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| Number of pages: | 269 |
| Book Club rating: | 4 |
| Reviewed by: | C. Simecek |

***Plot Summary:***



*The Happiness Equation* is made up of 9 Secrets to Happiness covering 3 general areas: contentment (Want Nothing), freedom (Do Anything) and happiness (Have Everything). Each Secret is explained in two to eleven chapters covering concepts and exercises to challenge your way of thinking and gain a broader perspective. Pasricha took input from psychologists, CEO’s and personal interviews to develop this framework.

The first three secrets relating to contentment are: Be Happy First, Do It For You, and Remember The Lottery. Be Happy First explains that your attitude has a lot to do with your happiness level. There are 7 things you can do to increase your happiness on a daily or weekly basis. The Do It For You section explains that people do a better job and enjoy the “work” more when they do it for themselves rather than because they must or for money. Remember The Lottery means to remind yourself of all you have already.

The second three secrets relating to freedom are: Never Retire, Overvalue You, and Create Space. The concept behind Never Retire is to keep learning, and if you retire from your 40-hour a week job, to find an ikigai (reason for living). Overvalue You by spending more time working only on things you enjoy. Create Space is the idea of creating open time to not think or do which frees your mind to potentially develop insights on other situations.

The third set of three secrets relate to happiness: Just Do It, Be You, and Don’t Take Advice. Just Do It explains that if you are avoiding something, the quickest way to get it done is to start. This will build confidence and satisfaction in the job, motivating you to complete it. Be You is to align your thoughts and actions with who you are. Pasricha presents three tests to help uncover more about yourself: The Saturday Morning Test, The Bench Test, and The Five People Test. Lastly, Don’t Take Advice explains you can get conflicting advice, so don’t follow advice of others, but use it as input to decide for yourself.

***Book Club Meeting Discussion:***

We discussed the points of the book that had the most meaning for each of us:

 A week can be divided equally into three buckets of time: sleep, work, and free time. What do you do with your “free time” bucket?

 The “Never Retire” secret is to keep learning, so you are productive and purposeful after you leave your 40-hour week job. This brought about a discussion about what to do during retirement. One participant mentioned a retired mentor, with whom she still keeps in touch, who encouraged her to become a mentor herself to international students. This inspired another participant to look into mentoring.

 Don’t pretend to be what other people want you to be; be yourself.

 Practice the seven ways to be happy, including take three walks , carry out five random acts of kindness and write down three things you’re grateful for each week.

We also discussed the idea of not responding to “hot potato” email, and most agreed this wasn’t practical for their jobs. However the idea of turning off email notifications and changing your presence to “busy” would be helpful to focus on a specific task and eliminate the disruptions.

Most people rated the book 4 out of 5. One participant mentioned that the book was a little too simplistic.

***Personal Comments:***

I rated the book a four, but I found it to have a few too many anecdotal stories. That said, I enjoyed the book, and the stories illustrate the author’s points of the Nine Secrets. I found that some ideas that resonated with others weren’t highlights for me, but that one of the benefits of the book – there is something for everyone in it.

It is an easy read and has helpful information. I particularly liked the exercises – things you can do to improve your happiness (The 7 ways) and the 3 tests to align with your authentic self and help you to put yourself in situations that you will enjoy. From a project standpoint, the “Just Do It” explanation will be helpful for me and the people on my team to accomplish tasks. As people are involved in many projects, sometimes the amount of time a task will take is enough reason not to start it and instead work on other projects. It would be interesting to try putting the focus first on starting the task rather than finishing.