

RESISTING HAPPINESS

Q&A WITH MATTHEW KELLY

- 1) You've said before in interviews that every book has a life of its own. Tell us about the life of this book?

Matthew: *For more than twenty years, I have resisted (pun intended) writing about myself. As I started writing this book, it quickly became apparent that in order to do it very well, I was going to have to make myself vulnerable and reveal myself to the reader on a whole new level. As an introvert and a deeply private person, I found this to be very, very, difficult.*

- 2) Who did you have in mind when writing this book?

Matthew: *I wanted to write a book that would speak deeply into the lives of two groups. First and foremost, the marginal or disengaged Catholic. I wanted to write a book that began with something we all struggle with and led to the realization that without God at the center of our lives, we don't really stand a chance of having the happiness we all desire. Along the way, I wanted to teach them how to pray and give them the building blocks for a solid spiritual life.*

The second group I wanted to write for was committed Catholics. Many of us who are committed Catholics have gaps in our spiritual development. I wanted to share my early conversion journey with them so they could continue to build a solid inner life.

It is, of course, very difficult to write for both of these groups. But these are the people who come to Church at Christmas, and I wanted to write a book that was perfectly suited to our Christmas Book Program. I think I have succeeded, but we will only know when the emails and reviews begin to flow in.

- 3) How does this book tie in with the mission of Dynamic Catholic to “re-energize the Catholic Church in America by developing world-class resources that inspire people to rediscover the genius of Catholicism”?

Matthew: *Books change our lives. I have seen it. The Book Program has proved it again and again. It is amazing how many people come back to church and get more*

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involved in their parish because someone hands them a book at Christmas Mass. It's really incredible. I was skeptical at first, but it just works.

To re-energize the Church we need to trigger people into engagement. The book program has become a proven and trusted way to do that. So writing this book with that specific purpose in mind ties perfectly into the Dynamic Catholic mission of meeting people where they are and leading them to where they are called to be, of engaging the disengaged, or triggering conversion, all in order to re-energize the Catholic Church in America.

4) How can someone use this book to begin a dialog with a friend or family member who has walked away from the Church?

Matthew: *Very often, these are the people who only come to church once a year at Christmas, or not at all. Everything about the book was designed to appeal to these people. Give them a book with a holy picture on the cover and they simply won't read it. Give them a book with "Trinity," "Mary," or "pope" in the title and they just won't read it. So if you look at the cover of Resisting Happiness, it is light-hearted, playful, and non-threatening to these people. The text itself starts off with a very real human challenge, one that we all face, then leads to a solution that gently introduces God and his Church as the solution to that problem.*

5) How does today's culture distract us from happiness?

Matthew: *In a thousand ways. We live in a culture of distraction. People today are afraid of missing out on stuff, so they find themselves rushing from one thing to another thing. In the process, they miss out on the stuff that God created just for them. We don't need a lot of things or experiences; we only need the things, opportunities, and experiences that God has chosen for us. Less is more.*

6) Why do people sabotage their own happiness?

Matthew: *Sometimes because we are fragile and weak. Sometimes because we don't really know what we want. Sometimes because we are afraid to totally surrender ourselves to God and his plans for our lives. And of course, there is that unspoken truth—we love some of our sins and we don't want to give them up.*

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- 7) You often say big questions are answered with simple solutions. Can we find happiness with simple solutions?

Matthew: *Yes. Absolutely. Both naturally and supernaturally. Daily exercise, regular sleep, and good and healthy food, all make you happier in a very natural way. On the other hand, the discipline of daily prayer exponentially increases our happiness on the spiritual plane. Wherever you find genius you find simplicity. Complexity is the way of the mediocre.*

- 8) How can conquering resistance bring us closer to becoming the-best-version-of-ourselves?

Matthew: *You cannot accomplish anything worthwhile without breaking through resistance. Naming it and understanding how it works helps you to do battle with it. And it is a battle. In order to become a-better-version-of-myself today, I must first slay resistance, then make choices that help me to become a better person than I was yesterday. You cannot become the-best-version-of-yourself, grow in virtue, or live a holy life without slaying resistance each day, and sometimes many times a day.*

- 9) *Rediscover Jesus* was crafted in a way that is digestible to the reader, with action steps for everyday life. Is *Resisting Happiness* similar?

Matthew: *Yes, but I resisted the temptation to use *Rediscover Jesus* as a template. This book ended up being thirty-seven short chapters, and I was OK with that. There was a temptation to stretch it out to forty chapters, but I didn't. I think the quotes that are blown up in each chapter help with usability, and the action step and key point sections at the end of each chapter reinforce the message of the chapter and provide practical ways to implement what has just been read. Writing a book that people will read and enjoy is one thing; writing a book that resonates with people is another thing. But writing a book that changes people's lives is in a completely different realm. That is where I am always shooting for when I sit down to write a book. It is no small feat.*



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10) What do you hope people will take away from *Resisting Happiness*?

Matthew: *I believe that simply naming resistance and learning to recognize it in our day is life-changing. I mean that with all sincerity. There is a lot more to the book, but as long as every reader takes away the ability to name and recognize resistance, I will feel that I have accomplished something incredible.*