Book Review 18 Make Room for Happiness by Steven Melemis

William C. McPeck

Happiness From A Unique Perspective, October 21, 2008, Rating: 4 Stars

Out of the blue, Dr. Melemis approached me to review his book and I am really glad he did. Had he not approached me, I probably would not have found or read the book. This is a great book and I am glad I read it.

The essence of the book can be found in the three paragraph Conclusion. The Conclusion states:
* "Tension is the greatest preventable cause of unhappiness
* Letting go of tension is the missing piece of how you change your life
* The foundation of all human relationships, understanding, tolerance and compassion are encouraged and developed through mind-body relaxation." (p. 191)

The subjects of stress and happiness are currently center stage today due to our lifestyle and the nature of the society in which we live. Stress is recognized as having all sorts of health and quality of life implications. The attention on happiness is the result of the current happiness related research coming out of the positive psychology movement.

While most books approach the topic of happiness from either a psychological, spiritual or philosophical perspective, this book is unique in that Dr. Melemis approaches happiness from a mind-body relaxation perspective.

Dr. Melemis divides the book into three parts:

Part I focuses on the causes of tension and unhappiness
Part II focuses on relaxation techniques to reduce your tension
Part III focuses on how to apply relaxation techniques to improve specific areas of your life

Unlike the authors of other self-help books I have read recently, Dr. Melemis provides documentation and references to substantiate what he writes. This adds tremendous value to the book. Secondly, Dr. Melemis practices what he preaches, adding much credibility to his writing.

I do see two small, weaknesses in the book. I wish Dr, Melemis had spent more time developing the differences between stress and tension. Secondly, the footnote numbering in the body of the book does not align with the footnotes listed at the end. Despite the numbering issue, it is not hard to match the statement with the correct footnote should the reader wish to follow-up on a specific point. Neither of these weaknesses detracts from the value of this book.

As a coach, consultant and worksite wellness specialist, I live in the trenches of behavior
change. I am therefore, by default, a student of behavior change. From this perspective, I
believe Dr. Melemis' book adds much to the topic.

According to Dr. Melemis, "tension is an obstacle because when you are tense, it's hard
to let go of your old habits to make room for change....When you're tense you tend to
repeat what's familiar and wrong instead of doing what's new and right." (p.9)

I believe we can all benefit from reducing our level of tension. A great starting point for
you would be to read and then begin to practice the recommendations found in this book.