

# Happiness 101: Part 2



## Activity Handouts

# Finding Your Flow

## Instructions:

- Find a partner and decide who is partner A and who is partner B.
- Partner A will ask Partner B the questions below. Partner A will not ask questions, interrupt, make comments or give advice; they will simply ask the question and listen to the responses. Timing: 6 minutes.
- Switch, with Partner B now asking Partner A the questions (same instructions as above). Timing: 6 minutes.

## Questions:

- 1) What did you love to do when you were a kid?
- 2) What do you love to do now? (Answers could fall under any category such as recreation, social activities, business, learning – it doesn't matter)
- 3) What activities have you done for hours without realizing that so much time had passed (this could be things you did as a kid, things from several years ago, or recently, it doesn't matter how long it's been since you've done it)
- 4) When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
- 5) What are some things that you do really well (no matter how important or unimportant you think they are; list anything that comes to mind)?
- 6) If you didn't need to earn a living, how would you spend your time?
- 7) Based on your answers to the above questions, what is one small thing you could start doing now to get more "flow" into your life (if desired) ?

# Activity: Fast Friends

## Instructions:

Set a timer for 12 minutes. One of you will choose one of the questions from Set I or II below, read it aloud and then BOTH take turns answering it, starting with the person who read the question aloud. When you are both done, you can choose another question from Set I or II – one of you reading it aloud and both answering it, and so on. Alternate who reads aloud (and thus who goes first) with each new question. After 12 minutes, skip to Set III and take turns answering that question.

## Set I

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest? Why?
2. Before making a telephone call, do you ever rehearse what you are going to say? Why?
3. What would constitute a “perfect” day for you?

## Set II

4. Is there something that you’ve dreamed of doing for a long time? What is it?
5. What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
6. Share with your partner an embarrassing moment in your life

**WHEN THE BELL CHIMES AND YOU HAVE A ONE MINUTE WARNING, ANSWER THE QUESTION BELOW**

## Set III

7. Tell your partner what you like about them; be very honest this time, saying things that you might not say to someone you’ve just met.

## References

1. Aron, A., Melinat, E., Aron, E. N., Vallone, R. D., & Bator, R. J. (1997). The experimental generation of interpersonal closeness: A procedure and some preliminary findings. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23(4), 363-377.

# Why Scruffy Hospitality Creates Space for Friendship

By Jack King / May 21, 2014

<http://www.knoxpriest.com/scruffy-hospitality-creates-space-friendship/>

After seven years of marriage, my wife and I have welcomed numerous friends into our home. Once we decide to host friends for an evening, we usually kick into get ready mode, a fast and furious sprint in the days and hours before our friends arrive. We divide and conquer the to-do list: select a menu, complete grocery shopping, mow the lawn, sweep the floors, run the vacuum, clean the playroom, wipe the bird crap off our lawn chairs (we have lots of trees), set the table, clean the playroom (again), and somehow, somehow, pray all that happens before the doorbell rings.

Over the years, that to-do list has prepared us for hosting company, but it has also *prevented* us from welcoming friends in our home. Unwritten Southern rules of offering hospitality with excellence have affected how often we invite people in our home. 'We should have the \_\_\_\_\_s over sometime.' And then we delay or postpone the invitation. Why? Because the to-do list is always there, the gap between our day-to-day home and the presentable, acceptable-for-hospitality version of our home.

But over the past several months, Emily and I are learning to lay those conventions aside. Why? Because inviting friends into our lives when we are only 'excellent' isn't friendship. Sure, there are still times we like to go all out, spruce up the house and cook a huge, Jamie Oliver style meal. It can be fun and it's enjoyable to do things well. But that standard of excellence is rarely possible with two children under the age of 3. Friendship isn't about always being 'excellent' with one another. Friendship is about preparing a space for authentic conversation. And sometimes authenticity happens when everything is a bit scruffy.

## Learning Scruffy Hospitality in this Scruffy Little City

It's interesting how wrestling with friendship and hospitality is taking place for us in Knoxville, this place which was called a 'scruffy little city on the Tennessee River' in the Wall Street Journal before the opening of the 1982 World's Fair. Knoxville has always had a chip on its shoulder, being slighted by outsiders, but something interesting happened in the years after this article snubbed K-town. We owned it. The World's Fair was a success. We inverted the insult and made it a welcoming motto. 'Keep Knoxville Scruffy' is a movement in our city that welcomes people into a fun, vibrant city scene without airs of pretension and exclusion.

I've begun to think about what it means to embrace scruffy hospitality in this scruffy little city and how that creates space for friendship. Scruffy hospitality means you're not waiting for everything in your house to be in order before you host and serve friends in your home. Scruffy hospitality means you hunger more for good conversation and serving a simple meal of what you have, not what you don't have. Scruffy hospitality means you're more interested in quality conversation than the impression your home or lawn makes. If we only share meals with friends when we're excellent, we aren't truly sharing life together.

Don't allow a to-do list to disqualify you from an evening with people you're called to love in friendship. Scheduling is hard enough in our world. If it's eating with kind, welcoming people in a less than perfect house versus eating alone, what do you think someone would choose? We tell our guests 'come as you are,' perhaps we should tell ourselves 'host as you are.'

Hospitality is not a house inspection, it's friendship. In an age of ever-increasing loneliness, in a time when Americans eat 40% of their meals by themselves, can I allow myself to value tidiness over community? Sadly, I'm sensing there's pride lurking across the threshold of my welcoming mat.

So here's the way of repentance for us. For me and my house, we're trying to eliminate complications, not add to them. We aren't going to host people every night of the week (after all, I'm still an introvert), but I want more memories with friends new and old than I've had over the past 7 years.

So I begin to ask this question, a good question: *what does it look like to welcome people into my humility rather than my standard of excellence?* The playroom may not be tidy. Our kids, who are lovely and enjoyable, may become noisy and cranky around 7pm. Dinners may be sponsored entirely by Trader Joe's frozen section rather than a handmade Jamie Oliver recipe. I might serve Crane Lake wine. Well, maybe not. Pepperwood Grove is still a low budget wine for a few bucks more and so much better. But why would I withhold an invitation simply because I can't make dinner from scratch?

### **Speaking of wine**

In the corner of our dining room, we keep a basket of wine corks. On those corks is my Sharpie script recording the date, the guests, and any special event that bottle of wine represents. It's kind of like an album of hospitality. Memories of first meals with friends with whom we have known now for 7 years. New corks from this year's new memories. Memories of celebrating major life events. Memories of mourning sad losses.

I hope when I look at the cork basket in a few years, there won't be so many long intervals between guests. I hope there will be more new friendships written there. I hope there will be more Pepperwood Grove corks.

One thing I can expect...I probably won't remember how accurately I trimmed the grass on our driveway on any given night we host guests. But I will remember the people who put their feet under our table.

### **What about you?**

So it's Thursday when I published this post. Go ahead and invite someone for tomorrow night. Keep your to-do list short. Take ten minutes to pick up the house and throw something together for dinner, even if it's from Trader Joe's. You're more ready than you think. And we're all hungry for genuine conversation more than we realize.

## What is Friday Night Meatballs?

[www.fridaynightmeatballs.com](http://www.fridaynightmeatballs.com)

Friday Night Meatballs is a way to try to get back to basics, to strip away the need for perfection and satisfy the need for community. It started in my little rowhome in Philadelphia, when my husband Joe and I decided we needed away to connect with our friends and neighbors. We were both overworked and stressed—him at the office, me as a **freelance writer and editor**. We rarely had time to schedule playdates for our daughter Lucia, who had just turned four, and when our childless friends invited us for nights out, we had to hire a babysitter or just decline. I was a raging extrovert working long hours alone in a home office. Joe missed exercising his talent in the kitchen.

So, on my thirty-third birthday, here's what I told my Facebook friends:

“ So here's what Joe and I have decided to do, in my 33rd year, to make our lives happier: we are instituting a new tradition we call Friday Night Meatballs. Starting next Friday, we're cooking up a pot of spaghetti and meatballs every Friday night and sitting down at the dining room table as a family—along with anyone else who'd like to join us. Friends, neighbors, relatives, clients, Facebook friends who'd like to hang out in real life, travelers passing through: you are welcome at our table.

We'll just ask folks to let us know by Thursday night so we know how many meatballs to make. You can bring something, but you don't have to. Kids, vegetarians, gluten-free types, etc. will all be taken care of. The house will be messy. There might be card and/or board games. There might be good scotch. You might be asked to read picture books. You might make new friends. We'll just have to find out.

**This is our little attempt to spend more time with our village.**

**You're invited.**

### ***We were overwhelmed with responses.***

Friday Night Meatballs grew into a weekly ritual, a comforting, relaxing, energizing cross between a Shabbat dinner, a salon, and a playdate. When I wrote about it for the blog “Serious Eats”, the article went viral. Facebook comments, emails, and recipe requests poured in. We heard about Friday Neat Meatballs in New York, Malaysia, the Ukraine, India, even Gaza. It's not just about meatballs (though Joe's are pretty amazing) – it's about getting together, so cook what feels right for you!

### **From the Blog Post:**

This isn't a new idea by any stretch of the imagination, of course; Shabbat dinners, Sunday suppers, Ramadan iftars, and the like are cherished all over the world. But in late-capitalist America, it can be *hard* to find community. The institutions that used to provide communal social life, like churches and unions, have long been in decline. People work long hours, often with long commutes or multiple jobs. An increasing number of us are freelancers, working from home without company. Social events aren't always hospitable for families with young children, and those who don't have kids can go years without even interacting with them. And with an economy that's really only recovered for a wealthy few, many Americans are more likely to down a burger in the drive-thru on the way to a second job than to sit down around a family table.

Here is the full blog post, found at:

<http://www.seriousseats.com/recipes/2014/09/super-simple-friday-night-meatballs-recipe.html>

# Ingredients for Joy and Meaning

In the book “The Gifts of Imperfection” by Brené Brown, Brené writes:

*“One of the best things that we’ve ever done in our family is making the “ingredients for joy and meaning” list. I encourage you to sit down and make a list of the specific conditions that are in place when everything feels good in your life. Then check that list against your to-do list and your to-accomplish list. It might surprise you”.*

She goes on to say:

*“When we compared our dream list to our “joy and meaning” list, we realized that by merely letting go of the list of things we want to accomplish and acquire, we would be actually living our dream – not striving to make it happen in the future, but living it right now”*

Brene’s list included things like getting enough sleep, working out, healthy food, weekends away, being present with their children, a sense of control over money, and time with family and close friends.

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So what would **you** have on your “ingredients for joy and meaning” list? List the first 10 that come to mind.

To help you fill this out, you could start with one of the following sentence stems (if helpful):

**“When things in my life are going well it is filled with...”**

**“When I’m feeling most happy about my life, what does it look like?”**

**“When my life is ideal I am.....”**

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## ***5 Pathways to Happiness: Positive Emotion/Pleasure, Engagement, Meaning, Relationships & Achievement***

1. If “Positive Emotion/Pleasure” is a pathway that you would like to build on, what are some small steps you can take towards increasing positive emotion and pleasure in your life?
2. If “Engagement/Flow” is a pathway that you would like to build on, what are some small steps you can take towards increasing flow in your life?
3. If “Meaning” is a pathway that you would like to build on, what are some small steps you can take towards bringing more of a sense of “meaning” to your life?
4. If “Positive Relationships” is a pathway that you would like to build on, what are some small steps you can take towards building/maintaining positive relationships in your life?
5. If “Positive Achievement” is a pathway that you would like to build on, what are some small steps you can take towards doing more activities that give you a sense of achievement?
6. What are you *already* doing well in each of the 5 pathways? Which pathway is the most well developed for you right now?