

The background of the cover is a photograph of a forest path. In the middle ground, there is a simple wooden bench. The path is covered in dark mulch and leads into a dense forest of green trees. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating soft bokeh effects. Overlaid on the lower half of the image is a large, orange arrow pointing to the right. The text is arranged as follows: 'Ultimate' in orange script, 'guide' in white script, and 'TO HAPPINESS' in white block letters, all contained within the orange arrow.

Ultimate
guide
TO HAPPINESS

TED LARKINS

Ultimate Guide to Happiness

By Ted Larkins

“Happiness sucks! Who are you to tell me I ‘get to’ be happy? Don’t you know there is incredible suffering in the world?”

My friend Andrew and I were having lunch. It was a hot, sunny Sunday in August in southern California. We had met and become friends 13 years earlier because both of our children had died at birth. We’d had our share of suffering.

Andrew, not quite so serious now, kept going: “Happiness is overrated. It’s fleeting and you’re lucky to get what you get.”

I had to agree, life can certainly be challenging. Our lunch was happening as Hurricane Harvey was dealing destruction in Houston 1,500 miles to the southeast. Who were we to be happy when all that suffering was happening? Who were we, with 20,000+ people dying of starvation every day on the planet, “getting to” be happy? Who are we, to find more than fleeting moments of joy?

My answer is simple: Who are you not to be happy? What purpose does not being happy, *when you can be*, serve? I don’t expect the people in Houston to be happy in this moment. But the two of us, sitting outside in the shade at that hamburger joint, sure as sh*t can be happy. If I were a god or some invisible alien watching and I saw us grumbling and complaining and sad, I’d

reach through the ether and slap each one of us upside the head and say, “Wake the hell up, man. You have those beautiful burgers —yours, you hippy, is made from quinoa—and right now, in this moment, you get to be happy, and you’re not? You’re killing me.”

We were choosing in that moment not to get off our asses and go personally help people in need. We were a very long way from Houston, and we don’t have boats. We could show up and be underfoot, possibly needing rescuing ourselves, or we could give to the Red Cross. And in that moment, in honor of those suffering, at least we could bring some happiness to the world through our own sense of peace and gratitude.

I explained this, and after a few minutes, Andrew, as always, smiled. Many people who can sometimes never do.

I’m not a god and I’m pretty sure I’m not an alien. What I am is a regular human named Ted. I created something I call the Get To Principle. It’s the ability to look at life from the viewpoint of, “I *get* to” as opposed to “I *have* to.” I obviously didn’t create those phrases. What I did do is recognize that I’ve had a mindset during my life that is apt to say “I get to do this,” which often leads to happiness. In challenging times, it has led me to ease and peace. I eventually realized that if, instead of simply being “apt” to say it, I were deliberate about saying “I get to” all the time, I could be happy, or at least be at ease, most of the time.

I also realized that if I could share this Get To way of being with others, they too could tap into the happiness that lies in all of us. I call this way of being the Get To Principle. Welcome!

The Get To Principle is a simple yet profound process that, when used, will help you create a sense of freedom and relief in your life. It can lead to great happiness. I have created this, *Ultimate Guide to Happiness*, to help kick-start you on the Get To path.

Here's how it works:

Most of us say "I have to" or "I gotta" or "I should" throughout our days. We live in a state of "have to." From doing the dishes to going to the bathroom, driving to work or taking the kids to their various activities, we're usually filled with a feeling of being a victim of what's going on in life. Right now, say "I have to." You can feel the heaviness, even if it's slight, settle on you. Even a simple "I gotta get a cup of coffee" has a lack of purpose, or at least a hint of desperation. And it's how most of us live, most of the time.

The Get To Principle offers an alternative to that, a way of being that is full of power and mastery over life. It's very simple. Instead of saying, "I have to," say "I get to." As simple as it may sound (and it is), it can have a profound effect on your life. When you develop the habit of saying "I get to" to any of life's situations, it changes your viewpoint and your experience.

Let's take doing the dishes. I agree that we might feel as though we "have to" do them; after all, if we don't, they'll pile up and stink. But if you instead say, "I get to do the dishes," your mind will automatically think of the reasons to be grateful for this task. First, if you're doing the dishes, it most likely means that you just had a meal. Every day thousands of people on the planet die of starvation, and today you're not one of them. Further, there are millions of handicapped people all over the world who would love to be able to just "do" the dishes.

Second, and more importantly maybe, is that while you're alive on the planet, for this brief period of time, you get to experience so many things, even doing the dishes. The water running over your hands, the soap, the different smells. How the plates feel in your hand. Wow! Dead people don't get to experience that. But you do. It's really quite a miracle.

The beauty is that all of this thinking happens automatically, almost unconsciously. When you say "I get to," your mind kicks into gear —there is an understanding that wells up in you almost instantaneously and you become filled with gratitude for what you have, and compassion for others who don't. You will smile. The more you say "I get to" instead of "I have to," the more joy you will experience. And in challenging times, it will help ease the suffering and pain you might feel.

To do this, I've created something I call the Get To Mantra. A "mantra" is usually something you say, but this mantra you both say and do. Whenever

you're about to do something you don't enjoy, or even that you do enjoy, repeat the following:

Get To—Smile—Do it!

When you say “get to,” your mind becomes quiet and the gratitude and compassion kick in. When you smile, endorphins are released into your bloodstream and you actually feel happy. When you do it (whatever you were going to do) you feel a sense of power in having made a deliberate choice.

This process is miraculous. You can do this regarding any situation you are in, or any thought you have. The more you use it in any situation in your life, the more your mind becomes accustomed to looking at every situation from a Get To frame of mind. It's simple, it's powerful, and it's effective. *Get To—Smile—Do it!*

Here's an example of how I use it:

I commute to work on the train each day. Recently, after a long day at the office, I got off the train at my station as usual. As I walked to my car in the parking lot I realized I had left my nice Bluetooth headphones on the train. As I turned to run back, the train was already leaving the station. There was no way to stop it. “Crap!” I thought, “The headphones my wife and kids bought me for my birthday. I'll never see them again.” I stood there for a minute, my heart racing, feeling the disappointment wash over me.

After feeling that for a minute, I took a breath and applied the mantra and said to myself: “Get To—Smile—See ya later, headphones.” With that, I realized how lucky I was to have a pair of headphones to lose. They cost more money than many humans on the planet have for food in a year. I also thought about the joy I had for the ten months I’d used them, and about how some lucky person was also going to get to use a great pair of headphones! I used the mantra for the 15-minute car ride home, and by the time I got there, I was genuinely smiling. *Get To—Smile —Life and headphones.* What a journey.

Use the *Get To—Smile—Do it!* mantra in everything you do, and I promise you’ll begin to feel happier.

Enjoy.

Ted

www.TedLarkins.com



PS: If you enjoyed this, please go on over and like my [FaceBook](#) page.

About Ted:

Ted Larkins is an accomplished business executive and entrepreneur with a focus on international licensing. Ted co-developed a leading entertainment licensing company in Tokyo, representing major movie studios that included Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures, and 20th Century Fox. He's worked on projects with Jon Bon Jovi, Jack Nicklaus, Mariah Carey, and many other artists. He is currently Senior Vice President of the North American division of CPLG, one of the world's leading entertainment, sport and brand licensing agencies. He is on the board of directors of the Licensing Industry Merchandise Association (LIMA), co-chairing the charity committee and sitting on the executive committee. He is a guest lecturer for the UCLAx Entertainment Studies and Performing Arts program.

Over the last year and a half, during his daily 4 hour train commute to work in Hollywood, he wrote the book, *Get To Be Happy: Stories and Secrets On Loving the Sh*t Out of Life*. It will be available soon. Ted lives with his wife of 22 years and their two children in Southern California.

About the book:

*Get To Be Happy: Stories and Secrets on Loving the Sh*t Out of Life*

By Ted Larkins

The secret to my happiness started during my high school days (yes, drugs were involved) and continued through hitchhiking across the country, through the suicide of my girlfriend, through bartending in

many cities around the country and then a move to Japan. I lived there for nine years, helping start a \$500 million business, including a LARKINS (my last name) line of product, finding enlightenment and meditating in Zen temples in the mountains of Hiroshima, meeting Mother Teresa in Calcutta, partying with Bon Jovi, experiencing the death of my business partner and then the loss of my daughter, and all the life lessons that come with the following statement: *I Get To do this!*

Coming to Amazon soon!