It Makes Me Happy!

A WORKBOOK TO HELP WOMEN DISCOVER JOY IN EVERYDAY LIVING

By The Goddesses™ — Penelope Dart, Lynne Hyer, Beth Enos, Karla Buckley and Amber Dart
and introducing Daniela Kouzov
New Year’s Day 2005 – I sat next to my best friend from high school, in the duplex that she moved into earlier that day. She left her husband after 16 years of marriage. In an effort to help her feel better, I asked her, “What makes you happy?” She turned to me; eyes filled with tears and said, “I have no idea.”

My friend is not alone. Millions of women across the country have slowly lost themselves as they have become multitasking machines in search of the “good life.” What is causing women to be unhappy? Research states the things that we desire are not the things we end up liking. The mechanisms of desire are insatiable. However, there are things that we really like and tire of less quickly – like having good friends and the beauty of nature. But, our economic system (and creative marketing) plays into the psychology of WANTING, and the psychology of LIKING gets drowned out. We have bought into the “Psychology of Wanting” which can never be satisfied.

The good news is that we can train ourselves to be happier. Positive Psychology, focuses on enhancing what is good in life rather than fixing what is wrong. This book helps women focus on the positive in life and in turn, become happier.

IT MAKES ME HAPPY walks participants through a simple process that helps readers recognize ways to infuse everyday events with meaning, resulting in increased levels of happiness. This technique teaches participants to look for small things in life and learn to express appreciation, love and gratitude for them along the way.

1. REFLECT – IT MAKES ME HAPPY identifies 12 key areas for happiness. One of us authors shares a personal story offering an intimate moment of awakening at the beginning of each section. Next, we share a personal anecdotes of what makes us happy. It was often difficult for us as individual women to point out what made us happy, but as our group conversations flowed, so did the ideas. We grew in a greater understanding of each other’s lives, shared many laughs and some tears too, and brought each other’s ideas into our own lives. This section is an opportunity to take our ideas and formulate new thoughts as well.

2. WRITE – After recognizing possible areas for happiness, it is time to acknowledge them by writing them down. This helps participants...

3. REMEMBER – When the item or area for happiness is brought back to a level of conscious awareness, it will evoke a feeling of happiness time and time again.

IT MAKES ME HAPPY is not meant to cure depression or revisit traumatic biographies. The lesson and purpose is simple: by identifying areas for happiness in our lives, we reprogram our senses and start to recognize the joy in each new day and turn ordinary moments into extraordinary events. The book will invites readers to join us on the journey. Find a group of friends or curl up on the couch with a cat to begin the process. This is our gift back to women like us, who want to find joy in everyday living and find special moments each day to smile and say – “It Makes Me Happy!”
THE BOOK IS DEDICATED to the memory of our friend, Mary.

We met Mary Turnbladh during a camping trip in Door County, Wisconsin. She lived with her artist son, the owner of Hands On Art Studio, a do-it-yourself studio in a converted barn.

We all remember the first time we met. She greeted us at the back door of her farmhouse and invited us to sit in the dining room. The walls were filled with sketches and poems created with pastels on typing paper. Mary explained that her paints were packed away, so she worked with what she had available.

She spoke of her days as a teacher and how she would greet her naughtiest students with, “Good morning, I love you. I don’t always like everything you do and say, but I love you.”

She told us that she was going to live to be 103, and on her 100th birthday, she was going to dance naked in the moonlight. We believed her. Last year, during our trip to the studio, instead of visiting with Mary, we painted ceramic tiles for her memorial. The week prior, she peacefully passed away at the age of 93.

Mary was an inspiration and example to all who met her. She had an innate belief in the goodness of people and the power of love. It Makes Me Happy is our way of carrying on Mary’s message of finding love and joy in everyday living. Thanks Mary, we love you too!

LOVE
A poem by Mary Turnbladh

Write about love.
Just - write about Love!
That’s a big order.
Love is endless.
Love is everywhere.

Just open up your heart and let it come pouring in.
Love will wash over you and wash you away. Like a giant wave.

You won’t be able to resist.

I know what I’m talking about –
I’ve been there many times –
And it keeps on coming.

Love! Love! Love!
The Delphian Sybil was an oracle at the sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi and is often referred to as the "speaker of truth." Penelope is the mother of two terrific and uniquely different grown daughters, Amber and April. She and her husband, Harlan, are empty nesters except for their four feline friends. Penelope is currently a business administrator at a church/school and recently started her college career, working on a degree in leadership development. Her personal goals for the future include studying Renaissance Art in Florence, studying cooking in Paris, then doing horticulture in Japan and studying yoga in India.

The other goddesses say, "Penelope is a matriarch and natural leader. Her practical, honest assessments act like a magnifying glass, getting you to focus on the heart of the issue."

Sophia is the goddess of wisdom. Lynne has two brothers, a sister and an orange, very needy cat named Sydney. She is a college graduate and is currently the Manager of Benefit Strategies for a large multinational corporation. Lynne has recently discovered her creative side and takes delight in container gardening and making and building things for the garden. She plans to live long and well so she can lead a non-profit organization in the community. Lynne looks forward to the day she can walk to work while pushing her cat in a pet stroller.

The other goddesses say, "Lynne is the kindest person I have ever met. She always works at making it work for everyone. Lynne does small, kind things for everyone she knows, for no reason at all."
Author Biographies

KARLA BUCKLEY (39) aka Athena – "Nothing is impossible with God." – Luke 1:37

Athena is the Greek goddess of wisdom, war, the arts, industry, justice and skill. Karla has been married to her husband, Patrick, for 14 years and has a nine-year-old son, Jack. Karla started her career as a graphic designer, but over time developed a passion for business and marketing. She is an entrepreneur at heart and is currently a full-time student working on her bachelor's degrees in marketing and business. Karla's personal goal for the future is to telecommute from her villa in Florence, Italy.

The other goddesses say, "Karla is our visionary. She has dreams, and the drive to accomplish them. Karla has an almost childlike sense of wonder with our world."

AMBER DART (24) aka Iris – "The best portion of a good (wo)man’s life, her little, nameless acts of kindness and love." – Wordsworth

Iris is the mother goddess and the embodiment of femininity. Amber recently purchased her first home independently and began working on a physical therapy assistant degree. She shares the only blood connection with one of the other goddesses; her mother is Penelope. Amber’s personal goals are to complete her degree and get a good job to help support her future family, when the time comes.

The other goddesses say, "Amber is very insightful and mature beyond her years. She is a wonderful combination of youthful expectation and energy whirled together with a deep sense of purpose and tenderness."

BETH ENOS (41) aka Belisana – "Bloom where you are planted." – Anonymous

Belisana is the goddess of healing, laughter, and the forests. Beth and her husband, Tim, recently became proud parents of a little boy, Evan. Beth has already packed a lot into her hectic life, and doesn’t plan on slowing down anytime soon. Her personal goals for the future include climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro with her husband (she has already done it with her husband) and starting a company that helps animals find good homes.

The other goddesses say, "Beth is the toughest girly, girl I ever met. She can be a kick ass cop, but has pedicures before she would show her feet. She is the quintessential modern woman struggling to find a balance between having a career as a successful executive and being a loving, supportive mother."
I cannot even imagine where I would be today were it not for that handful of friends who have given me a heart full of joy. Let’s face it, friends make life a lot more fun.”

—Charles R. Swindoll
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Postscript

Coming Soon, the sequels to
It Makes Me Happy!,
It Makes Me Happy - Too!

ADVENTURES IN TRAVEL WITH THE GODDESSES™
ENTERTAINING WITH THE GODDESSES™
Nothing is more memorable than a smell. One scent can be unexpected, momentary and fleeting, yet conjure up a childhood summer beside a lake in the mountains...

—Diane Ackerman, American Writer, b. 1948

Odors are very powerful emotional stimuli, explains Bruce Turetsky, a University of Pennsylvania associate psychiatry professor. In fact, he says, different scents may "have a greater ability to bring up an emotional memory in you than seeing a picture or hearing a voice." (LeTourneau)
GOOD SMELLS awaken our senses and our minds. Research has proven that odors trigger emotional memories. The sense of smell adds intensity and dimension to life.

I was tired of people telling me to ‘stop and smell the roses.’ I didn’t want to. I was busy with my career and deep down thought the frantic pace made me important. My attitude started to change during a lazy summer weekend in ‘93.

I took time off to go ‘up-north’ to Penny’s cabin. After a day of antiquing, we were settling in for the night. The room was filled with the aroma of fresh-cut lilacs bursting from the center of a unique vase. I was awestruck and living in the moment. The next day, I discovered Penny packed the vase with my things.

Now every year, when I smell the lilacs for the first time, I stop in my tracks, close my eyes, and take a deep breath. Then, I dust off that old vase, cut some lilacs from the neighbor’s bush and invite that memory into my home for the couple weeks that the lilacs bloom in spring.  

It Makes Me Happy! - Karla 😊
**FISH MARKET**

I love the smell of an open air fish market. It makes me realize the possibilities of the good food that could follow. - Penny

I love the smell coming from Penny’s kitchen when I walk in her back door after she’s been cooking! - Beth

**BABY SMELLS**

Beth’s baby boy smells like Desitin® diaper rash cream. When I hold him, this smell brings me back to the days when my son was still in diapers; a time that I treasured. - Karla

**CHEAP TRIp**

The smell of Hawaiian Tropic® Tanning Lotion makes me happy. It reminds me of trips to the ocean. - Beth

**FRESH BAKED COOKIES**

There’s nothing like the smell of chocolate chip cookies baking. My grandma and I used to spend hours in the kitchen together. - Lynne

**Indulgence on a Budget**

When I was in Florence, Italy, I visited the Santa Maria Novella perfumery. This was the place where Hannibal Lector had a special perfume made for Clarice in the movie “Hannibal”. At the perfumery I purchased several bars of soap. Since using this luxurious soap, others just won’t do. I’m a student now, and don’t have money to spare, but I do allow myself to indulge on quality soap and lotion. It Makes Me Happy! - Amber
Remember...

Make a list of scents and smells that can indulge your senses and soothe your soul—childhood memories, travel, food and drink, bath products, change of seasons, pets, flowers...

1. How can you bring those scents in to your home today? Which smells can become more aware of and look for in your everyday life?

2. Write

Childhood Memories
- Whiff of a cigar while walking on the sidewalk
- Barn smells
- Musty smell from Grandma’s in Florida
- Mimeograph sheets
- Scented markers

Travel
- Bus exhaust
- Salt water and wet sand

Food and Drink
- Bacon and coffee over a fire
- Freshly ground coffee
- Popcorn
- Fresh basil
- Burnt sugar

Bed, Bath and Home
- A baby after a bath
- Anything Aveda®
- Fresh sheets
- A candle burning when it’s cold outside
- Fresh paint

Change of Seasons
- Fresh cut Christmas tree
- Honeysuckle on a summer night
- Fresh cut grass in spring
- Laundry drying outside

Pets
- A horse, any horse!
- Cat litter
- New baby critters

Flowers
- Night blooming jasmine
- Wild roses
- Lily of the Valley
I love it, I love it, and who shall dare to chide me for loving that old arm chair.

—Eliza Cook
Decorating

HOME is where the heart is. It becomes more comfortable when we decorate by aligning our surroundings with our personality; creating a friendly, inviting sanctuary.

I like white. In fact, all the walls in my entire house are painted white. White is clean, functional, modern and easy to care for. For over ten years, I lived with my white walls and nothing else. I had remodeled, replastered and didn’t have the heart to pound any nails in the fresh plaster. I began to notice how my friends decorated with personal photos. This made me think of our trip to Prague and stumbling upon a wall decorated with graffiti dedicated to John Lennon. Amber examined the wall and took the perfect picture in memory of my favorite Beatle.

I held my breath and pounded that first nail. Finally, I found a style to call my own. The primary colors against my white walls remind me of the fun, the friends, and the freedom I’ve found along the way. It Makes Me Happy! - Lynn

We all have a unique decorating flair. Take time to discover your individual style.

Relax. It’s ok to leave a wall empty until you are inspired with an idea.
COLOR
The paint was picked out before I even found a house to buy. The orange bathroom color complements the “perfect” shower curtain, my red bedroom inspired by a tapestry from a friend and my living room the color of Beth’s dog Thor. My decorating style is all about color. It Makes Me Happy! - Amber

MIX & MATCH
Let’s face it, we spend a lot of time in the bathroom so it should be a fun place. There’s so many cute shower curtains; so I decided not to limit myself to just one. I collect them and change them monthly. “Wash Away Your Sins” from New Orleans, Buzz Lightyear® from Disney®, Cats with Sunglasses for summer. The list goes on and on. - Lynne

NOSTALGIA
“The Waltons” was my favorite show growing up. I bought a house that was built during the depression in 1937. The Art Deco light fixtures are one of my favorite things. When a shade broke on the dining room fixture, it took me nine years to find a replacement shade. Keeping the original fixture made both me and my house happy. - Karla

COLLECTING
I love to buy things when I travel - a painting, carving or pottery. I decorate the house with all the souvenirs from my travels to remind me of all the wonderful places that I’ve been. - Beth

COMFORT
I plaster my refrigerator full of snapshots taken from parties and family gatherings. The photos remind me of the fun times we had throughout the year. - Penny

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IT MAKES ME HAPPY
Take a look at the choices you make in clothes, cars, books and movies (and men). Describe the style. Is it fun, functional, or maybe fussy? These characteristics can transfer to your home style.

1. Make a list of pieces you have now that you like. Is it an old chair that you inherited from your aunt or a ceramic cat that you picked up at a craft show? Now, take a look at your space. Are there bare spaces in your home? Are certain pieces faded or worn? Is there a special piece you saw in a magazine that you really want?

2. How is life lived within your walls? Do you enjoy entertaining guests? Do the kids hang out at your house after school? Do you enjoying curling up in a quiet corner to read a book? Are you often traveling and need a simple, clean atmosphere?

3. What are your favorite colors and which of these could you live with for a long period of time? Look through magazines and clip color combinations that appeal to you. Take a look at how your friends and neighbors are coloring their spaces.
The (wo)man-and-his (her)-dog bond can improve pet owners' physical and mental health. Pet ownership can have specific healing effects, including lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. One study, from the University of New England in Australia, found that cat owners had fewer psychiatric disturbances than those without feline friends. And research conducted at the University of New York at Buffalo found that hypertensive stockbrokers improved dramatically after owning a pet for six months. (Gorrell)
Pets can make love strike when we least expect it.

PETS offer unconditional love, devotion and friendship at a level that is often hard to comprehend. It’s their goal to make us happy.

A good friend of mine had to leave town for a few months and needed a sitter for his dog. I wasn’t thrilled since I grew up with cats and Gator was a pit bull with a head bigger than mine. But he was in a bind, and I wanted to help.

Gator was smelly and wanted to sit on my lap. He looked at me suspiciously and followed me everywhere. I had to take him outside constantly to go “potty,” and when he decided to pursue a rabbit, he dragged me across the yard, on my back.

Who would have guessed that while all this was happening, I was falling in love with that dog? He was ecstatic to see me when I came home and was there for me to talk to and cuddle with at night.

Gator developed cancer shortly after my friend came back to town and his suffering had to end. I’ve since gotten to know and love his ‘grandson’ Sampson. But, I’ll never forget Gator. He was my baby, I loved him and even though he’s gone, just thinking of him—*It Makes Me Happy*! - Amber 😊
STRESS-RELIEF
I've got a Type-A personality and often end up getting frazzled and stressed-out. My cat, Ed, lets me cuddle him like a teddy bear and the stress of the day seems to fade away.
— Karla

EXERCISE & SOCIAL INTERACTION
I had to take my dog, Gator for a walk every day or should I say, Gator took me for a walk every day. I never really exercised before and I ended up with really strong arms! Plus, I met some nice people along the way.
— Amber

COMFORT
I've survived two marriages, two divorces and my dad's death. I've celebrated buying my first house, promotions at work, and finding the love of my life. Throughout all of this, I've always had a cat by my side to paw at my nose at 3 a.m. just to let me know that no matter what is going on, it's going to be ok.
— Lynne

IN TOUCH WITH NATURE
When I was a kid, I found an orphaned baby squirrel and raised it. He ate peanut butter and milk and rode on my shoulder. Eventually I released him into the woods. He taught me to appreciate nature and that wild animals were meant to be in the wild. Today, I enjoy watching the squirrels play in my yard and think of my little friend.
— Beth

IT MAKES ME HAPPY
Constant Companions
Like having different friends to suit different interests, I have multiple cats that serve multiple purposes. Hendrix, my Persian, welcomes me home; Millie joins me for exercises on the floor; Ralph assists with gardening; Sweetheart is a lap cat who loves watching movies; and my old tiger Looper, who has passed on, layed on my shoulder to read books. I'm never lonely because I have a house full of cats.
— It Makes Me Happy! - Penny

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Reflect
Ideas: Pets
Add a Pet to Your Life

- Become a foster parent to pets needing temporary care
- Offer to cat or dog sit for a neighbor, friend or family member
- If you have a dog, bring a cat in to your home or vice-versa
- Looking to meet new people? Take a new route on your daily walk with your dog.

No Pets Allowed

- Take a neighbor’s pet for a walk
- Install a bird or squirrel feeder outside your window
- Volunteer at or visit your local Humane Society
- Adopt an elderly person with a pet or visit a nursing home during animal visitation hours

Alternative Pets

- Guinea pigs are easy to care for, are inexpensive to buy and are affectionate
- You might consider a hamster, gerbils or even mice!
- Birds can add life to a home
- A rabbit can be trained to use a litter box and even go for a walk
- What about a potbelly pig?

Think about how to add a pet to your life? Consider the following regarding your lifestyle. Do you want a pet that is active or someone to relax with at the end of the day. How much clutter can you handle?

Maybe you’re not willing or able to bring a pet into your home. Think about alternative ways to bring animals into your life. (i.e. bird feeder, visit an animal shelter, pet sit for a neighbor, etc.)

How much time do you have to offer a new pet? What about space. Will your pet be able to live indoors or in your backyard?

How much money are you willing to spend on your pet? Is it important to have a purebred or is a less expensive mixed breed ok? Plus, consider food, vet expenses, boarding and grooming.
Religious experiences can be very positive. They offer people a feeling of being in contact with God (also known as "transcendence") and contact with others. These are usually positive things and, of course, if someone is more involved in positive things, they will tend to feel happier than someone who is less involved in those things. (Nielsen)

Don’t say, "I follow the one true path of the Spirit," but rather, "I have found the Spirit walking on my path, for the Spirit walks on all paths.

—Khalil Gibran (1883-1931)
As Lynne, Karla, Amber and I climbed a hill toward a tower in San Gimignano, Italy; we abruptly stopped and looked over the valley. A light fog had settled and rays of sunshine shone through, creating a breathtaking shimmering mist.

As we looked out into the distance, we were silent as tears simultaneously ran down each of our faces. No one uttered a word or even glanced at one another.

Moments later, as we continued up the hill, we confessed our experiences. All of us had felt it, a spiritual presence, a oneness with the universe. My heart felt too big for my chest to contain. We all experienced the same feeling, but each one of us expressed it in our own unique way. Six years later, we still savor the experience. Every time I remember this event, it brings goose bumps to my flesh, my heart expands and an overwhelming peace and happiness floods over me – It Makes Me Happy! - Penny

And God said, “I am there in their midst.”
- Matthew 18:20

Allow yourself to become one with something bigger than your understanding.

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As we looked out into the distance, we were silent as tears simultaneously ran down each of our faces. No one uttered a word or even glanced at one another.
“The discovery of a new dish does more for human happiness than the discovery of a new star”.
—Jean-Antheleme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826)

Research shows that chocolate benefits mood. Phytochemicals in chocolate trigger the same reactions as some antidepressants, according to study in the American Journal of Psychiatry. The study authors found that chocolate releases endorphins, proteins with analgesic properties that occur naturally in the brain. But, don’t overdo it on a box of chocolates; just a tiny bit will give you a boost. (Weingarden-Dubin)
I REMEMBER being a “starving student,” surviving on mostly noodles and vegetables with an occasional can of tuna as a splurge.

I looked forward to Sunday evenings at my parent’s house since the visit would include a nice hot meal - with meat! These experiences have helped me appreciate good food.

Today, a trip to the Farmer’s Market is a delight. I love to select ripe fruits and vegetables, and yes, sometimes even fresh meat. It’s exciting to plan wonderful gourmet meals with plenty of herbs and spices. I also enjoy going to a nice restaurant and just ordering appetizers. These appetizers are often the tastiest treats on the menu, offering a satisfying flavor sensation in a few scrumptious bites.

I have also discovered how wonderful it is to pair just the right wine with an entree (and a glass of Cabernet wine with dark chocolate). Plus, I always look forward to dinners at Penny’s house. She enjoys trying new dishes and uses the freshest herbs from her garden. What an amazing difference it makes. It’s about quality, not quantity. Enjoying good food and wine – It Makes Me Happy! - Beth

Good food, like wine, takes time. Savor the flavor and indulge your senses.
Unlike a job or a career, a calling is a passionate commitment to work for its own sake. The effort you expend becomes its own reward, regardless of the money or status it brings. People with callings are consistently happier than those with mere jobs or careers. And if you think callings are only for artists and healers, think again. Recent studies suggest that any line of work can rise to that level. (Seligman)
I KNEW that I was in trouble when I turned down my son’s invitation to get ice cream.

I took a project from work home with me in an attempt to get caught up. After his trip, my son stopped in my office and said, “Mom, you need to make time to have fun.” What a wakeup call. He was right. I was so busy with my work tasks that I did not have any time in my schedule for fun.

The job was not a match with my skill set. I thought that if I worked long enough, it would get better. I tried to gain sympathy, but everyone kept telling me the same thing. “Karla, it’s a job and no one likes their job.” Well, I wasn’t about to settle for that.

I proceeded to look for a new job that better matched my life passions and work style. I applied for a position in which I was overqualified, but to my surprise, the employer created a new position that was suited to my qualifications. Work became fun again. Having a job that focuses on my strengths – It Makes Me Happy! - Karla 😊
There's no easy way out. If there were, I would have bought it. And believe me, it would be one of my favorite things!

—Oprah Winfrey

"There is virtually no system in the body that isn't in some way favorably impacted by regular exercise," says Cedric X. Bryant, Ph.D., chief exercise physiologist for the American Council on Exercise. (Shape)
Exercise

I AM A marathoner. I've biked 100 miles in a day and have even won a few trophies.

These wins represent hours of training, but even more hours of recovery. I ignored a pain in my back and figured it would just go away. Then at 6:00 a.m. on May 13, 1999, I got a wake up call. I collapsed in pain as I stepped out of bed. It was a ruptured disk.

As my back slowly started to heal, my psyche healed too. I opened my mind to yoga. To do it well, I had to slow down, listen to my body and explore the razor thin line between ease and effort. Being attentive on the mat also seeped out to other areas of my life. I became more observant to life. I spent hours outdoors, taking long walks and discovered so much to see along the way. I might not be winning races anymore, but just getting out the door is its own reward, even if I’m no longer in first place. Exercise – It Makes Me Happy! - Lynne

Slow down and listen to your body. It might be telling you something.
“I think it's fair to say that personal computers have become the most empowering tool we've ever created. They're tools of communication, they're tools of creativity, and they can be shaped by their user”.

—Bill Gates
I USED to view cell phones as a toy, or a practical tool for emergencies.

I thought, “What could be so important that it could not wait until I was home to use the telephone?” That was until my husband bought me a cell phone for Valentine’s Day.

My phone came with a whopping 600 anytime minutes that I could use nationwide. I thought to myself, “Those minutes are going to go to waste.” Soon after receiving the new phone, my youngest daughter moved to California. She is in a time zone two hours earlier than mine is. My mother lives in Florida, which is one hour later. These time differences make it difficult for all of us to be near a home phone at the same time. Thus, the convenience of a cell phone became apparent the first month I had it. Needless to say, I went over my 600 minutes!

Who knew I could possibly talk on the phone so much? My cell phone allows me more flexibility and more opportunities to stay connected. Connectedness, convenience and the ability to share exciting news at any time – It Makes Me Happy!

- Penny

Embrace new technology. You never know when it might come in handy.
I believe art is something that makes somebody feel something. In other words, a picture has the ability to create a mood for you; it can make you feel hate, comfort, pleasure, or even a simple feeling of happiness, because it looks good but has no meaning. (Newton)

Art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life.

—Pablo Picasso
I HAVE always loved art and took every class offered in school. I enjoyed creating pieces and trying new techniques.

I didn’t think of art as a class, that is, unless we were studying art history. I felt art history was a waste of time. The artists were all dead, so who cared? Certainly, they created some amazing pieces, but art class, in my mind, was for creating your own art.

Then at age 19, I found myself in Florence, Italy, standing in front of Michelangelo’s David with my head tilted back and my eyes opened wide. It was at that moment that it hit me; all of those pieces that I had been required to study were REAL. I could feel the energy radiating off David and could almost see him breathe. No words or pictures could do him justice.

That same trip I saw The Pieta, The Sistine Chapel, Botticelli’s La Primavera and Birth of Venus, and hundreds of other breathtaking works. The talent, power and history held inside these creations was unbelievable. I was left wanting to see and learn more. Art, past or present – It Makes Me Happy! - Amber 😊
A recent study, headed by sociology professor Hans-Peter Kohler of the University of Pennsylvania, compared happiness levels in adult identical twins -- some of whom are parents and some who aren't. The study found that people with children are, in fact, happier than those without children. (Krakovky)

We find delight in the beauty and happiness of children that makes the heart too big for the body."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson
Becoming a first time mother at 40 is real life-changer. My husband and I were clueless.

We imagined a cute little kid going camping, watching Disney® movies and eating ice cream. What we failed to recognize is that those kids start out as totally dependent babies. They never sleep when you do, and stay that way for about a year.

Now we look back on our naivety and laugh. This morning when I came into the room to see my 14-month-old dancing to Reggae music, I smiled. Every day I see the wonder in his eyes; the excitement of a plane crossing the sky or just a chipmunk in the yard. It brings me joy to experience the world for the first time again, through his eyes. My son adds a new dimension to life that I previously had no idea even existed. Now when I am feeling the stress of being a parent, I take my son by the hand and we go for a walk. Seeing the world through his eyes, and my new eyes as a parent – It Makes Me Happy! - Beth
There are no uninteresting things, there are only uninterested people.

—Gilbert K. Chesterton

Medical studies have shown that there are physical, psychological and spiritual benefits from having an active interest in crafting. One study of 30 female heart patients, reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, showed a significant decrease in heart rate, blood pressure and perspiration rate while the subjects completed a simple craft project. (Calder)
When you try new things, the fear of failure is replaced with the joy of learning.

“DO YOU have a hobby?” Five years ago, I would have answered, “I enjoy reading anything.”

Knowing a bit about a lot makes me feel smart. There’s a huge difference in reading about a subject and actually doing it. Reading is safe. Doing something invites the possibility of failure.

A short time ago, I attempted to paint a ceramic turtle to enhance my garden. Unfortunately, the image in my mind didn’t translate through to my paintbrush. I was disappointed in my lack of artistic talent. I realized I could just tuck the turtle in the back of my garden where no one would see her. However, she wasn’t so easily denied.

But, spring brought other crafting adventures and as my palette of crafts grew so did my confidence. Ms. Turtle took center stage when I gave her a touch of mosaic glass. I couldn’t hide her any longer, and strangely enough, I grew to love her. Having hobbies like painting and gardening are a way for me to explore new skills, even if I still need to work on perfecting them. Being open to trying new hobbies—It Makes Me Happy!

- Lynne
Travel inspires us and encourages us explore beyond our everyday world. It gives us a new perspective and energy when we return to it. (Erickson)

I think that travel comes from some deep urge to see the world, like the urge that brings up a worm in an Irish bog to see the moon when it is full.

—Lord Dunsany
I WAS born in Hawaii. My mother is from California, and my father from Wisconsin.

As a result, the value of travel was apparent to me at a very young age. The idea of going to Europe, on the other hand, living on my humble, non-profit employee’s salary seemed far out of reach to me.

Then Karla and her sister invited me to go with them on a European backpacking trip in 1994. “Financially impossible,” was my first thought. Karla finally persuaded me to join them. I saw this trip as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

During that unforgettable trip, we visited Rome, where Karla instructed me to throw a coin into the Trevi Fountain. She assured me it would guarantee a return trip. I scoffed at this idea. I knew Europe was a once-in-a-lifetime event. The idea of going just once was satisfying enough for me at the time. It’s funny, I think of that coin often. Since then, I’ve made 10 happy trips to Europe in the past 12 years.

Think a travel destination is too far out of reach. Think again.

– It Makes Me Happy! - Penny

It Makes Me Happy
What makes us so special? We are a diverse group of women including Penelope Dart (Delphia), the strong-minded beauty and matriarch of the group; Lynn Hyer (Sophia), the practical peacemaker; Beth Enos (Belisana), the mom and tough girly-girl; Karla Buckley (Athena), the creative dreamer; Amber Dart (Iris), the cute young lady with a wise old soul; and the newest Goddess, Daniela (Pele), the quick-witted fashionista. We subscribe to different politics, talents, religions and marital status, but come together as the Goddesses™ with a single goal of finding joy in everyday living.

While shopping one Saturday afternoon, Penny picked up a beautifully embroidered linen towel and said, “Dishtowels make me happy.” Then Beth selected a bar of handmade soap from Italy, took a whiff, and proclaimed, “Soap makes me happy.” Soon, we were all calling out what makes us happy and the phenomenon of IT MAKES ME HAPPY had begun. We started to take notice of the simple pleasures that our busy lives seemed to rob from us. Lynne recognized the irises from her aunt that were popping up on the east side of her house. Amber noticed the beauty in a white fluffy cloud against a bright blue sky while driving home from school. Karla took delight in her nine-year-old son’s drawing taped to the dining room door with enough tape to hold back an army.

Yet, we were not always so happy. Like most life lessons, we learned the hard way. Prior to finding friendship with each other, one of us was told to get some hobbies, another told to find her own friends, while yet another was trying to meet everyone else’s expectations. It was not until we all became friends and started getting together every Saturday morning for a jog, coffee, and bagels that we realized the bond that was forming and the life lessons that we were learning. We slowly realized that we were not bitter anymore. We were choosing to look at things differently, and we were having fun and enjoying life. We know what makes us happy and want to share our formula with women everywhere. We also practice what we preach. Below is a note from an e-mail message Penny sent regarding a book-planning session.

Hi All - What an absolutely, memorable meeting last night. WOW, everything was right, wonderful food, great weather, baby birds, people dropping by and synergy. I was so excited that I couldn't sleep. The book we are producing keeps getting better and better. Yes, the process last night was “Making Me Happy.” Our ideas and energy combined is a force to be reckoned with! Writing a book – “It Makes Me Happy!” Love, Penny
IT’S BEEN two years since the IT MAKES ME HAPPY project began. We’re a little older and a little wiser too.

PENELlope Dart Penny graduated from college and is running for the office of Village Trustee. She has found her calling as a servant leader.

LYNne Hyer Lynne left her job of 23 years to become Operations Manager for a large non-profit healthcare organization. Her cat is happy she now works less and plays more.

BETH Enos Beth’s baby is now two years old. She’s gone back to her corporate position and has become active in rescuing animals both big and small.

Karla Buckley Karla graduated from college and found a job (with Lynne’s non-profit), helping businesses assist their employees in taking steps to balance their lives and get healthier.

AMBer (Dart) Schroeder Amber graduated from school, met a nice boy and got married. She also adopted a cat, and a dog that Beth rescued. She wants a baby ASAP.

DANIELA Kouzov Daniela is the newest Goddess. She is a wife, mother of a two year old and fashion designer extraordinaire. Check out Amber’s wedding dress - it’s a DK Designs original!
WITH THIS GROUP of women, or The Goddesses™ as they are known, there’s always an adventure waiting around the corner. It might be a celebrity sighting in New York, a deportation from France, searching for relics in Rome, discovering abandoned kittens in the north woods while training for a marathon or tracking down a thief at the local parish hall.

Whatever the adventure, these five ordinary women are living extraordinary lives in Green Bay, Wisconsin through their discovery of the key to unlocking joy in everyday living. The medical field named the process they’ve discovered Positive Psychology. Whatever it’s called, the girls simply say, “It Makes Me Happy!” You’re invited to join them on the journey.

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— Penelope Dart, Lynne Hyer, Beth Enos, Karla Buckley, Amber Dart and Daniela Kouzov
Call (920) 432-1565 or e-mail: KarlaB@new.rr.com

PRAISE FOR “IT MAKES ME HAPPY!”

If you can learn to be happy in Green Bay, you can be happy anywhere!
— MICHAEL FELDMAN, Host of the National Public Radio show, Whad’ Ya Know?

I stop and look at things differently now. Since reading “It Makes Me Happy!,” I choose to remember things that make me happy, like the smell of lilacs, rather than the things that go wrong in a day.
— LAURA KEATING, single, working mother of two challenging boys.

JOIN THE GIRLS ON THEIR JOURNEY TO DISCOVERING JOY IN EVERYDAY LIVING