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STROLL®

Chappaqua

FINDING
JOY
IN THE
CHAOS
OF
EVERYDAY
LIFE

MEET
*ROSALIE
KISSMANN*

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DELIVERING NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

in the CHAOS *of*

finding JOY



EVERYDAY *life*

ROSALIE KISSMANN

LIFE IS HARD... AND YOU CAN BE HAPPY

I'm here to tell you something that might surprise you:

Life is hard AND you can be happy. Two things can be true at the same time.

- I have a husband. Being in a relationship is hard.
- I am a mother to two wonderful girls. Being a parent is hard.
- I work full-time as an elementary school teacher. Having a career is hard.

You know why life is hard? Because we are human. So, congratulations on being a human being.

THE MYTH OF "YOU'RE SO LUCKY"

People often look at me and say, "You're lucky—you're always happy." But it has nothing to do with luck. Happiness is intentional, hard work.

According to happiness researcher Sonja Lyubomirsky, our happiness is shaped by three main factors, which she calls the Happiness Pie:

- 50% comes from your genetic setpoint—your natural baseline
- 10% from life circumstances—your job, house, income, health
- 40% from your daily actions, habits, and thoughts

That last slice, the 40%, is where your power lies.

THE BIGGER, BETTER, MORE SYNDROME

We live in a society that doesn't quite know what to do with that 40%. In a world obsessed with achievement, we've learned to believe that happiness waits on the other side of success. It's what I call the "Bigger, Better, More Syndrome."

- Attend the Ivy League school.
- Graduate with honors.
- Land a high paying, soul sucking job.
- Work yourself to the bone.
- Buy the big house.

- Fill it with stuff.
- Buy the even bigger house.
- Fill it with even more stuff.

And even when something still feels like it's missing, we teach our kids to do the same. It becomes a generational curse—the endless chase for "more." But if happiness doesn't come from degrees, money, or accolades, where does it come from?

It comes from learning how to use your 40%.

I'm not happy because I'm lucky. I'm happy because I've learned to work that 40%. And you can, too.

HOW TO WORK YOUR 40%

1. Set the tone for your day

Each morning, say to yourself:

- "Today is going to be a great day."
- "Today is the day magic will happen."

This tells your brain what to look for. It's called your Reticular Activating System—the filter that decides what's important. When you train it to notice the good, it finds it everywhere. Think of it like shopping for a new car—you suddenly see that same car everywhere. The good has always been there; you just start paying attention. Challenge yourself to keep a running list of the magical moments that appear once you start looking.

2. Be where your feet are

Look down. Notice your feet. Now make sure your mind is there, too. The average person has around 60,000 thoughts per day. Dr. Daniel Gilbert, professor at Harvard, discovered that nearly half of our waking moments are spent thinking about something other than what we're doing right now. A wandering mind is deeply connected to unhappiness. When you stop living in the past or worrying about the future, you find peace in the present. You start

to see the extraordinary in the ordinary—and that's where happiness lives.

- Put your phone down.
- Look around.
- Notice the light, the sounds, the smells, the small, beautiful details.
- Romanticize these simple moments of being fully alive.

3. Cultivate connection

Since 1938, The Harvard Study of Adult Development has followed more than 700 people and their descendants. Its findings can be summed up in seven words: Good relationships make us healthier and happier.

Human connection is one of the strongest predictors of lasting joy.

- So call a friend. Wave to your neighbor.
- Chat with the local barista.
- Happiness multiplies when it's shared.

FINDING JOY IN THE EVERYDAY

Life is messy and beautiful and exhausting—and it's all part of being human.

But within that chaos, happiness is possible. Not because everything is perfect, but because you can choose to see the magic in what is.

Be intentional with your 40%.

Your happiness isn't waiting at the finish line—it's right here, right now, in the middle of your messy, beautiful everyday life.

Rosalie Kissmann is an elementary school teacher and speaker who helps others discover joy in everyday life through her stories, research, and practical strategies for well-being. She has taught in Chappaqua for 18 years and runs after-school happiness classes for children, as well as workshops for adults throughout the community. Learn more at joy-redefined.com.