



## Podcast Episode 22: The Hamster Wheel Of I'll Be Happy When

This is the Agility Challenge Podcast with your host, me, Daisy Peel. You're listening to episode 22. Welcome to the Agility Challenge Podcast. I'm your host, Daisy Peel. Join me as I talk about everything related to the mental side of the sport of dog agility. If you've ever felt overwhelmed by negative self talk or lack of confidence, or if your dog training to do list seems so long that you don't even know where to get started, then this podcast is for you.

You can have the best training and the best skills and the best dog and access to the best trainers, coaches, and instructors in the world, but if you don't have your mental game under control, you'll never be able to successfully use all those skills you have to the best of your abilities. Now, let's dive in to today's episode.

Welcome friends to another episode of the agility challenge podcast [00:01:00] as always I'm your host Daisy Peel and today I'm diving into the idea that happiness. is not something to be postponed with an I'll be happy when mindset. So I think most of us, definitely myself included, have been in that headspace where we think I'll be happy when I get that promotion or I'll be happy when I lose those 10 pounds or I'll be happy when I buy that dream house.

Now, when it comes to agility, it might be, or dog training, it might be something more like. I'll be happy when I get that title or I'll be happy when I get that top tier ranking or maybe I'll be happy when my dog gets that



last double cue or that 500th double cue or I'll be happy when my dog gets a mock or a pock or I'll be happy when I get out of novice or I get out of open.

It's a pretty familiar phrase to hear people in and out of the ring [00:02:00] during a walkthrough before a run after run saying. I'll be happy when so I want to dive into that today because it's such a common phrase to hear Not just in the dog sport and dog agility community, but just in life in general. And so I want to dive into the idea of whether or not The I'll be happy when mindset is actually helping us and our dogs Achieve the goals that we are chasing, including happiness.

So why is this I'll be happy when mindset counterproductive to our well being and the whole process, the whole agility journey? I think it's an important question. Because when we tether our happiness to specific agility titles or achievements, we can create a perpetual cycle of actually postponing happiness.

We're essentially [00:03:00] telling ourselves that we can't fully embrace the present moment. and appreciate the joy of working with our dogs until we hit those milestones. And then even when we finally achieve that sought after title, or we level up, or we get that double Q, or we get that big win, the happiness it does bring is pretty short lived.

And we're kind of on this hamster wheel of, well, that was nice, but I'll be happy when. Because we're just kind of in the habit of saying, I'll be happy when, and as soon as we achieve something that we really could take a lot of, find a lot of joy in, in the moment, again, we're on that hamster



wheel, and we quickly set up a new goal, and then again, another I'll be happy when milestone.

A lot of the time, when I hear people talking that way about this or that achievement or accomplishment, and then they actually reach that milestone, the emotion I see, and this is crazy, and I know you're going to agree with me because you've seen [00:04:00] it too, is relief, not happiness. Right? Relief. It's crazy.

All that hard work, all that anticipation, all of that I'll be happy when, and then when the moment comes, when the when actually arrives, the feeling that people experience is relief. Man. So I think this is definitely worth something digging into. Now, I talked in episode 14 about Uh, why goal setting or chasing something, anything, and especially happiness from a place of lacking, from a place of scarcity, isn't a good solution for actually being happy.

But in this episode, I want to talk a little bit more in depth about specifically the I'll be happy when phrase and why we need to be careful about not throwing it around too casually and, and really think about do we really want to have that phrase in our, Uh, bag of phrases that we toss around on a day to day basis, not just with dog agility, [00:05:00] but with anything.

It's kind of like chasing a mirage in the desert, just always out of reach. Or, like chasing that perfect agility run, which again, is often more of a mirage than a reality. The perfect agility run is typically more of a result of being able to mindfully execute in the moment, and ironically, I think it's a lot more within your reach if you can approach it with an in the moment



sense of satisfaction and happiness, rather than with that I'll be happy when mindset.

I even hear And this is just crazy, and I know that you've heard this too. If you're not doing it yourself, you've heard it at a competition. I hear, as people are getting ready to go into the ring with their dogs, I'll be happy when this run is over. It's crazy. So, how can we break free from this hamster wheel, from this cycle, and find happiness in the journey while we're still working toward our [00:06:00] aspirations?

The key, I think, is a mindset shift, and it's been one that I, over the years, have Worked on myself. So it's been purposeful practice for me to have this mindset shift and I think it's especially relevant in our sport So instead of saying I'll be happy when when I get that title when I level up, whatever I'm gonna encourage you to think about starting to say and to think I'm happy now Because I'm competing with this amazing dog who sure we have our fair share of challenges But I can be happy now while we tackle those challenges And then by coming up at each training session and each class and each run with that sort of baseline sense of happiness, you'll be much more likely to find joy in those times that you spend with your dog and in each small improvement, even if you are also falling on your face and scraping your knees [00:07:00] with those challenges.

You can. Be happy and struggle at the same time. So that's what I am recommending here. Um, it's been effort for me, for sure, and it's not always easy, but in essence, it's about choosing happiness now instead of postponing it from, for some distant future. Now I know you're thinking, just words, it's just a phrase.



Whatever, it doesn't mean anything, but it does because our words Reflect our thoughts and our thoughts reflect our mindset and our mindset determines our actions. So words have power. So be careful what you say and be careful what you think, especially with this one. Now I want to dive deeper into the power that our words have and talk a little bit more about why I think we should be cautious casually throwing around that phrase I'll be happy when because like I said our words have a significant impact on our mindset and ultimately And when we repeatedly [00:08:00] say or think, I'll be happy when, we're basically programming our minds to believe that happiness is a destination rather than a state of being.

So here's why we should be mindful of this. Number one, it's mindset conditioning. Our minds are incredibly susceptible to conditioning. When we consistently tell ourselves, when we make a habit of telling ourselves that happiness is only attainable in the future, it's going to shape our mindset. And we're going to start to believe that the present moment isn't good enough for happiness.

And we condition ourselves to delay our well being. And this constant postponement, well, this moment isn't good enough, I'll be happy when? And then the next moment, this moment isn't good enough either, I'll be happy when? No, no, no, this moment isn't good enough, I'll be happy when? It's gonna lead to chronic dissatisfaction.

And then you end up on top of the world, or you should be, and dissatisfied. Because that's just what you've been practicing, and [00:09:00] that's what you've conditioned your mind, that's the framework



that you've conditioned your mind to operate from. And perpetual discontent, this cycle of I'll be happy when is.

It's just, it's not a real great place to be. You're going to miss out on so much if you are coming at this from an I'll be happy when mindset, because then when we achieve the goals that we set, we're going to move the goalposts. No, no, no. I know I achieved it. I know I said I'd be happy when I leveled up to novice, but really, I'm going to be happy when I get out of open.

So it's this hamster wheel, this never ending chase, this continuous goalpost moving and striving that is going to leave us feeling pretty unfulfilled and just perpetually dissatisfied with the process. So we end up with this situation where we could really be doing pretty well, but we're not.

Dissatisfied because we're constantly moving the goalpost because no present moment is good enough to be happy because we'll always be happy when and it doesn't really even matter what comes [00:10:00] after the word when we'll just be happy when sometime in the future, not now, never now. And by focusing on a future state of happiness, we're much more likely to overlook the joys and opportunities right now.

So we're going to miss out on some opportunities opportunities to tackle challenges opportunities to. Um, get better through a little bit of struggle and opportunities to savor the small victories that come from continuously placing ourselves in the path of those challenges. The I'll be happy when mindset is going to blind us to.



The small victories that we achieve by perpetually tackling challenges and overcoming and so if we're constantly thinking, well, I'll be happy when I'll be happy when I master this front cross, then we're going to miss out on the joy of working to master the front cross and if we are able joyful in our approach to tackling challenges, we're going to be much more likely to master [00:11:00] those challenges and then move on to the next one.

The other thing is that the constant pursuit of future happiness, I'll be happy when, puts a lot of pressure and some stress potentially on us. Um, because we're putting pretty heavy expectations on ourselves when we believe that we have to achieve certain goals in order to be happy. Now, I've got some pretty big goals.

I definitely want to achieve those goals. And there's plenty of pressure in that. There's plenty of pressure to, like, work a little harder, and grind a little bit harder, and make sure I get up in the morning and get that workout done. But if I'm also attaching happiness to that, and thinking, well, I can't be happy until I achieve those goals, that's a lot of extra pressure.

And that is also me telling myself, you can't be happy now, you can only be happy when you achieve these goals. But what if I don't achieve those goals? So what if I don't achieve those goals and I wasn't happy along the [00:12:00] way and happiness was part of that goal? That's a lot of pressure And there are plenty of goals that I'm not going to achieve.

So it's important to make sure that I'm not just casually attaching happiness or folding happiness in as part of that goal and Casually throwing around the phrase. I'll be happy when and attaching it to that



goal. It's gonna have a pretty profound impact on my mindset and how I chase after those goals.

And really the goal, the big goal is to be able to chase after those smaller goals. and be happy and joyful about it along the way. All right, well that all seems well and good, but why do we even fall into this trap of I'll be happy when thinking? There are a couple different reasons, I think. Often, although not always, it relates, I think, to the pressure that we put on ourselves and our desire for recognition and success in the sport.

And that can be recognition from friends, [00:13:00] instructors, or community members, other people. But I think even more importantly, there's this mistaken belief that happiness and ambition are mutually exclusive and that we have to prove to other people that we're really goal getters and we're really going for it and that part of that is constantly providing evidence that we're hustling by constantly making sure everybody knows that we're hustling because we only can be happy when.

So there's this sort of belief that If you're an ambitious go getter, and if you're really, you know, going after it, you can't also be happy. And we see this reflected in all sorts of ways. Another big phrase, um, that people say is at shows, they'll say, I'll be happy when, and another one that's kind of tied into this is, oh, I'm only here for fun.

I'm just here for fun. I'm just here for fun. And that's kind of a, it kind of ties in, [00:14:00] um, it's sort of, um, it's sort of, Insurance or, um, basically putting it out there that, well, if we don't do well, I was only here for fun





anyways. And it's kind of the same where we can't be happy and also be ambitious. We can't be happy and also be going after a goal.

We can't be happy and also work towards something that we might fail at. And so we sort of, we either say, well, I'll be happy when to provide evidence that we are going for it. Or we tell everyone around us, well, I'm just here for fun. I'm only here for fun to sort of let everybody know that. Um, we're not going for it, but that's sort of, that's sort of like chopping off one of our two hands.

We, we can be happy and ambitious at the same time. We can be there just for fun and also do things that challenge us knowing full well that we might fail at those things. We can be [00:15:00] there for fun and also strive to achieve a little bit more than yesterday. So, when you think about it, Think about, okay, are you telling people, um, I'll only be happy when, and are you telling yourself, I'll only be happy when, because there's some sort of idea that if you decide to be happy now, you might find yourself on the couch doing nothing all day, like, like some sort of enlightened Buddha.

Well, I'm happy now, so I guess I don't have to keep trying. I'm happy now. I guess I don't need to go to any more competitions. I'm happy now. I guess I don't need to train my dog anymore. It's sort of a weird idea when you sit back and think about it. I'm happy now. I guess I don't have to go to work anymore.

Um, you know, you can be happy and ambitious and not only can you be happy and ambitious and go after some goals and some challenges at the



same time, if you go after those goals with a mindset of I can be happy now, what you're going [00:16:00] to experience There are a number of benefits. One of them is going to be increased motivation and drive to tackle those very challenges.

Because happiness serves as a pretty powerful source of energy. It's going to fuel your determination to train, to try things that are a little bit beyond your reach, to learn, which can often involve a lot of failure and a lot of discomfort. And you can be happy while you're failing, and you can be happy and uncomfortable.

So being content with where we are at currently with our training and our competition and all that can actually enhance our ambition to go after even greater success. Coming at goal getting and competition and dog training with a mindset of happiness rather than I'll be happy when is also going to boost creativity because a joyful heart and a happy heart is a creative heart.

And when we're happy now, we tend to think more creatively. Think about it. [00:17:00] Think about the last time you got a little frustrated in a training session. How easy was it for you to come up with creative solutions to that in the moment training problem? On the flip side, if you are, Enjoying the present moment and enjoying tackling the challenge of the moment.

You're going to be far more open to trying new, um, training and handling techniques and strategies. You're going to be more willing to take on the responsibility of being an agent for the change that you want to see out of



your performances and with your dog's behaviors when it comes to handling and training and running your dog.

Creativity. It's going to be much easier when you're coming at it from an I'm unhappy, I'm happy, I'm happy now mindset and it's creativity is going to lead to more innovative ways of working with your dogs. Which in turn is going to go a long way toward boosting your performance in the sport. It's going to take you [00:18:00] much further than if you're churning in that I'll be happy when mindset and you're super frustrated and I'm just kind of slogging along.

Being happy now instead of that I'll be happy when mindset is also going to improve your communication with your dogs because again when you're thinking clearly you're going to be much more capable of quickly and accurately assessing your own role and how a training session is going you're going to be much more capable of being timely with your reinforcement as well as any course corrections and you're going to be more capable of thinking clearly and communicating clearly Um, in terms of desirable and undesirable behaviors.

When you're operating from a mindset of, I'll be happy when I get this running dog walk trained. Then, or I'll be happy when I get these weave pulls trained. You're going to be much more likely to be frustrated with where you're at. In the moment and far less capable of [00:19:00] clearly working through the actual process of actually training that running dog walk or problem solving or troubleshooting those weaves.



And finally, in terms of how happiness and ambition can kind of go hand in hand. And in the moment, sense of happiness and contentedness and satisfaction, even while you're tackling challenges is going to help you with adaptability. Because dog agility training, dog training in general, life is dynamic.

And each dog agility sequence or course or training challenge is going to present its own unique set of challenges. And with a happy and adaptable mindset, We can more clearly think on our feet, adjust to unforeseen situations, and respond quickly and appropriately to the unexpected. So happiness enables us to stay cool under pressure and remain more flexible in our approach.

So [00:20:00] hopefully you're kind of trying to, you're kind of starting to get on board with the idea that happiness is not something that's going to end up with you sitting under a tree like the enlightened Buddha. And it's not a hindrance to agility success. It's actually a catalyst for agility success when we're happy and content in our training and competition.

We're better handlers. We communicate more effectively with our dogs and we're more resilient in the face of challenges. This positive mindset. Is a choice. It's one that you have to choose. It's one that you have to practice. It's one that might not be a skill that you have. You might be very skilled with saying, well, I'll be happy when grumble, grumble, grumble.

So that positive mindset is a choice. It's a skill. It's a practice, and it's going to enhance your performance, making you more adaptable and overall better as an agility trainer, handler and competitor. Even if the outcome



that you're after is a title or leveling up or a win, you [00:21:00] want to make sure that you're enjoying the process and experiencing joy and happiness along the way instead of just engaging in a hamster wheel race to level up or get that title and then experiencing relief once it's over.

So I've thrown around the word joy a couple of times and I want to take a minute to consider the distinction between joy and happiness. Happiness and joy

are related emotional states, but they differ in terms of their duration and intensity. Happiness is kind of like a steady undercurrent in our lives. It's like a, um, overall baseline sense of contentment and well being. It's a choice. It's a deep seated peace and satisfaction that we can feel in our daily existence, regardless of what life throws at us.

And every day, life is going to throw us challenges. Unless you stay in bed all day and even that's going to throw some [00:22:00] challenges your way, life is challenge. On the other hand, joy I think is a, it's a short term burst of emotion. It's usually um, intense pleasure, excitement, just, it's joy. It's a, it's a moment that lights up our lives and leaves us feeling exhilarated.

It's that feeling when you do level up. From novice to open or you do get your first double cue or your 500th double cue or you do get that first blue Ribbon or that first master series? certificate or a big win in an event and You are just flying home on that drive. So joy can last for quite a while could last for hours or even days You know, you're not even sure how you



made the drive home from that big event or from that show because it you just joy huge burst Of intense pleasure.

It's the thrill of a perfect run, um, the [00:23:00] euphoria of achieving a long sought after goal, not relief, um, but here's the thing, joy, in my opinion, can't typically happen unless there's that foundation, that baseline foundation of happiness present, because happiness really sets the stage. It's the backdrop against, um, It's a backdrop against which those moments of joy can really occur when we're happy and content with where we're at.

We can create the conditions for joy to emerge. We're trying to create the conditions to experience joy at the end of that run, no matter what the outcome was instead of relief. So when we go into the ring with the I'll be happy when mindset, I'll be happy when this run is over. We're going to come out of the ring and at best.

experience relief. When we go into the ring, and we're happy to go into the ring, we're happy now, we're happy in that moment, we are setting up a situation [00:24:00] where joy can occur at the end of the run. Sure, we might not, you know, set the ring on fire with our performance, but still we can take pleasure in how the run went.

So when you and your dog step on the course, you can choose To bring into the ring with you a certain emotional state and this emotional state can range from happiness to anxiety, excitement to apprehension, your heart rate might be up, you might be up on your toes, you might be ready to go and you can choose how to interpret that physical readiness.



So happiness is the emotional backdrop against which your performance is going to unfold. And also, when you're in that state of happiness, rather than, Oh my gosh, I'll be happy when this is over, you're going to actually enhance your perception. There are all sorts of studies that actually back this up, that your field of vision will actually be wider, your vision will [00:25:00] actually be sharper, you're actually going to be more perceptive, more capable of noticing all of the things around you, and more capable of responding to those things in the environment and with your dog in that moment.

It's going to improve your physical performance, and also you're going to be more capable of just noticing and appreciating those little moments on the course that are going to be amazing. And in life, that baseline level of happiness is going to allow you to just notice the small things in life that might otherwise pass you by.

So this morning, for example, I got up pretty early, it was dark, and I... Trudged over to the gym. Now, I say trudged. I walked over to the gym. The gym is in my arena. So I bundled up. I walked over to the gym. I trudged because I was kind of stiff still. I'd just gotten out of bed. I could choose to grumble and trudge my way [00:26:00] over or because it's gonna be a workout.

I'm gonna sweat. It's gonna be challenging physically. It's gonna be difficult. That's the whole point. If it's easy, then why bother working out? Or I can choose happiness in that moment. I'm content. I, here I am right now walking in the dark over to the arena and that choice allows me to appreciate the chill of the morning air.



It allows me to appreciate, um, the ability to just walk to the gym. I didn't even have to get in a car. It allows me to appreciate the struggle of the workout. It allows me to appreciate the small gains that I'm making with this workout, this particular routine that I do, um, every few days. I can appreciate the small gains that I'm making while I'm struggling through this workout.

And, when I walk out the door an hour later, And the sun is rising. This morning was [00:27:00] amazing. I, that was joy. There was. There was a little bit of frost on the grass. The leaves are just the most amazing color right now. The sun was just rising. It was just coming up above the horizon and I, I noticed that the sun is a little further over to the right than when it was a month or two ago.

It's also coming up later. So that's what I'm talking about. Is that, that Baseline level of happiness allows us to fully embrace the moment and it puts us in the path of experiencing that joy. And then the, you know, sometimes the moment only lasts for a moment. I watched the sunrise for a couple of minutes and then moved on for my, with my day.

So, happiness is the foundation for joy to really... It's the emotional state that primes us to recognize, appreciate, and celebrate those brief, intense moments [00:28:00] of joy that punctuate our lives on and off the course. Without happiness, it's much more likely that we're going to find it difficult to notice and fully embrace those moments.

Just notice them first and then fully embrace them secondly. So in our pursuit of happiness, We're not merely seeking a constant state of joy.





Instead, instead of pursuing happiness, we choose to be happy in the moment, so that we're creating the conditions for joy to emerge naturally, infusing our lives with those moments that really light up our hearts and bring us extraordinary pleasure.

So, as we wrap up this episode, I want you to remember this. In the world of dog agility training, handling, um, competition, and in life, happiness really, and this is something that it's, I can't believe I'm as old as I [00:29:00] am, and it took me this long to figure it out. I mean, when we're kids, I think we kind of just live it, and then we grow up and we kind of forget that it could be this way.

Happiness is not... something to be achieved. It's not a goal. It's not an I'll be happy when situation. It's a choice you make every day, every hour, maybe even every minute. And honestly I am far from perfect. Nobody is. I, I have my days for sure when that choice is tougher than others. There are some mornings when I get up, um, and just Getting my feet on the floor is a little tougher than other days.

Um, sometimes, you know, I maybe didn't drink enough water the day before, maybe I stayed up a little too late, um, and I have some days where I just flat out fail to make that choice. But, it is a choice. Um, and I'm going to keep working to make that choice, because at this point, [00:30:00] Now that I have practiced Making that choice.

And like I said, making the choice to view happiness, not as an achievement, but as a mindset that I want to have in the moment. I really have experienced the benefits in terms of motivation, drive, mental



resiliency, creativity, and all of the other things that I've talked about in this episode. So, whatever you do, whatever you take away from this episode, take away the idea.

That you don't have to postpone your happiness for that future title or team or accomplishment and that you can choose happiness now. Choose to never again say, I'll be happy when. You can work towards that when, that accomplishment, that goal, that title. I've got plenty of things I'm working towards. But you can choose happiness right this moment, right now.

And then, and I know it sounds kind of trite and it [00:31:00] sounds like a meme, but it really is true. If you make that choice. And you practice that choice, it, it gets easier to hold on to that choice longer and longer throughout the day, and it enables you to really, truly embrace the process of whatever life is going to throw at you in terms of challenges, you're going to be able to savor the small successes, whether they end up with a successful career.

Picture on a podium or not and let joy be those beautiful unexpected moments that really light up, not just your agility path, because this is an agility podcast, your life as a whole. All right. Well, I think that's probably enough for this episode. So thank you so much for tuning into this episode of the agility challenge podcast.

And until next time, remember happiness in agility and in life is a choice and it's yours to make. Each and every day. If you enjoyed today's [00:32:00] podcast, and you've got somebody in mind who you're pretty sure could benefit from discussing the things that I talked about today,



head to the webpage for today's episode, [podcast.theagilitychallenge.com/22](https://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com/22) and scroll to the bottom. You'll see a section that says share the love, that has some instructions and links for how to subscribe to and share this podcast, and also how to leave a rating and review in Apple podcasts. Now, I'm a pretty tech savvy person, but even for me, it was a little tricky.

So I've included a how to link for you at the bottom of the page. So go ahead, head on over to [podcast.theagilitychallenge.com/22](https://podcast.theagilitychallenge.com/22), subscribe to the podcast, leave a review, and share it with a friend. Also, you can leave a comment below the episode and let me know what your thoughts are about what I talked about today.

Are you one of those people who says, I'll be happy when? What'd you think about that topic? I'd love to hear from you [00:33:00] and discuss your thoughts on a future episode.