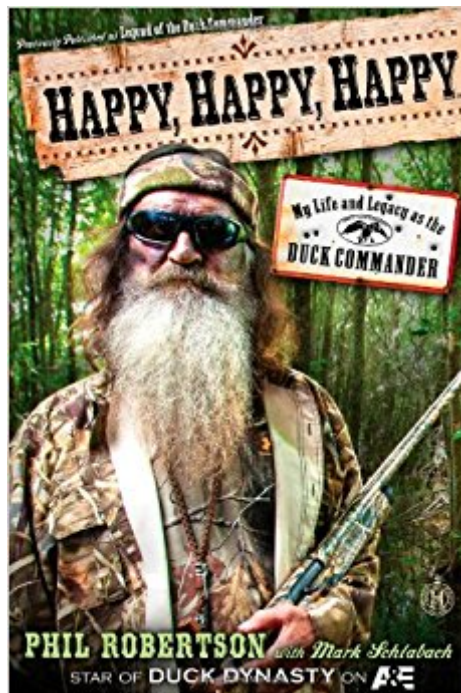




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# Happy, Happy, Happy: My Life And Legacy As The Duck Commander



## Synopsis

This no-holds-barred autobiography chronicles the remarkable life of Phil Robertson, the original Duck Commander and Duck Dynasty® star, from early childhood through the founding of a family business. **LIVING THE DREAM** Duck calls it "the source of his livelihood" are not what makes Phil Robertson the man he is today. When asked what matters in his life, he's quick to say, "Faith, family, ducks" in that order. It isn't often that a person can live a dream, but Phil Robertson, aka The Duck Commander, has proven that it is possible with vision, hard work, helping hands, and an unshakable faith in the Almighty. Phil's is the remarkable story of one man who followed the call he received from God and soon after invented a duck call that would begin an incredible journey to the life he had always dreamed of for himself and his family. In the love of his country, his family, and his maker, Phil has finally found the ingredients to the "good life" he always wanted. If you ever wind up sitting face-to-face with Phil, you'll see that his enthusiasm and passion for duck hunting and the Lord is no act—it is truly who he is. If you've watched the exceedingly popular A&E® program *Duck Dynasty*®, you already know the famed Phil Robertson. As patriarch of the Robertson clan and creator of Duck Commander duck calls, he fearlessly leads his family in a responsible work ethic and an active faith. But what you don't know is his life before the show. In the pages of this book, you'll learn of Phil's colorful past and his wild road to the "happy, happy, happy" life he leads today. Before the "happy," Phil's passion for the outdoors and wild living led him down some shady paths. As a young husband and father, he became the proprietor of a rough bar and lived a life, as he says, of "romping, stomping, and ripping" for a number of years. He even left his wife and young boys for a short period of time. Through it all, Phil Robertson has lived his life as a "called" man. Called to live off the land, called to leave a starring role in Louisiana Tech football (playing ahead of Terry Bradshaw) for duck hunting, called to wild living, called to create a new kind of duck call—and finally, called to follow God and lead a life of faith. In this eye-opening and rousing book, you'll find stories that will shock you, as well as those that will inspire you. You'll get to know the man behind the legend, and you'll come away better for it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Phil Robertson was born and raised in a small town near Shreveport, Louisiana. After college he spent several years teaching but soon decided to devote his talents elsewhere: he began to experiment with making a call that would produce the exact sound of a duck, and thus Duck Commander was born. Duck Commander is still a family business, now featured on the [A&E® TV series](#) [Duck Dynasty®](#). Mark Schlachach is the coauthor of the New York Times bestselling books, *Happy, Happy, Happy*, *Sociology 101*, and *The Duck Commander Family*. He is one of the most respected and popular college football columnists in the country. He and his wife live in Madison, Georgia, with their three children.

*Happy, Happy, Happy* 2> Rule No. 1 for Living Happy, Happy, Happy Simplify Your Life (Throw Away Your Cell Phones and Computers, Yuppies) What ever happened to the on-and-off switch? I don't ask for much, but my hope is that someday soon we'll get back to where we have a switch that says on and off. Nowadays, everything has a pass code, sequence, or secret decoder. I think maybe the yuppies overdid it with these computers. The very thing they touted as the greatest time-saving device in history • a computer • now occupies the lion's share of everybody's life. Here's a perfect example: I owned a Toyota Tundra truck for a while, and I got tired of driving around with my headlights on all the time. If I'm driving around in the woods and it's late in the evening, I don't want my headlights on. I tried to turn the lights off and couldn't do it. I spent an hour inside the truck with a friend of mine trying to turn off the lights, but we never figured it out. So I called the car dealer, and he told me to look in the owner's manual. Well, it wasn't in the book,

which is about as thick as a Bible. Finally, about ten days later, after my buddy spent some time with a bunch of young bucks in town driving Toyota trucks, he told me he had the code for turning off my lights. Now, get this: First, you have to shut off the truck's engine. Then you have to step on the emergency brake with your left foot until you hear one click. Not two clicks—only one. If you hear two clicks, you have to bring the brake back up and start all over. After you hear one click, you crank the engine back up. I sat there thinking, Why would you possibly need a code for turning off headlights? What kind of mad scientist came up with that sequence? Seriously, what kind of mind designs something like that? To me, it's not logical. I just don't get it, but that's where we are in today's world. I miss the times when life was simple. I came from humble, humble beginnings. When I was a young boy growing up in the far northwest corner of Louisiana, only about six miles from Texas and ten miles from Arkansas, we didn't have very much in terms of personal possessions. But even when times were the hardest, I never once heard my parents, brothers, or sisters utter the words "Boy, we're dirt-poor." We never had new cars, nice clothes, or much money, and we certainly never lived in an extravagant home, but we were always happy, happy, happy, no matter the circumstances. My daddy, James Robertson, was that kind of a guy. He didn't care about all the frills in life; he was perfectly content with what we had and so were we. We were a self-contained family, eating the fruits and vegetables that grew in our garden or what the Almighty provided us in other ways. And, of course, when we were really lucky, we had meat from the deer, squirrels, fish, and other game my brothers and I hunted and fished in the areas around our home, along with the pigs, chickens, and cattle we raised on our farm. It was the 1950s when I was a young boy, but we lived about like it was the 1850s. My daddy always reminded us that when he was a boy, his family would go to town and load the wagon down and return home with a month's worth of necessities. For only five dollars, they could buy enough flour, salt, pepper, sugar, and other essentials to survive for weeks. We rarely went to town for groceries, probably because we seldom had five dollars to spend, let alone enough gas to get there! We rarely went to town for groceries, probably because we seldom had five dollars to spend, let alone enough gas to get there! I grew up in a little log cabin in the woods, and it was located far from Yuppiesville. The cabin was built near the turn of the twentieth century and was originally a three-room shotgun house. At some point, someone added a small, protruding shed room off the southwest corner of the house. The room had a door connecting to the main room, which is where the fireplace was located. I guess whoever added the room thought it would be warmest near the fireplace, which was the only source of heat in our house. In hindsight, it really didn't make

a difference where you put the room if you didn't insulate or finish the interior walls. It was going to be cold in there no matter what. I slept in the shed with my three older brothers—Jimmy Frank, the oldest, who was ten years older than me; Harold, who was six years older than me; and Tommy, who was two years older than me. I never thought twice about sleeping with my three brothers in a bed; I thought that's what everybody did. My younger brother, Silas, slept in the main room on the west end of the house because he had a tendency to wet the bed. My older sister, Judy, also slept in that room. I can still remember trying to sleep in that room during the winter—there were a lot of sleepless nights. The overlapping boards on the exterior walls of the house were barely strong enough to block the wind, and they sure didn't stand a chance against freezing temperatures. The shed room was about ten square feet, and its only furnishings were a standard bed and battered chest of drawers. My brothers and I kept a few pictures, keepsakes, and whatnots on the two-by-four crosspieces on the framing of the interior walls. Every night before bed, we unloaded whatever was in our pockets, usually a fistful of marbles and whatever else we'd found that day, on the crosspieces and then reloaded our pockets again the next morning. To help battle the cold, my brothers and I layered each other in heavy homemade quilts on the bed. Jimmy Frank and Harold were the biggest, so they slept on opposite sides of the bed, with Tommy and me sleeping in between them. My daddy and my mother, Merritt Robertson (we started calling them Granny and Pa when our children were born), slept in a small middle room in the house. My youngest sister, Jan, was the baby of the family and slept in a crib next to my parents' bed until she was old enough to sleep with Judy. The fireplace in the west room was the only place to get warm. It was made of the natural red stone of the area and was rather large. One of my brothers once joked that it was big enough to "burn up a wet mule." Because the fireplace was the only source of heat in the home, it was my family's gathering spot. Every morning in the winter, the first person out of bed—it always seemed to be Harold—was responsible for starting a fire. It would usually reignite with pine fatwood kindling, but sometimes you had to blow the coals to stoke the flames. Some of my favorite memories as a child were when we baked potatoes and roasted hickory nuts on the fireplace coals for snacks. We usually ate them with some of my mother's homemade dill pickles. There was never any candy or junk food in our house. The only other room in the cabin was a combination kitchen and dining area. The cookstove was fueled by natural gas from a well that was located down the hill and across the creek. The pressure from the well was so low that it barely produced enough gas to cook. Pa always said we were lucky to have the luxury of running water in the house, even if it was only cold water coming through a

one-inch pipe from a hand-dug well to the kitchen sink. We didn't even have a bathtub or commode in the house! The water pipeline habitually froze during the winter, and my brothers and I spent many mornings unfreezing the pipe with hot coals from the fire. When the pipe was frozen, we'd grab a shovelful of coals and place them on the ground under the pipe. When we finally heard gurgling and then water spitting out of the kitchen sink, we knew we could return to the fire to get warm again. Breakfast began when Granny put a big pot of water on the stove to heat. We didn't have a hot-water heater, so we bathed in cold water when I was young. Granny used the hot water for cooking and cleaning the dishes. Breakfast usually consisted of hot buttermilk biscuits, blindfolded fried eggs, butter, and fresh "sweet milk": every morning, one of my brothers or I would take a pail of hot water to the barn to clean the cows' udders after we milked them. There were always several jars of jams and jellies on our table. Pa and Granny canned them from wild fruits that grew in abundance in the Arklatex area. Pa liked to scold us for having too many jars open at once; he said we opened them just to hear the Ball jar lids pop. He may have been right. Nearly everything we ate came from our land. The eggs came from our chickens, the milk and butter from our cows. Bacon and sausage came from the hogs we raised and butchered. We canned vegetables from our large garden, which spread over about eight acres in three different patches. Cucumbers were turned into jars of sweet, sour, bread-and-butter, and dill pickles. Our pantry shelves were lined with canned tomatoes, peppers, beets, and just about anything else my family grew, including pears, peaches, plums, and grapes, as well as the abundant dewberries and blackberries of the area. Cut-up cabbage, green tomatoes, onions, and peppers were mixed together and canned to make what we called chow-chow, a relish that was a delicious accompaniment to just about anything—especially fish. In addition to our garden, where we also grew such things as English peas, butter and pole beans, lettuce, turnips, mustard greens, onions, radishes, carrots, Irish and sweet potatoes, cantaloupes, and watermelons, my family grew several fields of peas, peanuts, and corn. We started many of the vegetables from seeds that were planted in a hotbed (called a cold frame by some) in early February. My brothers and I gathered cow and horse manure, which, as it decomposed, kept the bed warm and enriched the soil. After the plants sprouted and grew big enough, we transferred them to the garden. One year Pa, figuring he would get a jump on the market for the early watermelons that brought the highest prices, had my brothers and I collect manure from the cow pens to put into two hundred holes. He directed us to dig the holes two feet square and two feet deep. In early February, Jimmy Frank and Harold laboriously filled washtub after washtub with manure and then transported them on a slide pulled by an old mule to the holes that were dug. After depositing the manure into the

holes, we mixed the top of it with soil and planted the watermelon seeds. To be perfectly honest, Tommy and I didn't become too interested in the project until Jimmy Frank and Harold told us we should plant marbles along with the watermelon seeds in the holes. They promised us we would grow a big crop of marbles. Of course, we were young enough and thus gullible enough to believe them. We already had marbles running out our ears from ill-gotten gains at the schoolyard, where we played bull's-eye, cat's-eye, and hotbox for "keeps" (whoever shot best and won the others' marbles got to keep them). We won regularly and often came home with pockets bulging with marbles, which we deposited in a five-gallon bucket just inside the back door. Tommy and I grabbed our bucket and, with high hopes, planted them in the manure just like our older brothers told us to do. It didn't take Tommy or me too long to realize we had been duped. We ended up sacrificing ammunition for our slingshots for a bumper crop that never came. There were always two things in my pocket when I was young: marbles and a slingshot. We made our slingshots from forked tree limbs and red real-rubber bands we cut from old inner tubes (the black synthetic inner tubes didn't have the necessary snap to propel a marble or small rock). We used the slingshots to bring down small birds, but Granny and my grandmothers always admonished us not to shoot the mockingbirds or "redbirds," as they called cardinals. Our watermelons came up beautifully that year. The decaying manure heated the beds enough to sprout the seeds early, and the soil's added richness gave the young watermelon plants a tremendous growth spurt that turned the hillside where they were growing into a couple of acres of lush, verdant green vines. Pa never followed up on selling them, so we wound up giving away what we didn't eat to kinfolk and friends. My entire family took part in harvesting fruits and vegetables. If we hadn't, we wouldn't have had enough to eat. From the beginning of May, when the mayhaws and dewberries ripened, until the end of fall, with the gathering of muscadines and pears, my family and I could regularly be found in the area's swamps, fields, forests, and abandoned home sites. With our buckets and tubs, from the youngest to the oldest, we would be stooped over or stretched upward gathering whatever fruit was in season. The trick was to get there when the fruit was ripe and before another family beat you to it! Pa, who worked on drilling rigs usually located in the wilds, often discovered fruit trees and berry and grape vines as he moved about with the rigs. He also knew the locations of many old home sites with abandoned peach orchards, grapevines, and plum and pear trees. There was no shortage of places to harvest. The trick was to get there when the fruit was ripe and before another family beat you to it! I remember one particularly cold, wet spring when my family was wading ankle-deep (in our everyday

shoes because we didn't have rubber boots) to gather mayhaws in cottonmouth-infested waters near Myrtis, Louisiana, in a swampy area off Black Bayou. Clouds of mosquitoes covered our backs, biting through our thin shirts while we stooped to gather the floating fruit we shook from thickly clustered trees. Mayhaw jelly is still my favorite, and even today my wife, Kay, and I gather the bright reddish-orange berries from the swamps around our home each spring. We make plenty of the tart jelly for our needs, usually with enough left over for our children and other family members and friends. Mayhaw jelly has a unique, delicious flavor. One year when I was young, the wild grapes were so abundant in the old Ruby Florence field that they filled all of our tubs and buckets with rich, purple-red fruit. We could barely fit our harvest into the car, which was already crowded with adults and children. In fact, the trunk was so crammed full of tubs and buckets of fruit piled on top of each other that the lid wouldn't shut. Several large buckets and pans of grapes were jammed inside the car, on the floorboards, between our legs, and on our laps. The harvest was so great that Granny lit all four burners on the stove and had Pa and Jimmy Frank set an entire number three washtub full of grapes on top of them to render the juice. As our luck would have it, this was also one of the years when the price of sugar was sky-high (always a consideration in canning as to whether it was worth the cost). After making a smaller amount of jelly than usual, my family simply sealed a number of gallons of surplus grape juice in quart jars without sugar and stored them in the cabinets alongside and beneath the sink thinking we might make jelly later, after the price of sugar went down. But we eventually found that the stored juice was delicious, so my brothers and I drank a quart or more daily for breakfast and snacks. Before too long, the juice began to ferment. In only a short time, it turned into a very good wine. My parents and older relatives began to drink this, too, but couldn't finish it before it turned into vinegar. Granny used the vinegar in her canning throughout the rest of the year. Of course, man can't survive on fruits and vegetables alone (at least not a real man), so we also raised and butchered our own beef, usually killing two steer calves annually that weighed about four hundred pounds each. The calves were the offspring of our milk cows, which were bred to my aunt Myrtle's beef-type bull—a runty, mostly Black Angus mix, which still sired nice calves. Pa and my older brothers would kill the calf, gut and skin it, and wrap it in an old bedsheet, which they then put into the trunk of our car. We didn't have a deep-freezer, so the meat was taken to Vivian, Louisiana, about two miles away, where it was hung to cool and age in a local icehouse. After about fourteen days, Pa brought the sides of beef home and cut them up on the dining table. Then Granny and Pa wrapped the meat in freezer paper and took it to a rental storage locker in town, where it was frozen. Granny periodically retrieved packages of beef when she was in town and transferred



them to the small freezing compartment in the refrigerator at home. Homegrown chickens were another staple at my house when I was a boy. Pa bought two hundred baby chicks by mail order each year at a cost of about five dollars per hundred— one hundred early and another hundred later, so we always had young fryers running around the yard. It was a big day when the baby chicks were brought home from the post office in a ventilated cardboard box. They were immediately moved into a brooder Jimmy Frank built with four-by-eight-foot sheets of tin. The brooder was heated by using an old washtub— with vents on the sides— and a small burner that was fueled by the natural gas well that also heated the stove. We didn't wait too long to start eating the chickens— even if it took eight of them to make a meal! We usually kept twenty or so hens every year to lay eggs, and we dined on the older ones from previous years during the winter. Of course we cooked and prepared them the old-fashioned way: wringing their necks, plucking the feathers, and singeing them over a stove burner. Our Sunday meals in the spring and summer typically consisted of fried chicken and homemade ice cream, which was made with the rich cream of our Jersey cows. On the way home from church, we'd pick up a twenty-five-pound block of ice, and my brothers and I would make the ice cream outside. Jimmy Frank or Harold cranked the freezer, while Tommy or I sat on it to keep it steady. The story of the Robertson family is a pretty good picture of an early American family. We didn't have much, but we loved each other and found ways to keep each other entertained. We didn't have cell phones or computers, but somehow we managed to survive. As far as I know, none of my brothers or sisters has ever owned a cell phone, and Jimmy Frank is the only one who owns a computer, because he's a newspaperman and needs one to write his stories. I've never owned a cell phone and don't plan on ever having one. I've never owned a computer, and I'm still trying to figure out what the fuss over social media is all about. I can promise you one thing: you'll never find me on Twitter or Skype. If anyone needs to talk to me, they know where I live.

I have to preface this review by saying I'm not a hunter. I don't know a single thing about ducks, other than the fact that sometimes they like to swim in my pool and drive me nuts. I've also never seen Duck Dynasty. I don't have a beard (and that's a plus, considering I'm female...) (No offense to any hairy women out there. I'm sure your beard is lovely!) Anyway, I have absolutely nothing in common with Phil Robertson. In fact, before this book's release, I didn't even know who he was. So, for all intents and purposes, I had no reason on earth to pick this book up. But the cover really stood out to me; Something about Phil and his "happy happy happy" title drew me in, so I had to check it

out. And I'm so glad I did. I'm sure I'm not saying anything that fans of his don't already know, but for those of you who (like me) may be coming from an outside perspective, let me just say that this guy is awesome and the book about his life and experiences live up to its title. I'm happy cubed. It really goes to show that although we may have very different backgrounds, interests, hobbies, and lifestyles, many of us still stand on very common ground. We all make mistakes, we've all struggled to find happiness in our lives. But, it's all within our power to change. A big life lesson I try to drive home with my kids is that you can't live your life for other people. If you love something, then you love it with everything you've got and don't ever half-ass it. Then, and only then, will you find true happiness. And that's what this book is about, told through the stories of his past, his present, mistakes, accomplishments, and his close family. Fans of Phil Robertson, I'm sure, will love this book; they don't need to read a review from me. But, I'm here to prove that this book has a much bigger reach than just satisfying fans. His passion, drive, work-ethic and loyalty are truly inspirational. It was also really entertaining and easy to read. Consider me a Phil Robertson fan from here on out. Now maybe he can write another book telling me how to get rid of these stupid ducks in my pool...

This is an inspiring story of a not nice man making a change for the better. I like it that he does not sugar coat anything to make him look better during the hard times he put his family through. It is a great story that is a page turner. He is a controversial subject for some, but anyone who makes a stand for anything sets themselves up to be ridiculed. If you stand for nothing or go with the politically correct crowd. If you are not a believer you will most likely be annoyed with this story. I found it to be a great story of how we can change for the better no matter how bad things currently are with a little (or a lot) of help from above. Recommended

Many have found Phil Robertson's story about redemption and perseverance inspiring. He also shares a depth of knowledge about natural resources, as well as sage advice about life and overcoming trials and tribulations. Phil is descended from James Robertson, co-founder of the city of Nashville and compatriot of Daniel Boone. His ancestors were early American settlers who moved from Tennessee to Louisiana. Thankfully, he and his clan are preserving a wealth of natural resource knowledge and practical American traditions that have become too rare. "Nearly everything we ate came from our land. The eggs came from our chickens, the milk and butter from our cows. Bacon and sausage came from the hogs we raised and butchered. We canned vegetables from our large garden" (Robertson 2013:13). His family raised an amazing plethora of

produce, including: "English peas, butter and pole beans, lettuce, turnips, mustard greens, onions, radishes, carrots. Irish and sweet potatoes, cantaloupes, and watermelons, my family grew several fields of peas, peanuts, and corn" (2013:13). This was supplemented with beef they raised, and of course, wild game. Phil is a compelling narrator - what an amazing story about a mysterious, ancient water-hole, surrounded by huge trees (one cypress with an enormous hollow trunk, about twenty feet wide, perfect for a blind) where the ducks spiraled down, covering the water so thickly it was "like a giant raft made of ducks" (2013:74). On his property seen on *À Duck Dynasty: Season Four*, the Robertson clan continued their gardening traditions. Phil's vivid description of that geography, history of Indian campgrounds and burials, is fascinating. Through years of intense work, Phil Robertson has carefully managed his wetlands ecosystem to enhance and restore its health. He labored for years to replace acres of bitter pecan trees, which are inhospitable to wildlife, and replace them with acorn-producing oak trees that would provide "a more palatable fare for a wider variety of wildlife" (2013:163). He has also "planted, cultivated, and protected the grasses" on his land; his "wetlands are covered with native millets, sedges, and nut grass, as well as planted stands of Pennsylvania smartweed, American smartweed, and sprangletop, creating a mosaic of wild and cultivated plants" (2013:161). He shares a wealth of information about various species of ducks, and it's fascinating to read about his fishing business; great story about an immense haul of delicious Opelousas (flathead catfish), really of Biblical proportions! Great chapter discussing our Founding Fathers; catch what Jefferson said relevant to current health care issues, "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical" (2013:209). We really enjoyed this inspiring book, and hope Phil chooses to share more in the future. Perhaps he might consider writing more about his land-management, wildlife, and wetlands ecosystems, with photographs - it would be much appreciated! Enjoy!

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