

Comparison is the Thief of Joy

Once you stop comparing yourself to others, you can really begin to enjoy what you're doing and just live in the moment. Constant comparison robs us of joy.

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA, USA, April 23, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- It's impossible to avoid [comparison](#) these days with social media, the internet, and the constant access into people's lives. But, the comparison trap has been around long before Instagram. Theodore Roosevelt said, "Comparison is the thief of joy." When we compare ourselves to others, whether we feel a sense of inferiority or superiority, it's impossible to achieve a feeling of lasting [happiness](#). Instead, comparison can lead us down the path of suffering.



However, avoiding comparison is easier said than done. The ability to compare these days is so readily available and is almost acceptable in our society. At any moment of any day, we can pick up our phones and see a small moment of someone else's life, and as a result, we may think "Why am I not doing what she's doing?" or "I'm so much better than him." Either way, this thought process only harms us and can be seen as wasted energy since social media is a tiny snapshot of someone's lived experience.

Aside from social media, there are many other opportunities to compare ourselves to others. We can compare how we look to other people when we're out and about. We can compare ourselves to neighbors and assess what we have vs. what they have. We can compare ourselves to our relatives and what we've accomplished in our lives vs. what they've accomplished. Another common comparison scenario is comparing your work performance to your colleague's. This may in fact be encouraged by your company because they think that comparison can make people work harder and increase profits. It's a vicious cycle to get caught up in, whether you

started the comparison game or not.

Next, we'll explore how we can free ourselves from the comparison trap so we can turn the focus away from other people onto ourselves.

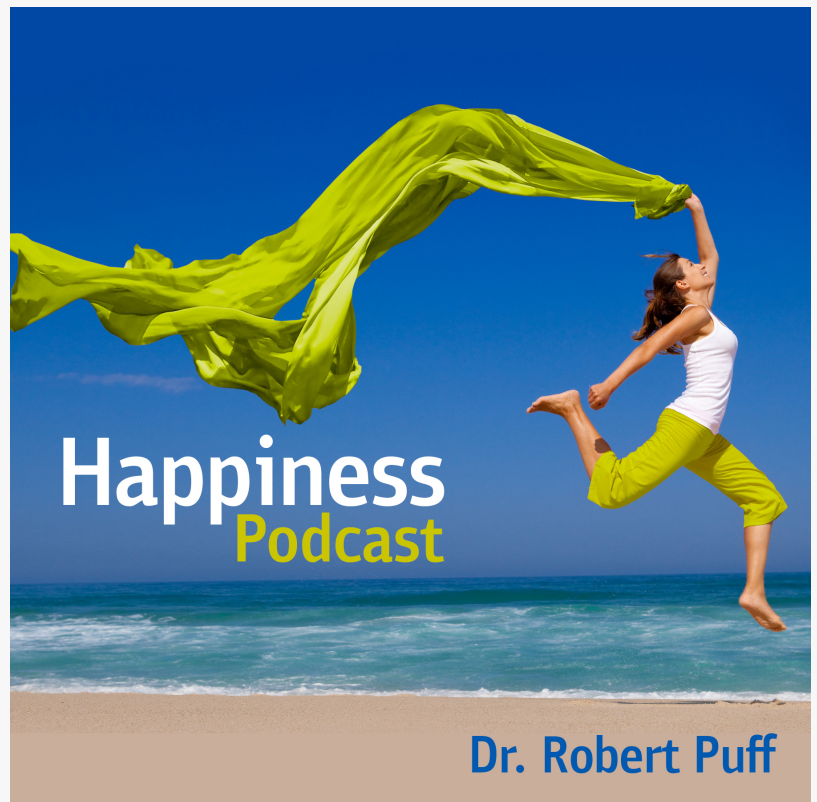
The first thing we have to do is acknowledge that comparison doesn't serve us, whether our focus is on being better than or less than others. Again, ending the comparison cycle is easier said than done because it can be alluring to compare yourself sometimes. This is because there will always be people that we're doing "better" than. On the flip side, there is also someone who is doing better than us. You will always find someone with a better job, a nicer home, a better wardrobe, and the list goes on. The moral here is, if we compare ourselves, we will always lose. When we compare ourselves to others, there will always be someone who has more than us. So instead of falling down this trap, we must first acknowledge that comparison exists, but it doesn't mean we have to engage with it.

A song that illustrates this point well is What Makes You Beautiful by One Direction. The purpose of the song is that no matter how good you are at something, or how beautiful you are when you compare yourself to others it robs you of your own joy.

So what do you do if you want to feel good about yourself? Instead of building yourself up through witnessing other people's shortcomings, a better approach would be to recognize that your accomplishments are only measured by how good something makes you feel. The person whose



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Happiness Podcast

opinion matters the most is your own. Once you stop comparing yourself to others, you can really begin to enjoy what you're doing and just live in the moment. Constant comparison robs us of joy and being present.

We may be able to control how we speak to ourselves and how we praise ourselves, but we don't have control over other people praising us. It's hard to avoid heading down the comparison trap when we receive praise from other people. It's important during these moments to say thank you, and then remind yourself that you are no better than the person next to you, just because you received a compliment. A great way to bring yourself back to earth is to think of other people who are better than you in the very thing you received a compliment for. For example, because I've had a lot of education, people compliment my intelligence. To quell any sense of superiority, I think of all the people in the world who are much smarter than I am. This doesn't make me feel inferior or less than. In fact, this practice relaxes me. It stops these compliments from getting to my head. So next time you receive praise or a compliment, I recommend gently reminding yourself that there are always going to be people better than you. The focus should be on how can I enjoy what I'm doing more, not how can I outperform others.

But what if our work or schooling puts emphasis on ranking or comparing ourselves to others? This is very common - through bonuses, teacher of the year, employee of the month, etc. So how can we avoid the comparison trap when our environment is forcibly comparing us to others? We must acknowledge that the comparison game is being played, but we don't necessarily have to play it. How we prepare for our test, presentation, or interview doesn't have to change, but when the results are released or offers are given, it's important to not pay any mind to our standing. Remember, giving energy to our ranking, or comparing ourselves to others, takes away our own joy. What really matters is doing your best under the given circumstances.

You may be thinking that choosing the path of not caring about rankings or grades will cause us to fall behind and do poorly. But I believe that the opposite is true. Have you ever heard of the concept 'being in the zone?' This means you're performing exceptionally well in the moment. In these situations, which have been studied significantly, guess what isn't present? Comparison. We actually do our best in life when comparison is absent.

When we release ourselves from the comparison trap, we can refocus our attention on living a life that best represents ourselves. When we do this, we're able to create a beautiful life free of other people's judgments and opinions. Because at the end of the day, the only person's opinion who really matters is your own.

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About the [Happiness Podcast](#):

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 9 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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