

THE HAPPINESS BANK...Colouring the World

Intro

I met Claire Massingham in person earlier this year through a mutual friend who thought Claire and I would connect. Our friend was spot on and so, Claire and I have continued to connect. Claire is one of those people that no matter when I see her, she seems to always be beaming with an amazing smile. It's a contagious energy.

Body

Claire Massingham is the founder of The Happiness Bank. The very name intrigues me and so of course I was curious to take a browse over Claire's social media. If your curiosity needs nourishment, pop over to learn more about Claire and 'Colouring the World' at www.happinessbank.com.au and take a browse of Claire's story right here.

Thanks for joining me Claire...

1. Tell us a little about yourself, the lady that is Claire Massingham...

Quite often when you ask someone about themselves they give you a quick rundown of what they do, not who they are. For example I work three days a week at Diabetes Queensland, I am a mum to two boys and have been married for 28 years to an amazing man. But that is what I do, not who I am and I am guessing that you would much prefer to know a bit about me. So if I could describe myself in three words it would be caring, compassionate and colourful.

I love my life, I love being healthy and I love learning new things. I believe I am here on this planet to help people become healthier and happier and to enjoy a life that they deserve. It's all about colouring the world with happiness one person at a time.

2. How did the Happiness Bank come about? And what is your future vision for Happiness Bank?

I have always had a keen interest in health and fitness. In the 80's I was one of those aerobic instructors with the G String Leotard and lycra pants (thankfully they are a thing of the past now). I loved helping people reach their fitness goals, however I always knew that health and fitness was so much more than just working on the physical body.



What engaged me the most was the mind and how it could really mess with people's health and happiness.

This interest morphed into the Happiness Bank and now I concentrate more on training the mind to sustain happiness rather than training the body to sustain fitness. Happiness comes first and then fitness and success will follow. My future vision for the Happiness Bank is engaging with as many people as possible through presentations, seminars, books and happiness tutoring so that I can colour the world with as many happy people as possible.

3. Do you have any special projects/events on the horizon?

Yes I do have one special project on the boil.

Currently I am working on a heart-centred project which involves writing a 'happy letter' every day for a whole year. I am up to letter 140 with only 220 to go – eek! I have been amazed at how much joy this is bringing not only me, but the people who are the recipient of a hand written 'happy letter'. I am hoping that on my last day, which will be 23 June 2015, I will be joined by people all over the world writing a 'happy letter' to someone that they know so that we can send a ripple of happiness through the universe. So stay tuned via the Happiness Bank for more details on this little project.



4. What does 'Colouring the World' mean for you?

Colouring the world means that every day I am choosing happiness. I am consciously making deposits into my happiness account and building a sustainable base of happiness, so on the days that life sucks a bit (and invariably it will!) I can make a withdrawal knowing that I am not going to hit rock bottom. Happiness currency is being grateful, helping others, being kind and not right, using my strengths, surrounding myself with people who I care about and who care about me and making sure that I have some meaning and purpose in my life. I don't want to have a beige life, I deserve more than that, in fact everyone deserves more than that. I want to create a life filled with the most amazing colours.

5. How do you look after your 'Claire' Happiness? Whenever we meet you are always bubbling with Happiness...can you share your strategies/tips with the readers?

Being realistic about happiness is my biggest tip. Many people think that to be happy you have to be joyful and up beat all of the time but that is not realistic. The true meaning of happiness is living a rich full and meaningful life and that means accepting the full range of positive and negative emotions that we experience. There will be joy and sadness, laughter and tears, love and fear, excitement and boredom, peace and anger and everything else in between. Basically you can't have rainbows unless there is rain.

Once you realise this and stop chasing the fleeting feelings of joy and elation but instead concentrate on building a more sustainable base of happiness by regularly depositing into your happiness account then you will start to experience true happiness. By the way I think that the word happiness can also be interchanged with peace, contentment and wellbeing.

6. We all know how important 'moving' the body is...What do you do to enjoy moving?

You know what Kylie and this may come as a shock to some people I actually don't enjoy moving my body at all! What I do enjoy is the fact that I HAVE moved it. A subtle difference I know, but one that I think is very important especially to those people who really struggle with the whole exercise concept.

I honestly can say that there is nothing in the process of moving my body that I really enjoy. I get out of breath, I get sweaty, it's hard work and I find it boring. There are so many other things that I would prefer to be doing. HOWEVER, I know that it is vitally important to my health and happiness to move my body and I also know that once I have done it I feel so much better. So I make sure that I move at least five out of seven days. What works best for me is to do it first thing in the morning so that I limit the chances of talking myself out of it. Often I finish exercising before my brain has had the chance to wake up properly and realise what I am doing!



7. As you know Kylies Courage mantra is all about living a life graced with 'Health, Happiness & Freedom'. What does Health, Happiness & Freedom mean for you?

It means being the best version of me that I can possibly be. I feel that I have a responsibility to make sure that I use the gifts that I have been given every single day to make a difference on this planet. One of my mantras is "what is in me that I can give to you today." In simple terms Health, Happiness and Freedom all come from a place of love and there is no higher purpose in this world than love.

8. What is your favourite food/recipe? Rumour has it you enjoy your raw sweetie treats? And are pretty handy creating them...

Oh my goodness I am addicted to raw salted caramel slice. It is my all time favourite treat and I often have a little square of it after my dinner at night. I get a little happy dance going on in my tummy just thinking about it. The recipe can be found on my website <http://www.happinessbank.com.au/raw-salted-caramel-slice/>



9. A favourite travel spot of yours and why?

My favourite holiday of all time has to be the 7 days that I spent at the Golden Door Retreat back in 2008. Sadly the retreat has changed since then but it was one of the happiest and memorable holidays that I have been on. It had all of the vital ingredients that I love. Firstly, pampering every day at the day spa, organic vegetarian food, as much movement as you wanted to be involved in (my favourite was tai chi qigong of a morning, no sweating or heavy breathing in that!), tranquil surroundings, two beautiful pools to swim in and as much introverted or extroverted time as you wanted. I now have Gwinganna Health Retreat on my bucket list!

10. Is there anything else you would like to share with the readers...?

Yes, I would just like to say that one of the key things to happiness is self-awareness. So often we are all on this treadmill called life, madly trying to get everything done, trying to please everyone, trying to pay off our mortgages and trying to make ends meet. In the busy-ness of living we forget about the most important person - which is us.

We lose sight of who we really are.

Our gifts and values get buried under a whole heap of 'stuff' and then we wonder why we are not as happy as we could be.

If someone asked you what your top three strengths were and what your top three values were would you be able to recite them off the top of your head? If not, I would strongly encourage you to work on your self-awareness. This is the first thing that I focus on in my happiness tutoring and I believe that it is the first step to obtaining sustainable happiness.

Claire, Thanks for taking the time to share a little of yourself with us and educating us on all things 'Happiness'.