



HAPPINESS IS WHAT WE MAKE IT

Some say that happiness is what we make it. The more time I spend with a certain friend, the more I'm convinced that's true.

Four years ago, he was a successful businessman. Then one of his employees had a breakdown and showed up with a shotgun, intent on killing as many people as he could. In an attempt to disarm the man, my friend lost a hand and an eye. When he was released from the hospital weeks later, his savings were gone. My wife and I met him when we began volunteering at the homeless shelter where he was living. By then, he also had Parkinson's disease and a deadly form of skin cancer. He could barely walk or

get out of a chair by himself, but he was one of the most cheerful, positive people I had ever met. He has since moved from the shelter to an apartment, where he lives on a small pension. Two surgeries stopped the cancer before it could spread, and medication and therapy are helping him deal with Parkinson's. Still, on a bad day there are very few things that he can do for himself. Taking him to doctor appointments and shopping has been a learning experience for me. Regardless of what we're doing or how arduous it is for him, he has a secret agenda: never leave anyone without a smile. And he always succeeds. He learns everyone's name, includes it in his cheery goodbye, and remembers it next time. He finds opportunities to build people up and is generous with compliments. He tells corny jokes. He pokes fun at himself. Whatever it takes.

A lot of people, if they were in his position, would blame God or become bitter, but not my friend. "That's no way to live—and I've still got a lot of living to do," he has told me.

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We either make ourselves happy or miserable. The amount of work is the same.-- Carlos Castaneda

Resolve to keep happy and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.--Helen Keller (blind, deaf and dumb Christian motivational speaker)

I began learning long ago that those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.-- Booker T. Washington

If we try hard to bring happiness to others, we cannot stop it from coming to us also. To get joy, we must give it, and to keep joy, we must scatter it.-- John Templeton.

It is pleasing to God whenever you rejoice or laugh from the bottom of your heart.--Martin Luther