Coach. He purchased and renovated an old house and these are the lessons on happiness from that experience. (Editor's note: the first four appear this week.)

1. Work on your wiring, first.

In a house wired for 1950s needs, our first priority has been to upgrade the infrastructure. Without this rewiring, the increased demands of a Millennial's' lifestyle (e.g. laptops in every room and a big-screen LCD TV) would blow the electrical grid.

So too, the first step in personal change is often a rewiring - of self-talk and personal practices. Perhaps you need to change the stories you tell yourself, about yourself; or shift some physical practice or attitude that no longer serves you. When you shift the flow of positive energy in your system, you're more likely to have the capacity to handle what life throws at you.

2. Get rid of the old junk.

The prior owners left a lot of stuff in the house. I'm sure that if we'd really investigated the matter, we could have tracked down an antiques-lover who'd have swooned over a 1955 electric stove with all the original components. But in the end, it was just old, tired junk.

Are you the sort of person who hangs on to old ideas and thoughts, sometimes beyond their useful life? Hey, if it no longer works well, pitch it. You'll love the space that opens up in your life for happiness.

3. Envisioning the future is easier once you remove what's in the way.

Until we removed all the junk, the rooms looked too small. Until we actually tore down the kitchen wall, no one could picture the larger space that was possible. Once we removed the obstacles, it became immensely easier to stand in the space and imagine the future.

I've worked with clients who remain "stuck" not because they lack motivation but because they can't picture where they're going. So we seek to remove barriers (e.g. old perspectives and assumptions) first. Only then do we try to define the future. What's in your way that you might remove?

4. Sometimes, less is more.

Fifty years of benign neglect in the yard meant that anything that started to grow...grew. We cut down five decades of overgrowth, and pruned back 80% of the trees and shrubs. The simplified landscape has drawn dozens of positive comments from the neighbors, most of whom had never even seen the front of the house.

Maybe you've allowed some of your habits to grow unchecked over several decades until they hide parts of who you are. What would emerge if you took pruning shears to one or two of those things you've been doing/thinking the same way since high school? You might discover a part of you that surprises!

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