

# Diagnosis: *excessive happiness*

## Doctor said patient was too happy

How happy are you right now—this very second? Hopefully you're at least somewhat happy, and perhaps you're very, very happy!

In the medical world there's a recognized medical condition called **EXCESSIVE HAPPINESS**. It's described as existing when people are in a state of denial about their "real" situation or condition.

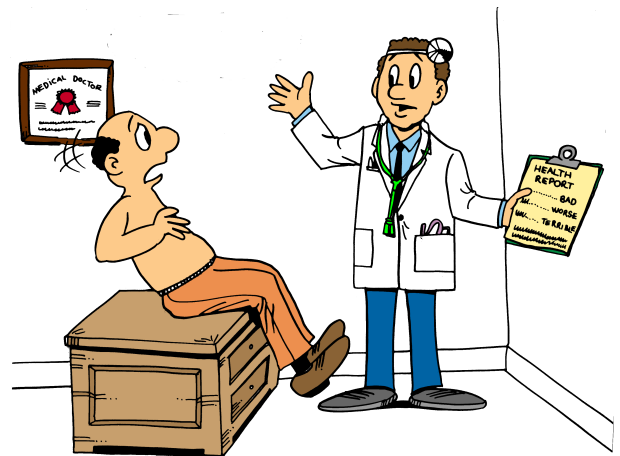
Most likely you're not a medical expert, nor am I, but come on, with all the illness and disease in the world, do we need an illness called **EXCESSIVE HAPPINESS**? And what's the treatment for it? To try to get the patient to feel miserable?

A close friend of ours, Art Berg, was actually diagnosed by his doctor with this **EXCESSIVE HAPPINESS** disorder. Here's how it happened.

In 1983 Art's neck was broken in a serious automobile accident. It left him a quadriplegic at the age of 21.

Prior to the accident, Art had been an amazing athlete in too many sports to even mention. He was engaged to be married to his beautiful high school sweetheart. But in the blink of an eye on December 26, 1983 everything in Art's life changed forever.

Art Berg moved on with his new life...in a wheelchair, as a quadraplegic, with very limited use of his arms, and no use of his legs, feet or fingers.



He got a job as a computer salesman, earned national sales awards, married his childhood sweetheart and had three beautiful, healthy children. He then became an award winning professional speaker. In fact, he spoke 200 times a year, traveled all over the world alone, wrote three books, and was inducted into the Speakers Hall of Fame.

He was a competitive wheelchair rugby player and set a world record by becoming the very first quadriplegic to race in an ultramarathon of 325 miles! It was not until 10 years later that Art's **EXCESSIVE HAPPINESS** DIAGNOSIS was revealed.

This is Art's account in his own words of how he discovered it ...

*"A few years ago, the hospital where I did my rehab contacted me to let me know they were going to purge their records of any data that was more than 10 years old. They gave me the option of paying the postage to have the medical data from my four-month stay in their hospital mailed to me and I jumped at the chance.*

*"A few weeks later a package arrived that was thick and bulging from the reams of paperwork. For several hours I read through the reports. It was fascinating. First, it refreshed some old memories. Second, it gave me the perspective of the hospital staff, the*



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doctors and nurses, the complications, medications, doctor's notes and my case manager's recommendations.

"For years I had been curious about something. During much of my hospital stay, my doctor kept sending psychiatrists to see me. At one time, my doctor had me separated from a room I shared with several other spinal cord injury patients and I was given my own room. I certainly wasn't complaining, but it did seem odd at the time.

"And then right there in the middle of this massive medical journal, I found the reason: **DIAGNOSIS: EXCESSIVE HAPPINESS.**

"Yes, my medical condition was actually diagnosed as **EXCESSIVE HAPPINESS!** The doctor noted that I laughed too much and was in too good of a mood too much of the time.

"I never knew there was such a disorder!" Art said.

"The doctor noted in my record that my **EXCESSIVE HAPPINESS** was keeping me in a state of denial about my condition. In addition he felt that the problem was exacerbated by (in his words) a loving family. His solution was to do several things:

1. Keep me in psychiatric counseling.
2. Isolate me from other patients.
3. And, limit my exposure to my family and friends.

"**EXCESSIVE HAPPINESS?** Yes! I'm gratefully still suffering from it today! And that's why I think I'm qualified to share my perspective on what causes such a grave malady...

1. Happiness is a choice we make every day.
2. Happiness is not a condition of our circumstances or external influences; it is a state of mind and heart.
3. Happiness comes most often when we focus on solving other people's problems as opposed to thinking only of our own.
4. Happiness isn't what we have or who we are. It's feeling valuable and worthy regardless of our station in life.
5. Happiness is within everyone's reach."

Art really was always happy whenever we saw him. And his "medical condition" was never healed. On February 19, 2002, the day Art Berg left this world, he was, as always, **EXCESSIVELY HAPPY.**

Now it's your turn to embrace this medical condition—and you can—by doing three simple things.

#### **Here's what you can do:**

1. Decide to be happy every day, even excessively happy! It's your choice. It's not determined by events or conditions. It's a state of mind you can choose.
2. You increase your odds of being excessively happy when you focus on helping others to solve their problems, as opposed to focusing only on yourself.
3. Once you get this condition, make sure you spread it. Be an **EXCESSIVE HAPPINESS** carrier. Infect as many people as you can! Art Berg did it in his short life—and you can pick up where he left off.

# Attitude is 100%

**Q: "What's the best definition of attitude, Joel?"**

**A: It's this one by Earl Nightingale ...**

"Attitude is the position or bearing as indicating action, feeling, or mood. It is **OUR** actions, feelings, or moods which determine the actions, feelings, or moods of others toward us, and which control, to a surprising extent, our success or failure. It is then **OUR** attitude towards life which will determine **LIFE'S** attitude towards us."

Just picture the word **ATTITUDE** in your mind's eye. See the letters **A - T - T - I - T - U - D - E**. Now, if you were to write next to each of those letters its position in the alphabet — **A** of course is the first letter of the alphabet so it's #1.

**T** is the 20th letter of the alphabet, and there are three of them, **I** is the 9th letter, **U** is the 21st, **D** is the 4th and **E** is the 5th letter in the alphabet.

Now add those eight numbers together and see what you get! Yes, 100. As one wise person said, "Attitude is 100%!"

Earl Nightingale was so right. Our lives really do mirror our attitudes. Sure, people with positive, expectant attitudes have problems, and they experience setbacks, but their attitude enables them to respond in the most effective way possible.

# One moment in time

## Live your life in perspective

Are you too tough on yourself? Did you ever mess up and keep re-living the mistake? Have you ever dropped the ball at a critical moment and never gotten over it?

If you said “yes” to any of those three questions this true story might help you live your life from a better perspective.

The story begins at a championship basketball game. The two best teams in the nation are playing for the Division 2 Championship.

Twenty-one-year-old Jim is the starting guard and high scorer on his team.

In the final three seconds, down by just one point, Jim steals the ball from the opposing team’s guard and dribbles toward his team’s basket for an easy game-winning and championship-winning layup, ten feet from the basket.

But suddenly, with not another player near him, Jim’s foot accidentally KICKS the basketball he was dribbling into the stands! The clock runs out—and of course his team loses.

Jim never forgot that moment that ended his college career.

Now if you ever messed up in your life, most likely it wasn’t in front of thousands of people and on national television. Still it hurts when you do mess up, drop the ball or do something really dumb.

Time heals all wounds, they say. It might heal the wound, but it doesn’t mean it’s forgotten. Jim didn’t forget, but he moved on with his life and became a very successful CEO of several big corporations. In fact his college invited him back as a guest speaker many times to share his wisdom and knowledge.

One year the head football coach asked Jim to help him motivate his players. Past teams had never done well and Jim was happy to help out.

On the appointed day, surrounded in the team’s locker room, Jim shared his story from decades before about how he had messed up—

took his eye off the ball for a split second, lost his mental focus—and lost a national championship! You could have heard a pin drop as Jim ended that personal story.

Then Jim connected his basketball story to their football experience, and challenged them to do three things:

1. Focus on their assignment.
2. Concentrate on what they were doing.
3. Never take their eye off the ball—whether on defense or offense.

Jim left, went back home and continued his business career. Months later the head football coach called him again and asked him to return—and this time it was to celebrate the team’s undefeated season! They had won their first ever Conference Championship!

Jim was delighted as player after player shook his hand and told him it was the speech he gave before their first game that served as their motivation.

Curious as to what exactly he had said to them that made such an impact, he asked them to explain. The team captain took Jim aside.

“To a man,” he said, “kicking that basketball and losing the championship was the part that motivated them.”

Jim was shocked. That story was just one small part of his message. The captain then explained, “Oh no, it wasn’t just the story that motivated them. It was the fact that this old man, older than their grandpa, was still re-living that awful mistake he had made decades ago! They were determined not to carry around for the rest of their lives the burden of one moment in time when they may have screwed up! It caused them to play every game with the focus and conviction of champions—which they then became!”

How does that story hit you? Could you be stuck now on some moment in time from years ago when you messed up?

## Here’s what you can do:

*Live your life in perspective, without beating yourself up for a past mistake and holding on to it. The past is over. Let it go! It will allow you to live your life in perspective and peace.*



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