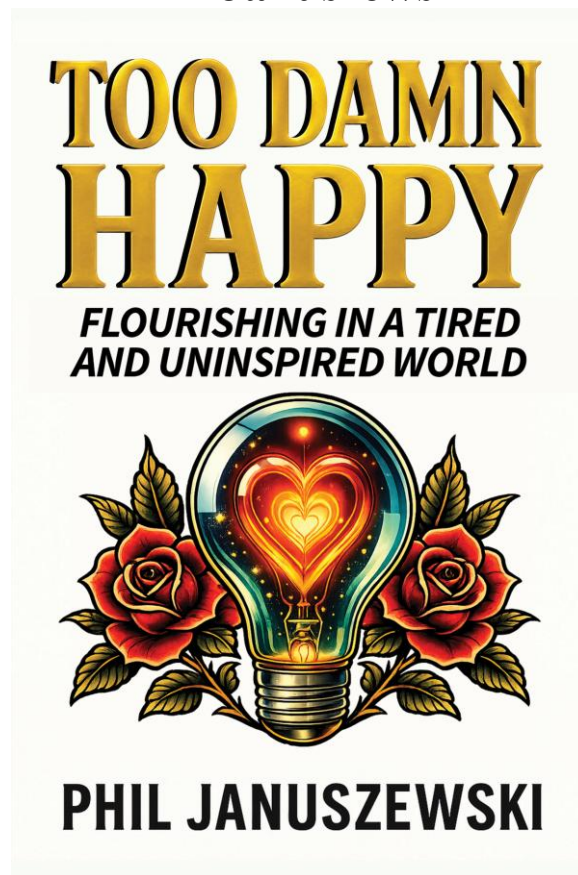


Parent Book Study Companion For: **TOO DAMN HAPPY**

Flourishing in a Tired and Uninspired World.

Phil Januszewski



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TOO DAMN HAPPY

Parent Book Study Companion

Prologue + Introduction

Big Ideas for Parents

- Parenting is an important part of who you are, but it is not the only part. Your own energy, identity, joy, and growth still matter.
- Parents often connect through shared stress and exhaustion, but flourishing grows when we intentionally create more positive and meaningful connections.
- Happiness is not about pretending family life is perfect. It is about making small choices that increase connection, meaning, and resilience over time.
- Children learn from what we model. The way we navigate stress, relationships, gratitude, and joy becomes part of what they experience at home.
- Caring for yourself and caring deeply for your family are not competing goals. A flourishing parent has more of their authentic self to share.

Family Flourishing Connections

Personal Well-Being Recognizing that your energy, identity, interests, and emotional health matter alongside your responsibilities as a parent.

Emotional Modeling Showing children that adults can experience difficult emotions while still making healthy, hopeful choices.

Family Connection Creating a home where people feel seen, valued, supported, and genuinely glad to be together.

Intentional Parenting Choosing small habits that help your family move toward the culture and relationships you want.

Reflection Questions

1. What parts of being a parent bring me the most joy right now?
2. Where have I unintentionally normalized exhaustion or negativity in my life?
3. What parts of myself outside of parenting still need attention and space?
4. What emotional tone do I most often bring into my home?
5. What is one small change I could make this week to help myself flourish?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- Why can parents so easily bond through stress, schedules, and complaining?
- What does flourishing realistically look like during a busy season of family life?
- How can parents care for themselves without feeling guilty?
- What do children learn from watching how adults handle stress and joy?
- What kind of emotional climate do we want to create in our homes?

Try This This Week

Choose one interaction each day to intentionally shift toward positivity or meaningful connection.

- Start a conversation with gratitude instead of stress.
- Give your child, partner, or friend a specific compliment.
- Put your phone down and give someone your full attention.
- Replace one complaint with curiosity or encouragement.

Parent Connection

Your children do not need you to disappear into the role of parent. They benefit from knowing the real, growing, curious, energized human who loves them. When you intentionally care for your own flourishing, you are not stepping away from your family. You are bringing more of yourself back to it.

TOO DAMN HAPPY

Parent Book Study Companion

Chapter 1: Happiness Is Not the Absence of Negativity

Big Ideas for Parents

- Removing stress and negativity does not automatically create happiness or fulfillment. At best, it creates neutrality.
- Flourishing requires intentional action, even during difficult seasons of parenting and family life.
- Challenges, discomfort, and growth experiences can deepen empathy, resilience, patience, and meaning.
- Parents do not need to wait for schedules, behavior, finances, or life circumstances to become easy before creating joy.
- Healthy families are not families without struggle. They are families that learn how to move through struggle with honesty, connection, and love.

Family Flourishing Connections

Emotional Modeling Allowing children to see that frustration, sadness, disappointment, and joy can all exist in a healthy life.

Resilience Practicing ways to recover, adapt, and keep moving through hard seasons without pretending they are easy.

Family Connection Staying connected during challenge rather than expecting everyone to feel positive all the time.

Personal Well-Being Creating small sources of joy and meaning even when circumstances are imperfect.

Reflection Questions

1. What challenge in parenting or family life has unexpectedly helped me grow?
2. Where have I been waiting for life to get easier before allowing myself to enjoy it?
3. What helps me create small pockets of happiness during stressful seasons?
4. How have difficult experiences strengthened my empathy toward my children or partner?
5. Where in my life have I settled for neutral instead of intentionally creating something better?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- Why do adults sometimes equate happiness with the absence of stress?
- How can families acknowledge hard emotions without allowing negativity to dominate the home?
- What do children learn when they see adults move through disappointment in healthy ways?
- How can challenge strengthen family relationships?
- What are healthy ways to create joy during a difficult season?

Try This This Week

Choose one stressful or frustrating part of family life and intentionally create one small positive moment inside of it.

- Play music during a routine everyone dislikes.
- Take a short walk together after dinner.
- Add humor to a stressful transition.
- Celebrate one small family win.
- Write down one meaningful moment from the day.

Parent Connection

Children do not need parents who never struggle. They need adults who can be honest about hard moments and still demonstrate that joy, connection, and meaning are possible. Resilience is not something we only explain to children. It is something they watch us practice.

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Chapter 2: More Love Is The Answer

Big Ideas for Parents

- Love is not weakness in parenting. It is the foundation for trust, belonging, safety, and connection.
- Parents can hold boundaries, disagree, correct behavior, and still communicate dignity and love.
- Children and adults thrive when they feel seen, valued, respected, and emotionally safe.
- Strong family relationships help everyone navigate stressful, divisive, or uncertain seasons.
- Small acts of affection, encouragement, patience, and appreciation create ripple effects throughout a home.

Family Flourishing Connections

Family Connection Building trust, belonging, affection, and meaningful connection through everyday interactions.

Emotional Safety Helping family members know that mistakes, disagreement, and hard emotions do not remove love or belonging.

Respectful Communication Listening, setting boundaries, and disagreeing without attacking another person's humanity.

Emotional Modeling Showing children what empathy, repair, appreciation, and mature disagreement can look like.

Reflection Questions

1. How was love communicated in the home where I grew up?
2. How do I typically respond when my child or partner strongly disagrees with me?
3. What helps the people in my family feel genuinely seen and valued?
4. Who in my family may need more encouragement, patience, or understanding right now?
5. How can I communicate appreciation more often instead of assuming people already know?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- What does love look like when a parent still needs to hold a boundary?
- How can families disagree without damaging connection?
- Why can appreciation be easy to feel but harder to say out loud?
- How do children benefit from seeing adults apologize or repair after conflict?
- What small acts help a home feel warmer and more connected?

Try This This Week

Choose one intentional act of love or appreciation each day this week.

- Tell your child specifically what you appreciate about them.
- Give a longer hug.
- Write a quick note or text to your partner or another parent you value.
- Listen longer before offering a solution.
- Replace one judgment with curiosity.

Parent Connection

Children will not remember every rule, meal, activity, or perfectly planned family moment. They will remember whether home felt like a place where they mattered. Love does not remove expectations. It gives those expectations a foundation of trust and belonging.

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Chapter 3: Know What Lights Us Up

Big Ideas for Parents

- Flourishing increases when we intentionally spend time doing things that energize, challenge, and inspire us.
- Parents can slowly lose connection with their own identity when responsibilities and routines consume every available space.
- Knowing what lights you up is not selfish. It helps you remain a whole person instead of only a manager of everyone else's needs.
- Flow happens when challenge and enjoyment overlap, helping us feel engaged, capable, and alive.
- Children benefit from seeing adults maintain interests, passions, friendships, and goals of their own.

Family Flourishing Connections

Personal Identity Remembering the interests, strengths, roles, and passions that make you you beyond parenting.

Personal Well-Being Making room for activities that restore energy, engagement, and fulfillment.

Emotional Modeling Showing children that adults can continue discovering strengths and pursuing meaningful interests.

Family Culture Celebrating the different things that light up each person in the family.

Reflection Questions

1. What activities or roles naturally energize me?
2. When was the last time I felt excited, challenged, or fully engaged in something just for me?
3. Which parts of my current routine help me flourish, and which parts drain me?
4. What did I love doing before parenting responsibilities became such a large part of my life?
5. What is one 'Er' I have neglected that I want to reconnect with?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- Why can parents lose touch with parts of their identity?
- Why can hobbies, friendships, or personal goals sometimes create guilt for parents?
- What do children learn from watching adults pursue things that light them up?
- How can partners or family members help protect one another's energizing activities?
- How can families celebrate each person's different 'Ers'?

Try This This Week

Make your own 'Er's' list. Choose at least five roles or activities that energize you, then intentionally schedule one into your week.

- Reader, Runner, Creator, Baker, Learner
- Friend, Music Listener, Lifter, Gardener, Laughter
- Traveler, Volunteer, Coach, Writer, Connector

Parent Connection

Your children deserve to know more than the version of you who packs lunches, drives carpools, solves problems, or reminds everyone to brush their teeth. Let them see the reader, runner, baker, musician, learner, creator, or dreamer too. A whole parent gives children permission to become whole adults.

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Chapter 4: Schedule in the Good Stuff

Big Ideas for Parents

- Joy rarely happens by accident during busy family seasons. It often needs to be intentionally scheduled and protected.
- Structure can create freedom by making room for the people and activities that matter most.
- Small moments of movement, creativity, humor, learning, rest, and connection can buffer stress.
- Decluttering unnecessary habits and commitments creates more room for meaningful experiences.
- A full family life does not have to mean a constantly frantic one.

Family Flourishing Connections

Intentional Living Using time on purpose instead of allowing every open space to be consumed by obligations.

Personal Well-Being Protecting small routines that restore energy and help you show up more fully.

Family Connection Scheduling shared experiences that create warmth, fun, and belonging.

Healthy Boundaries Recognizing when saying no, simplifying, or removing something creates room for what matters more.

Reflection Questions

1. What parts of my current schedule genuinely fill me up?
2. What habits, commitments, or routines may need decluttering?
3. Where could I intentionally add more joy, humor, creativity, or connection?
4. What activities do I keep saying matter to me but rarely make it onto the calendar?
5. What routines help me show up as my best self at home?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- Why do parents often feel guilty protecting time for themselves?
- How can structure actually create more freedom for a family?
- What does an intentionally full life look like compared with a chronically busy one?
- What family routines create connection without requiring elaborate plans?
- What might your family need to say no to in order to say yes to something better?

Try This This Week

Audit one day or one week of your schedule. Mark what energizes you, what creates connection, and what consistently drains you. Then make one small adjustment.

- Protect a workout, walk, or reading time.
- Schedule a simple family game or movie night.
- Reduce one unnecessary commitment.
- Create ten quiet minutes before the house wakes up.
- Put something you love on the calendar first.

Parent Connection

Family schedules can become giant machines that move everyone from obligation to obligation. You are allowed to build the good stuff into the machine too. Protecting meaningful time teaches children that life is not only about getting everything done. It is also about actually living it.

TOO DAMN HAPPY

Parent Book Study Companion

Chapter 5: Micro-Connections Matter

Big Ideas for Parents

- Small positive interactions create powerful feelings of belonging, connection, and emotional safety.
- Family connection is often built in ordinary seconds, not only vacations, celebrations, or perfectly planned quality time.
- Humans frequently underestimate how meaningful eye contact, humor, touch, encouragement, and acknowledgment can be.
- Micro-connections can help parents and children reconnect even during hectic days.
- Consistent small moments often shape the emotional tone of a home more than occasional grand gestures.

Family Flourishing Connections

Family Connection Building belonging through brief, consistent moments of attention and warmth.

Presence Giving another person your attention long enough for them to feel noticed rather than managed.

Emotional Safety Using everyday interactions to communicate, 'You matter here.'

Intentional Parenting Recognizing that connection can be woven into routines instead of added as another task.

Reflection Questions

1. What small interactions with my family consistently energize me?
2. How intentional am I about greeting, touching, encouraging, or really noticing the people in my home?
3. What small moments made me feel seen by adults when I was growing up?
4. When I am stressed, how does it change the way I interact with my family?
5. What is one tiny connection habit I could improve this week?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- Why do small interactions often leave such lasting emotional impacts?
- What micro-connections already happen naturally in your family?
- How do phones and distractions interfere with small moments of connection?
- How can parents reconnect after a rushed or frustrating interaction?
- How can a family create more belonging without adding another item to the schedule?

Try This This Week

Choose one intentional micro-connection habit to practice daily.

- Greet your child warmly when you first see them.
- Make eye contact before giving an instruction.
- Ask one extra follow-up question.
- Put your phone away during one routine transition.
- Give a hug, fist bump, high five, or affectionate touch.
- Say one specific thing you enjoyed about being with them that day.

Parent Connection

Children may not remember the details of every ordinary Tuesday, but thousands of tiny interactions teach them whether they are seen, enjoyed, and valued. Connection does not always require more time. Sometimes it requires being more present in the time already there.

TOO DAMN HAPPY

Parent Book Study Companion

Chapter 6: Learning Lifts Us

Big Ideas for Parents

- Lifelong learning helps adults stay energized, adaptable, curious, and fulfilled.
- Growth often feels uncomfortable during the process but meaningful afterward, also known as 'Type 2 fun.'
- Parents do not need to know everything. Modeling curiosity, humility, and learning is powerful.
- Novelty and challenge help prevent adult life from becoming stagnant.
- Learning alongside children can create connection while showing them that growth never really ends.

Family Flourishing Connections

Growth Mindset Treating mistakes, uncertainty, and challenge as part of learning rather than proof of failure.

Emotional Modeling Letting children see adults ask questions, struggle, practice, and improve.

Personal Well-Being Using curiosity and novelty to keep your own life mentally engaging.

Family Connection Learning with and from one another instead of assuming the parent must always be the expert.

Reflection Questions

1. What is something I learned recently that energized or excited me?
2. How do I typically respond when I do not know how to do something?
3. When have I experienced 'Type 2 fun' in my own life?
4. What mindset do my children see when I make a mistake or struggle?
5. What is one area of learning I want to explore more intentionally?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- Why can adults become less willing to be beginners?
- What do children learn when a parent openly says, 'I don't know, let's figure it out'?
- How can families make curiosity part of everyday life?
- What happens when adults stop learning or challenging themselves?
- How can parents model persistence without modeling perfectionism?

Try This This Week

Spend 10 intentional minutes each day learning something new.

- Listen to a podcast.
- Read a chapter of a book.
- Watch a tutorial.
- Ask your child to teach you something.
- Try a new recipe or skill.
- Learn about something your child currently loves.

Parent Connection

One of the most useful things a child can see is an adult who is still learning. You do not need to have every answer. Curiosity, humility, persistence, and the willingness to be a beginner can teach more about growth than another lecture ever will.

TOO DAMN HAPPY

Parent Book Study Companion

Chapter 7: Creating Counts

Big Ideas for Parents

- Creating is not frivolous. It is connected to energy, engagement, motivation, and flourishing.
- Humans thrive when they have opportunities for imagination, autonomy, and personal expression.
- Creativity does not need to be artistic or impressive to matter. Small acts of building, making, cooking, writing, or designing still count.
- Parents can reclaim creativity for themselves while also making family life more playful and alive.
- Creating alongside others can strengthen connection, confidence, and shared memories.

Family Flourishing Connections

Personal Expression Making room to build, imagine, experiment, and create without needing the result to be useful or perfect.

Family Connection Using shared creation as a way to laugh, collaborate, and make memories.

Emotional Modeling Showing children that adults can take creative risks and enjoy the process.

Autonomy Giving family members space to develop ideas, preferences, and projects that belong to them.

Reflection Questions

1. What kinds of creating or building naturally energize me?
2. When was the last time I made something simply because it brought me joy?
3. How has stress or busyness affected my creativity?
4. What small creative risks have positively shaped my life?
5. Where could I bring more creativity into my home or personal life?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- Why do adults often stop creating as they get older?
- How does creativity affect energy and emotional well-being?
- What do children learn from watching adults create imperfectly?
- How can families create together without turning the activity into another performance or competition?
- Why can process matter more than the finished product?

Try This This Week

Create something small this week purely for the joy of it.

- Cook or bake something new.
- Make a playlist.
- Build or fix something.
- Write, draw, photograph, or design.
- Invent a silly family tradition.
- Create something alongside your child without worrying about the outcome.

Parent Connection

Your children do not need every creative experience to become a Pinterest-worthy masterpiece. Let them see you make things, mess things up, laugh, start over, and enjoy the process. Creating reminds a family that life can be more than consuming and completing. We can build something together.

TOO DAMN HAPPY

Parent Book Study Companion

Chapter 8: Giving Away Our Gifts

Big Ideas for Parents

- Every person has unique strengths, gifts, and energy that can positively impact others.
- Giving does not need to be grand, expensive, or exhausting to matter.
- Parents often influence their families through presence, encouragement, humor, listening, consistency, and the unique strengths they naturally bring.
- Giving from authenticity and joy can energize both the giver and receiver.
- Sustainable giving matters. Love for your family does not require giving away every last piece of yourself.

Family Flourishing Connections

Strengths Recognizing the natural qualities you bring to your family and relationships.

Family Contribution Helping each person see that they have meaningful ways to contribute to the home and to others.

Generosity Sharing time, encouragement, attention, skills, and care in ways that create connection.

Healthy Boundaries Giving generously without confusing love with constant self-sacrifice.

Reflection Questions

1. What natural gifts or strengths do I consistently bring into my family?
2. How do I most naturally show care, encouragement, or support?
3. What small acts of kindness from my parents or caregivers stayed with me?
4. When does helping others energize me, and when does it begin to deplete me?
5. How can I share my gifts in ways that feel sustainable?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- What gifts does each person in your family naturally bring?
- Why do small acts of kindness often leave lasting impressions?
- How can parents model generosity without modeling self-erasure?
- How can children be invited to share their own strengths at home?
- Why do adults sometimes underestimate the positive impact they have on their families?

Try This This Week

Choose one natural gift you already possess and intentionally share it this week.

- Encouragement
- Humor
- Listening
- Cooking or baking
- Organization
- Creativity
- Storytelling
- Enthusiasm
- Patience
- Positivity

Parent Connection

Your greatest contribution to your family may not be the things you buy, schedule, fix, or provide. It may be the uniquely you things you bring into the room. Share those gifts generously, and let your children discover that they have gifts worth sharing too.

TOO DAMN HAPPY

Parent Book Study Companion

Chapter 9: Wiggle Our Toes in the Sand

Big Ideas for Parents

- Gratitude helps us notice and appreciate the good that already exists in everyday life.
- Parents can spend so much time planning, solving, driving, documenting, and preparing for what comes next that they miss what is happening now.
- Being present in small moments increases connection, joy, and emotional well-being.
- Gratitude can act as a healthy reset during stressful or overwhelming seasons.
- A meaningful family life is often built through ordinary moments experienced fully and intentionally.

Family Flourishing Connections

Presence Noticing the people and moments in front of you instead of constantly racing toward the next task.

Gratitude Practicing appreciation for ordinary experiences without requiring life to be perfect.

Family Connection Allowing attention and appreciation to deepen everyday relationships.

Emotional Modeling Showing children that joy can be found in ordinary life, not only achievements, purchases, or big events.

Reflection Questions

1. What ordinary parts of my family life am I most grateful for right now?
2. When do I find myself mentally living in the future instead of the present?
3. What small daily moments with my children bring me peace, joy, or connection?
4. How does gratitude affect my mindset during stressful seasons?
5. What helps me slow down enough to fully experience the moment I am in?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- Why can parents struggle to stay present in everyday family life?
- What are examples of 'toe-wiggling' moments in your home?
- How can gratitude influence the emotional tone of a family?
- What is the difference between documenting a moment and actually experiencing it?
- Why do ordinary family moments sometimes become the ones we miss most later?

Try This This Week

Start each morning by naming three things you are genuinely grateful for. During the day, pause once, look around, and fully notice an ordinary family moment.

- A child laughing in another room.
- A quiet cup of coffee before everyone wakes up.
- A conversation in the car.
- A messy family dinner.
- A bedtime hug.
- Music playing while everyone is doing their own thing.
- A completely ordinary evening at home.

Parent Connection

Parenting can trick us into constantly looking ahead: the next stage, next game, next school year, next problem, next milestone. Meanwhile, childhood keeps moving. Wiggle your toes in the sand. Notice the ordinary. Someday, many of these ordinary moments will be the ones you would give anything to experience again.

TOO DAMN HAPPY

Parent Book Study Companion

Chapter 10: Know Happy and Driven People

Big Ideas for Parents

- The people around us strongly influence mindset, energy, confidence, and growth.
- 'Engines' challenge, encourage, support, and inspire us to become better versions of ourselves.
- 'Anchors' may love us deeply but can sometimes reinforce fear, negativity, comfort, or staying small.
- Parents need supportive, growth-oriented relationships outside of their children.
- Children benefit from seeing adults build healthy friendships and communities rather than expecting family to meet every social and emotional need.

Family Flourishing Connections

Support System Building relationships with people who encourage your growth, well-being, and authenticity.

Healthy Relationships Recognizing which relationships energize, challenge, support, or consistently deplete you.

Emotional Modeling Showing children what mutual encouragement, friendship, and healthy community look like.

Family Culture Creating an environment where family members celebrate one another's growth instead of holding one another back.

Reflection Questions

1. Who are the biggest 'engines' in my life right now?
2. What qualities make someone an engine for me?
3. Where might fear, negativity, or comfort be limiting my growth?
4. How do the people around me influence the energy I bring home?
5. Would the people closest to me describe me as an engine for them?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- Why can parenting make adult friendships harder to maintain?
- What do children learn from watching their parents build healthy friendships?
- How can partners encourage one another's growth without becoming controlling?
- What are examples of engine behaviors inside a family?
- Why do people who love us sometimes unintentionally hold us back?

Try This This Week

Identify one engine in your life and intentionally reconnect with them this week.

- Send an appreciation text.
- Grab coffee or make a phone call.
- Ask for advice.
- Share a goal.
- Celebrate a win together.

Parent Connection

Good parents need good people too. You were never meant to get every ounce of encouragement, perspective, laughter, challenge, and support from your children or even your partner. Build a community that helps you flourish, and let your children see what healthy adult connection looks like.

TOO DAMN HAPPY

Parent Book Study Companion

Closing Reflection: The Choice Is Ours

Big Ideas for Parents

- Flourishing is not accidental. It is built through small intentional choices repeated over time.
- Parents cannot control every challenge around them, but they can influence how they show up inside those challenges.
- Positive energy, gratitude, connection, growth, and purpose create ripple effects throughout a family.
- Your well-being matters because you are a human being, not only because it may make you a better parent.
- At the same time, when adults flourish, the people they love often experience the benefits too.

Family Flourishing Connections

Personal Well-Being Continuing to build a life that feels meaningful, connected, energized, and authentically yours.

Emotional Modeling Showing children what it looks like to care for yourself, grow, recover, love, and keep learning.

Family Connection Choosing habits that create more warmth, presence, belonging, and shared joy.

Intentional Parenting Focusing on the small choices you can influence rather than chasing perfection.

Reflection Questions

1. Which chapter or idea impacted me the most personally?
2. What habits or mindset shifts do I want to continue building?
3. What currently helps me flourish most as a person?
4. How do I want my children, partner, friends, and family to experience me?
5. What is one area of my life where I want to intentionally grow next?

Parent Discussion Prompts

- What does flourishing realistically look like for a parent?
- Which ideas from the book feel most immediately actionable?
- How can parents protect their energy without disconnecting from their families?
- What kind of family culture do we want to help create?
- What do we hope our children learn by watching how we live our own lives?

Try This This Week

Choose 2-3 intentional actions you want to focus on over the next month.

- Build more movement into my day.
- Schedule meaningful connection.
- Practice gratitude daily.
- Protect my sleep.
- Reconnect with a hobby or friendship.
- Learn something new.
- Create more often.
- Spend less time doom-scrolling.

Parent Connection

Your children are deeply impacted by the way you show up, but this is not another reason to pressure yourself into perfection. Let it be an invitation. Build a life you are proud to live. Love your people hard. Keep parts of yourself alive. Let your children watch an adult who is still growing, laughing, learning, connecting, and becoming.

Personal Impact Plan

Choose 2-3 intentional actions you want to focus on over the next month. Consider the different Chapters in the Book.

My Flourishing Goals

Examples/Ideas:

- Build more movement into my day
- Schedule more meaningful connection
- Practice gratitude daily
- Protect my sleep
- Reconnect with hobbies, friendships, or creativity
- Learn something new weekly
- Spend less time doom-scrolling
- Become more intentional with encouragement

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

My Support System

Who are the 'engines' that will help support my growth?

One Thing I Want to Model More Often

For my children, partner, friends, or family:

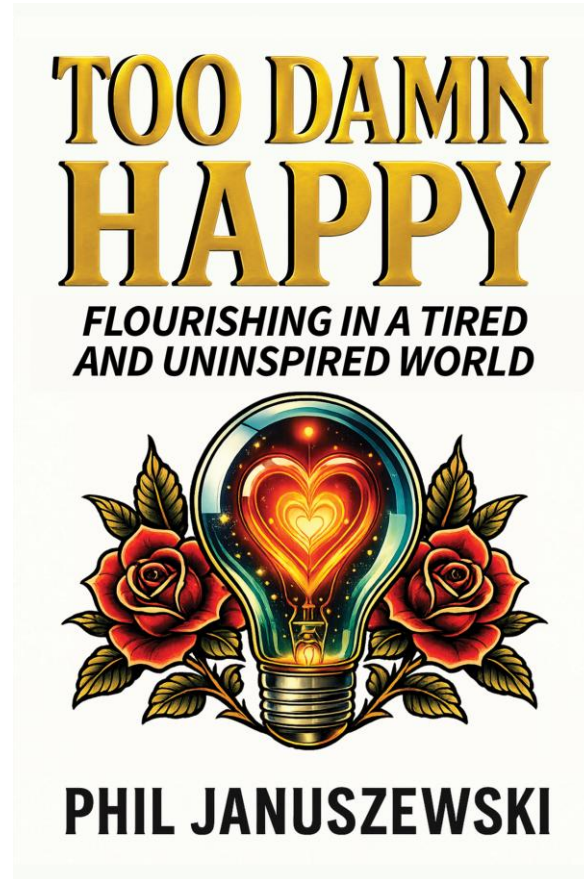
Final Reflection

The goal is not perfection. The goal is movement: forward, upward, toward a life that feels more connected, meaningful, energized, and alive. One intentional choice at a time.

Wiggle your toes in the sand. Share your gifts. Find your engines. Schedule the good stuff. Keep growing. The choice is ours.

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