



The Five Thieves of Happiness & Changing Your Habits

Over the last five weeks, we explored daily habits that create happier, more productive lives:

- **Reflection**
- **Gratitude**
- **Meditation & Mindset**
- **Twenty Minutes of Presence**
- **Kindness**
- **Movement**

These practices build a foundation for wellbeing. Today we added the final layer: understanding the Five Thieves of Happiness and learning how to change habits that no longer serve us.

The Five Thieves of Happiness

These five mindsets quietly undermine our joy and resilience. Awareness is the first step to reclaiming your natural happiness.

1. **Control**

The thief that convinces us life must bend to our will, leaving us frustrated when it doesn't. **Antidote:** Acceptance and surrender.

2. **Conceit**

The ego's voice that tells us we are the center of everything, cutting us off from humility and connection. **Antidote:** Focus on serving—100% control over what we give, little over what we get.

3. **Coveting**

The restless craving for what others have, blinding us to the abundance already in our lives. **Antidote:** Gratitude and remembering life is not a contest.

4. **Consumption**

The belief that happiness can be bought or acquired, keeping us chasing instead of appreciating. **Antidote:** Choosing happiness now, not "out there."

5. **Comfort**

The subtle pull toward ease and safety that prevents us from growing into our fullest, most alive selves. **Antidote:** Embrace change; patterns can trap us.

A Simple Practice: Stop / Notice / Replace

When a thief shows up:

- **Stop** – Pause the automatic reaction.
- **Notice** – Name which thief is present.
- **Replace** – Choose the antidote mindset.

This is the core muscle of happiness: awareness + choice.

Changing Your Habits

Happiness grows when habits change. Here are the principles we explored:

- **Serial vs. Parallel:** Change one habit at a time for better success.
- **Accountability:** Being accountable to even one person makes change four times more likely.
- **Path of Least Resistance:** Make the right thing the easy thing.
- **Habit Stacking:** Pair a new habit with an existing one (walk + stretch).
- **Reminders:** Slogans, notes, visual cues—what the brain sees often, it sees as important.
- **Tiny Changes:** From Atomic Habits—small daily improvements compound.
- **Letting Go:** "Almost all internal suffering is resistance to whatever is happening at any moment."
- **Honesty:** As Richard Carlson said—many of us say we want to exercise daily, but don't. Awareness is the first step.

Daily Questions: Use simple yes/no questions to keep yourself accountable. Example: *Did I practice gratitude today? Did I move my body? Did I choose contentment?*

Tools & Resources

- **Video:** Changing Your Habits — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNeXuCYiEoU>
- **Quiz:** Which Thief Steals Your Happiness? — <https://drjohnizzo.com/five-thieves-happiness-quiz/>

Final Reflection

In your small group, you identified:

- Your most important learnings
- How you will keep your progress alive
- One or two habits you will commit to for the next 30 days
- What reminders will keep this learning in front of you

Poems

Dawna Markova

I will not die an unlived life
I will not live in fear
of falling or catching fire.
I choose to inhabit my days,
to allow my living to open me,
to make me less afraid,
more accessible,
to loosen my heart
until it becomes a wing,
a torch, a promise.
I choose to risk my significance;
to live so that which came to me as seed
goes to the next as blossom
and that which came to me as blossom,
goes on as fruit.

Wendell Berry-The Wild Rose

Sometimes hidden from me
in daily custom and in trust,
so that I live by you unaware
as by the beating of my heart,
suddenly you flare in my sight,
a wild rose blooming at the edge
of thicket, grace and light
where yesterday was only a shade,
and once more I am blessed, choosing
again what I chose before