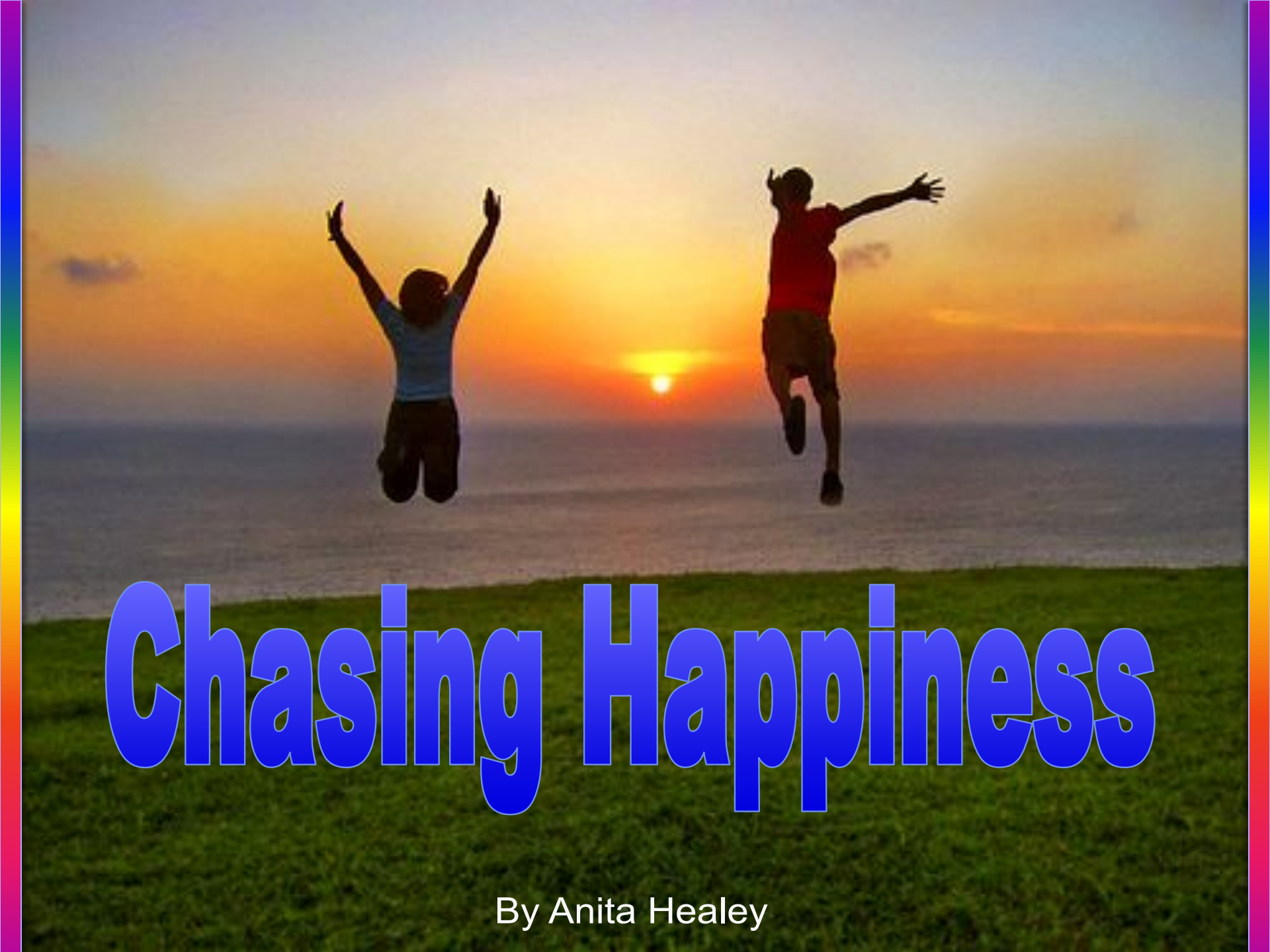


# Tommy's Window Slideshow

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# Chasing Happiness

By Anita Healey

In the movie *The Pursuit of Happiness* (2006), Will Smith's character makes the observation that the United States Declaration of Independence includes in its short list of “unalienable rights” the right to the pursuit of happiness —not the right to be happy, but the right to pursue happiness.

Why, he questions,  
was it worded that way?



His conclusion is that its author, Thomas Jefferson, must have understood that happiness is something that we all desire and strive for, but also something that not all will find or be able to hold onto.

A Declaration by the Representatives of the UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA, in General Congress assembled.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's god entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness; that to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, to institute new Government, laying its foundation on





**I had my years of chasing happiness...**

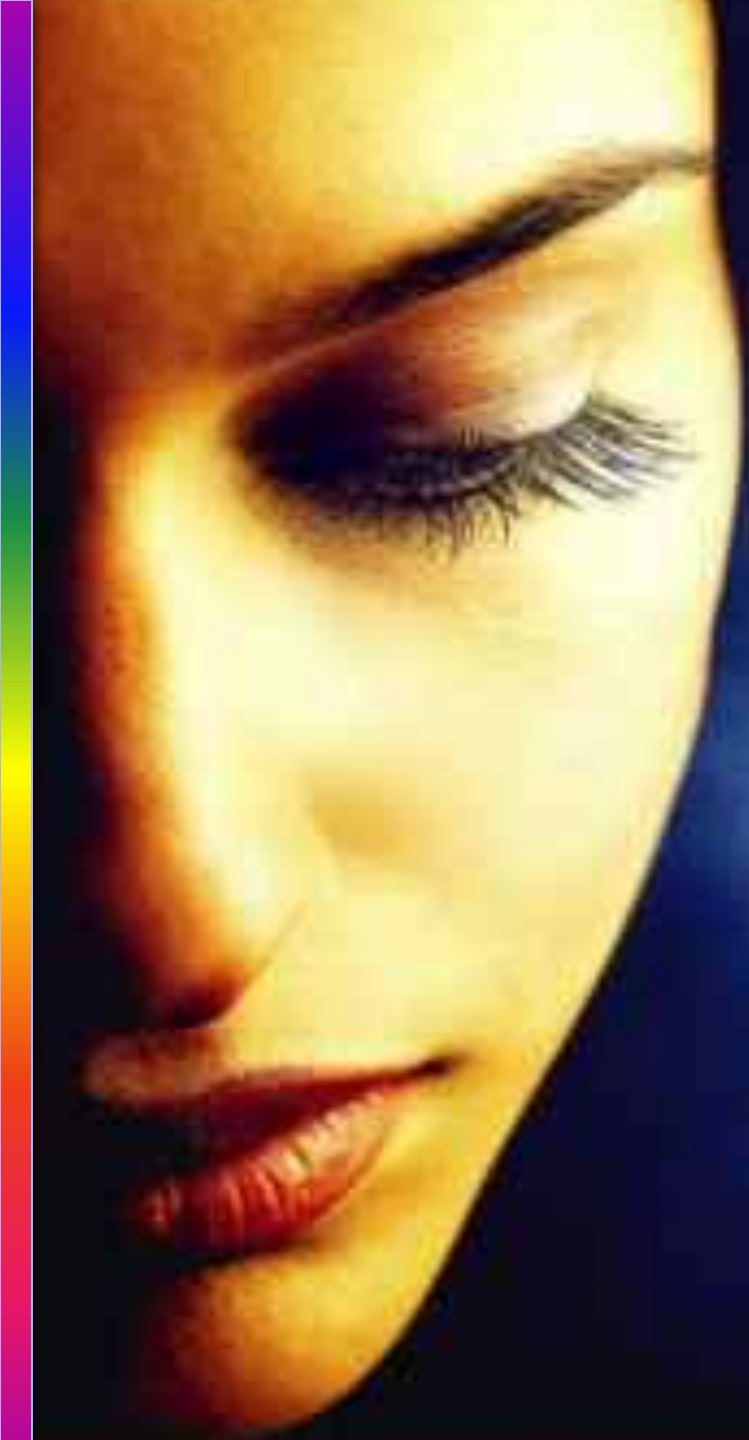
...of always feeling that  
if only I had a boyfriend  
if only I could change  
certain aspects of my job  
if only my circumstances  
could be just the way I  
wanted them, then I would  
be happy and free from  
the bouts of depression  
I struggled with.

# Two years ago I hit a low point.

I felt that all the cards had been stacked against me, that I must be the most horrible person in the world, and that I wasn't worth anything.



In desperation  
I asked God  
to do something  
—anything—  
to pull me out  
of the morass  
I was sinking into.



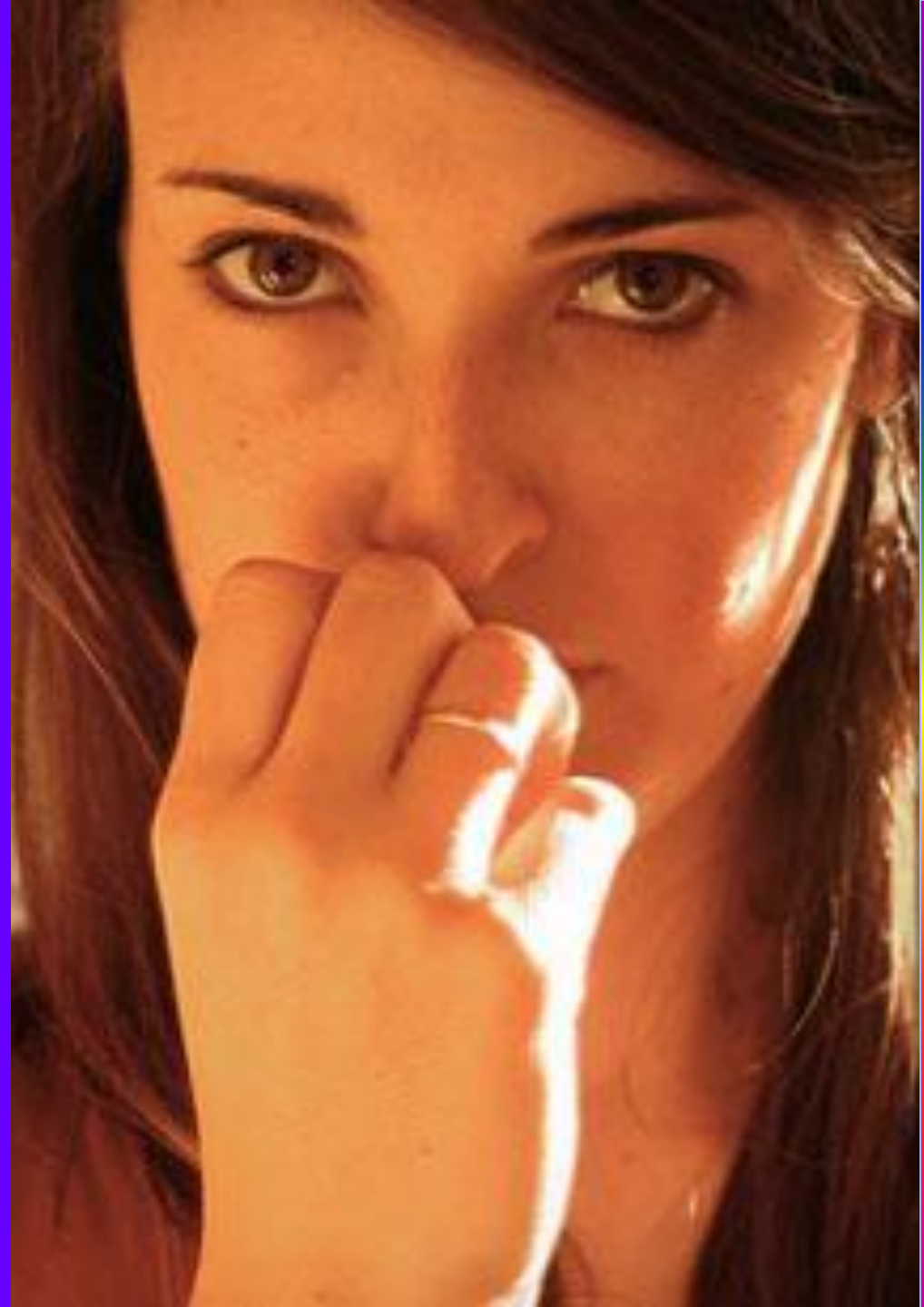
In one of my times of prayer,  
He helped me see that a major reason  
I was so down was that I wasn't willing  
to accept and make the most of  
the situation I was in.

**It was true.**


**I felt that the problem  
was always with my  
circumstances,  
never with me.**

**Accepting my  
circumstances,  
whatever they  
happened to be at  
the time, seemed  
impossible at first.**

That made me even  
more depressed,  
but finally I gave in and  
asked God to help me  
to accept that truth  
—that the real problem was  
not my circumstances,  
but my attitude  
toward them.





A close-up photograph of two people's hands clasped together. The person on the left is wearing a red long-sleeved shirt, and the person on the right is wearing a tan ribbed sweater and blue jeans. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Once I was  
willing to let  
God change  
my attitude,  
**He did the  
rest.**

For example, before long He brought a wonderful person into my life,  
and that reassured me of His love and boosted my self-esteem.

I have learned that happiness is a choice, and one that I must make every day.

**Circumstances**  
don't need to be perfect for me to **choose to be happy** and thankful for what I have and to **make the most of it.**

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