

Appendix 1:

A way to begin -- One family's experience with the 16 Guidelines

This is the story of how our family of 5 has been using the 16 Guidelines during 2007, and it includes some suggestions of how you might like to approach this resource. I enjoyed exploring the 16 Guidelines in depth in my roles as parent, music teacher, and teacher of Sunday classes for children. **Ready Set Happy** is one of the results.

What I have learned while parenting three children with very different personalities, teaching music to students with varied learning styles and teaching classes for toddlers through to adults in secular and several different faith traditions, is that not everyone will (or should) use **Ready Set Happy** in the same way. How you approach it will depend on your personality and whether you are a child, a parent, a teacher, or other caring adult.

Ready Set Happy has 16 sections, one for each guideline. Each section has

- a page showing a photographic poster for that guideline;
- a page of graphics introducing the cartoon character guide which includes
 - a definition of the guideline,
 - a description of the character guide's main characteristics,
 - a drawing of the character guide, and
 - the character guide's Positive Chant (associated sound files are [here](#));
- a page with a play, poem, song or chant which illustrates the guideline;
- three quick 'Try it now' activities which take about 30 minutes each;
- three longer 'Try it for real' activities to internalize the concepts over several days or a week; and
- an Instant Replay page with review questions.

Appendices 2 and 3 summarize all 16 guidelines in text, symbols, pictures, and song.

If you are a child or young person:

Good for you - using this on your own! I hope you have a great time and share it with others. I suggest you start with the guideline that interests you the most. The 'Try it now' activities will give you a quick taste of success. If you find those activities interesting, or you learn from them, then start the 'Try it for real' activities the following week. If these ideas make you happier, keep going! You could start with the Instant Replay at the end of each section, guessing what activities were used to get those questions. If you like one type of activity, for example the art projects, science experiments or poems, you could skim the chapters for those types of activities. There is no wrong way to go about it.



If you are a parent or caregiver working with one child:

Move at whatever speed suits you, the child, and the time you have together. If you plan to cover all the material, from one to three weeks per guideline is a good range to keep interest and let the ideas sink in. You may need to recruit friends or neighbors/classmates/siblings for some group activities.



Do you know your child's learning style? If they are auditory learners you can read to them or listen to the [sound files](#). If they are visual, let them try the art activities first. You could find picture books with the same themes at your local library. If they are kinesthetic learners, try the science experiments. If they learn through writing things down, teach the sand story in Aspiration and let them copy the icons or write out the chants.

You don't have to do every activity for each guideline. If they get it, move on. Ask them if they are learning about any of these 16 subjects at school and coordinate your schedule with what they are learning there.

If you are a family using the guidelines at home:

I recommend choosing one time during the week to do as many of the 'Try it now' activities as possible, and choosing one 'Try it for real' activity to concentrate on for the week. The following week you could choose another 'Try it for real' activity or move on to a new guideline. You may spend more time on some guidelines than others. Organizing to check-in in the morning and evening is a good way to keep that guideline in mind all day to make it a part of your life, and not just a theory. This would also be a good time to sing or say the Positive Chant for that guideline.



If you are a teacher or other adult working with a group of children:



You may find the 'Try it now' activities best suited to a classroom environment. If you have the students every day, small groups of children could work with certain guidelines and teach them to the others! If you meet once a week allow several weeks to explore each guideline.

In our Sunday classes we take about three weeks per guideline. We use a guitar and the Positive Chants to get the important ideas ringing in the ears of the students throughout the week. You don't need to be a great guitar player or singer to do this. For all the Positive Chants play a C chord on beats 1 2 and 4 and a Csus4 (sounds fancy but it's just a C chord with a little finger added on the D string, string 4, at fret three) on beat 3. Or you can download the [sound files](#) (see Appendix 2) and play them for the children. But they'll like the guitar better, even if you're a beginner, so be brave.

Our family experience:

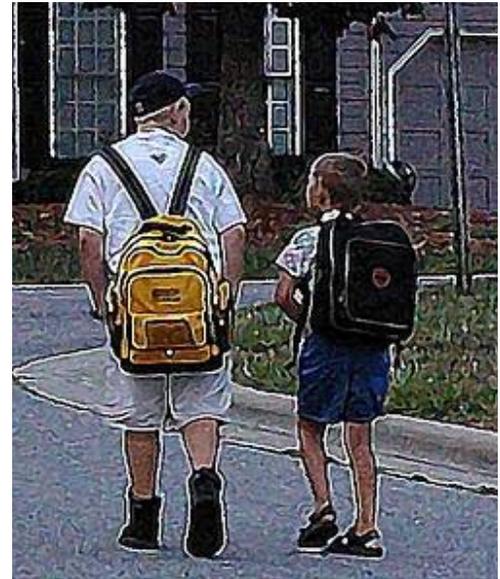
You may get some insight into how you want to use the 16 Guidelines by reading our story, so I offer it in that spirit. My children were 10, 16, and 20 when I received two preliminary booklets prepared for adults attending international conferences on Happiness and Its Causes.

These books provided several pages of text on each of the 16 Guidelines. My 10-yr-old son and I decided it might be useful to make a poster for each one of these guidelines as a starting point for Sunday classes, so we set out to learn about them.



Each week my son and I spent about an hour on Sunday morning at home, reading aloud to each other, and discussing the few pages. We wrote down on a small note card anything we thought was important. On one half of the card I wrote my thoughts, on the other half he wrote his. I wrote down comments he made that I thought might be useful to other children - some of those quotes are included in **Ready Set Happy**. After our pleasant time discussing these big ideas, we put the note card up on the fridge for the week.

Every morning, as he headed out to school or play, we reminded each other of the guideline for the week with the intention to observe that quality in ourselves or others during the day or perhaps try to exemplify it.



At bedtime we checked in to see what we had each noticed. We did this check-in almost every morning and night for the week -- sometimes we forgot. On the following Sunday we started with the next guideline.



As we worked through one guideline per week, we began to get a sense of what photo might represent each guideline. My son and I discussed how to make this information attractive and memorable for children. We came up with gamecards using a cartoon character based on a simple memorable shape for each guideline, and he began designing a game based on these cards. The simple matching game is included in **Ready Set Happy**, and a more involved game design is still in progress. You can see this card bigger by clicking [here](#).

At the same time we were involved with a one-Sunday-a-month program for families where a traditional story was told to the children. Our role was to write a short musical moral and sing it with the families right after the stories to help the children remember the main point. The adults seemed to enjoy this as much as the children, so we extended this story and song idea to the guidelines; we wrote a [fable of our own](#) to introduce the character guides we had drawn, and we wrote a [chant with a tune](#) for each of the guidelines.

By the time we began weekly Sunday classes in September we had completed the cycle of 16 weeks on our own, had finished the posters, and had begun working with [Essential Education](#) on the Children's Kit.

Family and friends have been a big part of our experience with the guidelines, lending their assistance to develop this component of the Children's Kit. My daughter helped with editing the fable and made suggestions for character development; my sister, my husband and friends from around the world contributed photos they had taken to enhance the activities; my younger son helped by reviewing text, and my older son helped by keeping us smiling (he's got Delight down, that one). Eventually **Ready Set Happy** found it's editor and its title, and the project expanded to the book you see now - truly a community effort on an international level.



Reflection on the last year:



It was a wonderful gift to get to work with these ideas in depth, and to build the vocabulary of these 16 qualities with my children. When we read comics in the newspaper or see movies, we discuss, 'Which one of the guidelines does this relate to? How?' and our understanding keeps growing. My children understand that these are the ideas I think are important and feel are worth our time and attention.

I have precious memories of the time I spent on those Sunday mornings snuggled with my youngest on the couch, reading and talking about important ideas.

Another highlight was the smiles on the faces of the community as I paused during singing [Belly Blues](#) for Contentment and the children in the group spontaneously finished the punchline, with the adults laughing out loud. What I am learning from the guidelines and work to practice in my own life is firmly nudging me down the path toward being a happier person.

As we prepare to put **Ready Set Happy** online, my children are all in transition: one to middle school across town, one to college across the state, and the oldest to a summer in Africa halfway across the world. Each of them has different guidelines well in hand and others not realized. This work has provided a timely opportunity for me to help write a love letter, not only to these children but to all children of the world, and across the wisdom of the centuries. These are the important ideas I would communicate to any of them, to any grandchildren or great-grandchildren I am privileged to know and especially those I won't know.



Have any important ideas been left out? As a music teacher I thought of one possibility to add.... Harmony. Perhaps Harmony is not separate from the 16 qualities but is a result of the blending of the other guidelines. Harmony within and Harmony without.



The social scientists tell us that a big part of our happiness is about meaningful interpersonal connections. So to what we (my son, my editor, other FDCW authors and I) have written about the guidelines I add a specific suggestion - turn off the television, put down the video games, step away from the computer sometimes and pick up a musical instrument and play with someone. That instrument could be your own voice or your own hands playing a clapping game like the one in the Principles section. Listening closely enough to play with each other, enhancing the sounds each are making, knowing your own part and learning to improvise, agreeing on a key -- all these are analogies for getting along harmoniously in this world and in the world within. May you all make beautiful music together.

There are qualities that we all know are positive, such as Kindness, Generosity, Patience, Respect, Service, Gratitude. These make us and those around us feel good. And there are qualities we know are negative, such as Greed, Hate, Arrogance, and Fear which make us unhappy and disturb those around us. By using the 16 Guidelines we can work together, all of us of any religion, any faith tradition as well as non-believers, in our efforts to move away from the negative qualities and move toward the positive ones.

May you find short term pleasure and more importantly long term happiness by working with these guidelines. This offering, this book, this bowl is empty until you fill it by trying these activities and putting these guidelines into practice in your life. If 16 are too many for you, I offer these four: Breathe, Appreciate, Help, Evolve. If 4 are too many, there is Kindness.



May this work be of benefit!

Love,

Denise Flora
February 14, 2008