

About Kirk Wilkinson

Author of *The Happiness Factor*



For more than 20 years, Kirk Wilkinson has been a life coach and mentor helping people find life-long satisfaction and happiness. But he hasn't always had something to smile about. Abandoned by his mother at age 8 and diagnosed with cancer at 29 and again at 36, Wilkinson learned to overcome life's major setbacks and turn them into something positive. He now shares his unique perspective on finding happiness in his new book, *The Happiness Factor: How to be Happy No Matter What!* (Ovation Books, October 2008).

Wilkinson was born in 1957 in Salt Lake City, Utah. When his mother abandoned him at a young age, Wilkinson and his two siblings had to rebuild their life with their father, who eventually remarried. His rocky childhood would continue to test Wilkinson's happiness well into adulthood until he learned to forgive his mother and reestablish a relationship with her.

Wilkinson's first lesson in happiness came to him after graduating from the University of Southern California with a degree in computer science. While working as a volunteer missionary in Yucatan, Mexico, he saw first-hand that material possessions were not the key to being happy. Happiness was something that could not be bought.

Determined to find satisfaction and joy in his future, Wilkinson returned home with a reinvented outlook on life. He got married, launched a career in the computer industry and started his own family. In 1986, Wilkinson faced one of his life's greatest challenges when he was diagnosed with testicular cancer at the age of 29. Although the treatment was successful, he was then diagnosed with another form of testicular cancer just seven years later. With the help of his family, faith and friends, Wilkinson pushed through the chemotherapy treatments and has been in remission for nearly 15 years.

In 2003, Wilkinson found himself at a difficult crossroads, unable to deal with the day-to-day challenges of everyday life. On the outside, he had everything in the world to be happy about. He had a loyal wife, four children, a stable job at Hewlett Packard and manageable health. But he still felt that complete happiness and fulfillment were beyond his reach.

"After 25 years of marriage I had hoped to be a better husband, a better father, a better provider," Wilkinson says. "My assumption had been that if I did what was right, live a good life and do my best, happiness and fulfillment would automatically follow. At the time I didn't realize that happiness, like anything else, just doesn't happen, you have to make it happen and it can be learned and practiced in a way that you can become happy and stay that way."

Today, Wilkinson has become an expert on how to be and stay happy. As a life coach, mentor and workshop leader, he advises on personal development, relationships, spirituality, parenting and career-related issues. In his new book, *The Happiness Factor: How to be happy no matter what!*, Wilkinson introduces a practical guide to overcoming adversity and finding complete, lasting happiness. His P-E-A-S-E-F-U-L approach to life demonstrates how to conquer the day-to-day barriers to happiness through perception, emotional generosity, acceptance, surrender, empowerment, forgiveness, under-reaction and love.

Wilkinson currently resides in Mesa, Ariz., where he works for Hewlett Packard Company as strategic alliance manager of international partnerships. He and his wife of 28 years have four grown children and three grandchildren. For more information, visit www.thehappinessfactor.com.