

How to Experience A Higher Level of Happiness

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By Jonas Cain

Guiding Teams & Individuals Through The 5 Stages of Happiness to Experience the Next Level of Enjoyment & Excellence!



If you've ever been frustrated, confused, or discouraged, then try this strategy.

Pursuing Real Magic

As a magician I've always been on the lookout for the greatest magic trick of all. When I was younger I thought it would have something to do with mastering sleight of hand or using smoke and mirrors, but what I eventually came to understand is that the greatest magic of all has nothing to do with tricks and has much more to do with something much more valuable.

Before I share this idea I'll give you some context for how I discovered this concept:

Think of the last time you were disrupted by something outside of your control. For example, it might be a colleague, spouse, or friend who did something unexpected. Or it might be a traffic jam or accident, or a rainstorm that ruined your parade or a sunny day that ruined your ice-skating trip. Whatever it is, think of this trigger that caused a disruption to your ordinary world.

How did you respond?

There are many things in this life that we can't control—we can't control nature, the weather, or our biology, and we can't control the emotions, thoughts, words, and actions of others—but what we can control is how we respond to these things.

- 1) *Do we choose to respond with frustration and give up?*
- 2) *Or do we choose to respond with fasciation and build ourselves up?*

The Experience of Frustration

A number of years ago my ordinary world was disrupted by a trigger outside of my control, and I didn't react very well to it. A psychologist at the time explained that I was experiencing what was known as *situational* or *temporary* depression, yet my reaction to this situation over a period of nearly three years created what I would more appropriately call persistent depression. I was grieving not just the initial trigger but also the loss of who I once was, and this frustration eventually lead to the experience of hopeless despair.

Despite this, somewhere inside of me I held onto an idea—an idea that I could choose to ignore, or choose to explore. The fact that you are reading this article today is evidence that I naturally chose to explore this idea, an idea that has not only changed my life but has sincerely saved my life. Today I am passionate about sharing this transformational idea with others who are experiencing frustration,

confusion, discouragement, negative affirmations, and despair. This simple yet transformational idea that I am talking about is Fascination.

I believe that choosing fascination over frustration is the key to enjoying the highest levels of happiness in life, and to understand how fascination works in this way we'll look to the mythologist Joseph Campbell who espoused a structured outline for what's known as *The Hero's Journey*.

The Hero's Journey To Joy

The Hero's Journey is a reoccurring mythological structure seen throughout history. We can see this pattern in storytelling, books, and movies, yet we can also view our own lives through this mythological lens. By viewing life's circumstances as reflections of the Hero's Journey we naturally become engaged, active, and purposeful participants with life, rather than a passive, disengaged, and uninspired spectators of life.

There are key words that serve as signposts for each phase of this journey, and these signposts form what I call *The 5 Levels of Happiness*, which can be understood as a happiness spectrum. For clarity, I'll explain each of the 5 Level of Happiness in context with the Hero's Journey:



The Ordinary World

The beginning of every myth is the experience of stability in the ordinary world—an ordinary world that we accept as our normal natural state. In the context of the happiness spectrum, the ground

floor of both happiness and the unhappiness are made up of the same thing, and that is **acceptance**. For our purposes we will define acceptance as the acknowledgment of what can and cannot be controlled. From this foundational vantage we can move up or down the happiness spectrum.

- *The Ground Floor of Happiness & Unhappiness is Acceptance.*

Trigger

When a trigger disrupts the ordinary world the hero can choose to respond with frustration and give up, or respond with fascination and maintain curiosity to build themselves up. By choosing **fascination** the hero sets into motion positive momentum.

- *Level One of Happiness is Fascination.*
- *Level One of Unhappiness is Frustration.*

Call To Adventure

Fascination with life's disruptions becomes a call to adventure! This is where curiosity leads to **inspiration**, with the creation of empowering dreams and goals as solutions to the disruption. Conversely, choosing frustration chokes curiosity, prevents inspiration, and leads to confusion.

- *Level Two of Happiness is Inspiration.*
- *Level Two of Unhappiness is Confusion.*

The Journey

Encouraged by empowered dreams and goals the hero becomes **motivated** to begin a journey towards the achievement of their supreme effort! Conversely, confusion leads to discouragement, holding the hero back from taking motivated action.

- *Level Three of Happiness is Motivation.*
- *Level Three of Unhappiness is Discouragement.*

Ordeal & Reward

At some point during the journey the hero inevitably comes face-to-face with their biggest challenge and receives their due reward.

This success serves as positive **affirmation** to keep fighting the good fight! Conversely, discouragement can lead to the negative affirmation rewards of pity parties, victim-mentality-driven sympathy, and “misery loves company” attitudes.

- *Level Four of Happiness is Positive Affirmation.*
- *Level Four of Unhappiness is Negative Affirmation.*

Transformation

The final stage of the Hero’s Journey is the transformation of the ordinary world to experience the highest level of happiness, which is **Joy!** This is where true enjoyment and excellence becomes possible due to the hero’s courage to take on the challenge of the transformational journey. Conversely, when the hero is content with the illusionary rewards of negative affirmation this can lead to the experience of hopeless despair.

- *Level Five of Happiness is Joy.*
- *Level Five of Unhappiness is Despair.*

After nearly three years of living in the dark night of the soul I embarked on a journey to crawl out of despair and back to the ground floor of acceptance. Once back on solid ground I resolved to make a better choice moving forward, and that choice was simple yet profound. Instead of being frustrated by the triggers that disrupt my world I chose instead to be fascinated by them. In so doing I became the hero of my own story, inspired and motivated to answer the call to adventure, allowing me the opportunity to grow and become more than I ever dreamed I could be and experience the highest levels of happiness.

If Your Life Were A Myth

Seeing your life as a myth is an exciting perspective. It’s like living a fascinating book or movie! It’s also fun to wonder who would play you in the movie version of your life. For me it would be definitely

be Eddie Murphy, because if anyone could pull it off it would be him.

If lately you’ve been frustrated, confused, or discouraged, then I encourage you to try Fascination on for size. As you do, you may find the following myth-related prompts helpful:

1. *If your life were a myth, how would you describe your ordinary world?*
2. *What trigger is disrupting your world? Are you frustrated or fascinated?*
3. *What’s your call to adventure? What are your dreams and goals?*
4. *Have you begun your journey? If so, what’s motivating you? If not, what’s getting in your way?*
5. *What rewards are you seeking? What positive affirmations have you already received?*
6. *What kind of transformation are you working towards? What Joys have you already experienced?*

It’s been many years since I first worked through those prompts myself, and today I am stronger and happier than I’ve ever been. Even still, I can say with confidence that disappointments still hurt, and sad things still cause tears; but, I can also say with authority that what I learned in the process of digging myself out of despair has given me a perspective that makes the low points of life seem a little less low, and makes the dark days seem a little less dark. And that has proven to be a greater experience of magic than any sleight of hand or smoke and mirrors ever will be.

Final Thoughts

No one and no thing can make you enjoy your life, and no one and no thing can make you excel in life. Enjoyment and excellence are personal choices. You choose to enjoy life when you choose to be fascinated rather than frustrated; when instead of giving up you choose to build yourself up. And you choose to excel in life when you take what you know and you take what you've been given and you do something amazing with it.

As a lasting piece of encouragement, I leave you with the words of Joseph Campbell:

***“The cave you fear to enter
holds the treasure you seek.”***

In other words, Stay Fascinated!



Jonas Cain is an author, magician, Facilitator of Fascination, and founder of Positivity Magic, LLC. His company provides engaging keynote presentations for conferences; empowering team-building workshops for monthly, quarterly, and annual meetings; and encouraging one-on-one coaching sessions for motivated individuals looking to achieve the next level of excellence and enjoyment at work, home, and beyond!

These interactive programs are strategically designed to help you and your team Foster Meaningful Connections, Develop A Positive Mindset, Gain Greater Vision & Clarity, and Implement Enjoyment & Excellence Practices!

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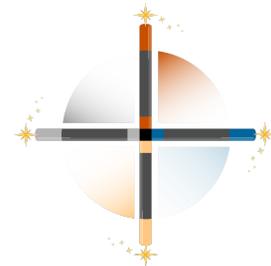
Just Another Day

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