

# Accepting the “Simple Solution” to Our Problem

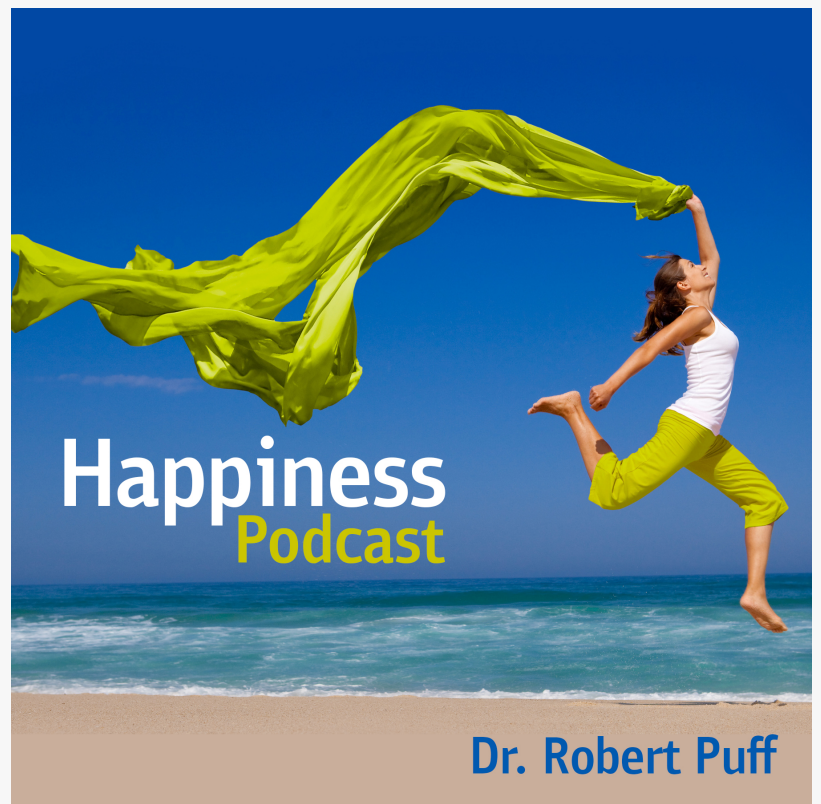
*Sometimes we go through difficult times even though we seem to know the solution to our problem. What keeps us stuck and how do we accept what we need to do?*

NEWPORT BEACH, CA, USA, August 12, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Do you have a problem? Maybe it's a large, vexing problem that causes you to suffer, or maybe it's a smaller dilemma that nevertheless causes discomfort in your life. My guess is that something isn't 100 percent the way that you would have it be, or if you're fortunate enough to be problem free, you remember a time when you had to make a hard choice.

That's what dilemmas are, after all. The word “dilemma” comes to us from the Greek. The prefix “di-” means “two” and the root “lemma” means “premise” or “assumption.” When we have a dilemma, we literally have two choices. (I've never heard of anyone using a word like “multilemma,” which would acknowledge the multiple choices we feel we could make, and maybe that's appropriate. Often, the real choice comes down to two options: stay or go, give or don't give, live or die.)

When we face a dilemma, we find ourselves on the horns of a choice, but the thing about choices is that they often mark a point where we could keep doing what we're doing, on the one hand, or we could stop ourselves and pursue another path, on the other.

Continuing along the route we have chosen for ourselves (or perhaps that we have veered into unintentionally) — well, that's the easy thing, or so it seems. A new route requires a decision, a break, and an introduction to the new path. That can seem a lot more difficult. Is it any wonder



Happiness Podcast

we sometimes keep on keepin' on, rather than bringing our lives to a halt to make a change?

In the early eighteenth century, mathematician, astronomer, and general polyglot Isaac Newton offered his famous three laws of motion, the first of which is the most familiar. It states, basically, that a body in motion wishes to remain in motion, and a body at rest wishes to remain at rest, and either body will contentedly do so unless an outside force acts upon it.

The body Newton was referring to is any basic thing — a book on the edge of a shelf, an apple in a tree. But that body can sound a little personal sometimes when we think about our own tendency to move or stand still.



Dr. Robert Puff, Ph.D.

It's called inertia, that tendency of something to move or stand still unless another force acts upon it. When we are traveling in a vehicle, our bodies are moving along with the car, and if the car stops suddenly, whether it hits the brakes or slams into a tree, our bodies inside keep moving forward, as bodies want to do. That's what causes injuries; our bodies keep moving forward, and we can slam right into the seat belt (if we're lucky) or the dashboard (if we're not).

We understand inertia as a basic concept of physics, but if we have ever been in a predicament, we probably understand it as a way of thinking as well. The word is often used in this metaphorical sense. We blame our own inertia when we stay in a job, a relationship, or a setting that no longer serves us well.

I once had a person I was working with, and she was just too busy. Her business was causing her suffering in her relationships and her emotional life, and it was even causing her physical pain. My advice to her was not something brand new that she had never heard before; her friends had been telling her the same thing for a long time. Anyone could see that she was too busy and she needed to slow down.

It's this way for many people. We keep going, going, going, and in doing so, we often fail to stop and smell the roses and enjoy the beauty that life has to offer.

She left our session with her typical response: "Yeah, yeah, yeah." She wanted a different answer,

a different option, but deep down I think she knew that slowing down was the right choice. She just wasn't willing to accept it yet.

The next week she came to me and she had a harrowing story to tell. She had left my office and been driving down the freeway at a high rate of speed because she was in a hurry, as usual. All at once, the semi beside her blew out a tire. It very suddenly swerved into her lane, and she slammed on her brakes just in time. That truck came within mere inches of killing her.

Because the universe sometimes likes to offer messages that are far from subtle, when she looked up at the side of the truck's trailer, she saw written in big, bold letters the words, "Slow down." It was the same message that I and other people had been sharing with her, but now she was ready to receive it. She had come to a dead stop, almost literally so, and she didn't have a lot of choice in the matter.

That woman's life got a lot better after that point. She received the message, and she found ways to get out of both the literal and figurative fast lanes.

Not everyone is quite so lucky. I know of another woman who sought counseling because she was in a dysfunctional relationship. The man she was dating had beaten her many times. The man was in jail but was getting out soon. My colleague told her that she absolutely needed to stay away from her for her own safety. This was a situation that could end poorly, perhaps with injury or even death.

The woman didn't like that answer, though she had heard it many times from many sources. This beautiful woman had been told by many people to stay away from her boyfriend, but she didn't like that answer, and she decided not to follow it.

It turns out that the man she was in a relationship with was released from jail, and this woman picked him up and took him home with her. That same day, he ended up killing her.

When we have struggles, we want answers. Often, however, the answer is very clear. It's inside of us, and we might even see it — but we choose not to acknowledge it, because that's not an answer we're ready to accept yet.

The answer to our problems can be obvious to everyone around us and even to ourselves, but we still reject it. We want a different answer.

Sometimes we suffer horribly for our refusal to acknowledge the clear answer to our problems. Occasionally, as with my colleague's client, our refusal can cost us our lives. Sometimes it can cause unhappiness, but aren't we here to have a good life? [Happiness](#) is our purpose and our birthright. We deserve it.

One of my favorite family members moved to a retirement community a few years back, and

shortly after she did, her husband died. This woman understood that she needed to move forward if she was to embrace the happy life she deserved. I visited her a few months later, and she was doing so well. She was actively involved with other people and participating in a support group for grieving spouses.

This dear family member told me that she knew many people didn't do well when a spouse died. They might isolate themselves, or even drink too much, and they ran the risk of never coming out of it. "I had so many beautiful years with him and I miss him," she confessed to me, "but I have a lot of years left, and I want to live them."

When we face a problem, we need to take a moment to define it. What exactly are we struggling with? Whether it's a relationship issue, a career issue, a psychological or spiritual issue, or something else entirely, we need to take stock of it as soon as we recognize that it exists. Time is of the essence if we are to get back to the important work of cultivating happiness in our lives.

After we define it, we must start gathering information about it. What is the potential solution? What can we do to solve our problem and move on from it?

There are many steps we can take to pinpoint a solution. Here are some that I have found success with:

- **Talking to friends.** Often, our loved ones see our situation more clearly than we do, and they can have advice that we haven't considered. We must be careful, however; friends' perspectives are valuable to a point, but we are living our own one and only life, and we should take others' perspectives with a grain of salt.
- **Talking to professionals.** A counselor, a minister, a life coach — there are people whose job it is to listen to what it is we are saying and then help us to see aspects of our problem that we may not have recognized otherwise. It can be tremendously helpful to see someone who can offer an objective viewpoint.
- **Reading books.** Walk into a large bookstore, and you are very likely to find a whole section of books related to your specific problem, whether that is living a fast-paced life, engaging in a negative relationship, losing a spouse, or any number of other problems. Others have found a way through; you don't need to reinvent the wheel to discover a solution that works for you.
- **Journaling.** It's amazing to me, what wisdom comes out when we have a pen in hand and we move it across the page. If we come to a journaling experience with no expectations and no preconceived notions, we might find that we are writing ourselves a very wise set of instructions, almost by magic. I sometimes feel as though someone is guiding my pen from the other side of the page. Wisdom emerges, and it's hard to tell where it came from. I think it must have come from deep inside, where answers live.
- **Making a pro-con list.** With any big decision in life, it's helpful to make a list of pros and cons of a potential decision. The pros can be obvious; if we slow down, we're likely to be healthier and happier. But the cons can seem pretty big. My client felt that if she slowed down, she would miss opportunities, lose revenue, and miss out on chances that were available to her. My colleague's

client must have felt that if she broke up with her abusive boyfriend, she would miss out on the good parts of the relationship — the companionship, the help, the support, and more. But putting the pros and cons down in columns can show us that there is both good and bad to any decision, and this allows us to be clear minded in our decision-making.

- Looking into our own mind. There's a funny thing I've noticed about finding the right solution to a problem. It never seems foreign or unexpected. The fact is, you usually know the right thing to do, and if you listen to your own still, small voice, the answer will be right there waiting for you. The solution is almost always readily available inside of us.

That last bullet point is worth some further reflection, because it's at the crux of the issue we're exploring. The fact is that the simple solution to any problem has always been there, and when our hearts are ready, we will do what we need to do. But while the solution may be simple, choosing it doesn't feel so very simple. It takes time, effort, energy, and the support of loved ones.

It is so easy for inertia to take hold of us. Living without intention, we can continue on the same track, in the same direction, at the same speed, with no sense of gravity or friction to slow us down. But we do need to slow down, assess the situation, and listen to the loving voice inside of us that cherishes us and wants us to be healed and happy. Maybe it's a message from the universe — and maybe God will write it on the side of a truck, if we need the universe to be so literal. But with self-reflection and self-trust, we can hear that whisper. We can begin to sense what we need to do to live the lives we deserve.

If we make the decision our heart is advising us to make, we will find that our lives keep getting better and better. We'll keep finding ways to make our lives more beautiful, more happy, and more peaceful, every single day.

If you would like to learn more, the latest episode of the [Happiness Podcast](#), hosted and created by [Dr. Robert Puff](#), is now available. It is titled, "#286 Happiness – Accepting the “Simple Solution” to Our Problem” and can be listened to at:

<https://www.happinesspodcast.org/286-happiness-accepting-the-simple-solution-to-our-problem/>

Links to listen to the Happiness Podcast:

<http://smarturl.it/HappinessPodcast>

About the Happiness Podcast hosted by Dr. Robert Puff:

Do you ever wonder what it takes to lead a peaceful, happy life? Are you curious about the specific steps involved in a self-actualized, limitless life? Are you struggling with anxiety or

depression? Or are you just plain tired and want some help? We explore all these concerns and more every week on the Happiness Podcast, which has been downloaded over 8 million times since its inception. Happiness does not happen by chance, but because we take specific actions in our lives to create it. Dr. Robert Puff, Ph.D., author of 13 books, TV show host, Psychology Today blogger, and corporate trainer, has been studying the actions it takes to reach the highest levels of human achievement for decades, and he wants to share what he knows with you. Come and explore, along with millions of others from the Happiness Podcast, Dr. Puff books and Psychology Today blog, private clients and corporate workshop attendees, the specific steps to take so that you can soar in your life.

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