



If It Makes You Happy

Reflecting the glow of recovery from Starlight at Tamassee

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee DAR School



I love music. I am often playing tunes in the background – in the car, in the office, in my AirPods while washing dishes. Recently I was listening through each decade’s hits on Apple Music. I started in the 1950s and kept going into the 2000s. So many great songs!

Along the way, I sang with Sheryl Crow on her 1996 hit song, “If It Makes You Happy.” The song has a great hook and a memorable refrain. The chorus says, “If it makes you happy / It can’t be that bad / If it makes you happy / Then why the #@\$\$ are you so sad?” Crow asks an important question of self-reflection. Why have so many things we thought would make us happy only left us sad? I told myself along the way that “it can’t be that bad,” but in hindsight, it most certainly was.

Anyone who has struggled with addiction knows this experience. When we were using, we said it made us happy. We said it can’t be that bad, but the bottom of the bottle, the empty needle, the last shopping spree, the risky bet, the most recent fling, only left us empty, lonely, lost, confused, disillusioned. When I sober up to

honesty, I admit my desires have led me astray. Getting what I want didn't end up being what I really want to want.

In other words, self-will leads to disaster. My will, my desires, my wants independent of wisdom were killing me. Recovery begins when we realize and start to want new desires. We need a new will to make better choices in our lives. Step 3 of the 12 Steps says, "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him." When I say to a caring God – "My will is sick; it keeps leading me to ruin. Please take it and give me new desires." – then I am on the path to healing.



This doesn't happen automatically or quickly. There are no quick fixes in recovery, but day by day, moment by moment, when I surrender my desires and wants to the caring God of my understanding, when I ask for God's wise guidance, and when I follow through on the direction I receive, then my desires start to transform. As good things come from better choices, I start to want them. What makes me happy changes, and then it doesn't leave me feeling sad. No, no. I start to feel like my own true self.

At Starlight at Tamassee, we believe in the renovation of the will, in the healing of our desires. We offer moms and children the hope a life surrendered to the care of God. To learn more about Starlight, visit www.starlight.tdarschool.org, or contact us at starlight@tdarschool.org or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at jholland@tdarschool.org.

