

This is New York: Harry Edelson on Happiness

By [Amelia Pang](#), [Epoch Times](#) | December 7, 2013 | Last Updated: December 9, 2013 9:37 am



NEW YORK—On a typical day Harry Edelson reads 600 pages of legal papers and sits in board meetings. It might seem a bit boring for some, yet for Edelson the one thought that perpetually runs through the back of his mind is: life is so much fun.

His nickname is Happy Harry.

"Sometimes it gets repetitive when people ask me how I'm doing," he said. "I'm truly always happy."

Edelson, 80, is the director of China Gerui Advanced Materials Group Ltd., a company that produces specialty steel products in China. He is also the director and partner at Edelson Technology Partners.

As a Wall Street analyst, he has covered about 200 companies, while most analysts usually handle 15, or 30 companies at most. It seems that Edelson never runs out of energy.

Edelson has a background in both computer and telecommunications engineering. He was involved in the birth of the internet, and for over a decade, he was the most-quoted securities analyst on Wall Street. He said the secret to his accomplishments is positive thinking.

The Power of Positive Thinking

Edelson said he's never had a bad day. Bad things happen to him, but he doesn't think of the day as a bad one.

He could lose a million dollars in one day, but he won't feel upset. "I do things and I think about things differently from other people," he said.

Over the years, Edelson has returned \$18 million (30 percent of his management fee) to his investors because he felt that although he did work hard, he did not do the work to deserve that much money.

Today, he still works six days a week. His work requires him to travel frequently. Six weeks ago he returned from a trip to China. He usually gets only two to three hours of sleep on the 13-hour flight to Beijing. Yet he still feels energized enough to attend a banquet after getting off the plane.

"I don't believe in the concept of jet lag," he said. "I consider it a negative thought. And I don't have negative thoughts."

Edelson said he has never missed a day of work or school. Apart from the sniffles he has not been sick. He has never even had chicken pox.

"If I'm out in the cold without a jacket, I'm not afraid I'm going to get sick," he said. "That's a negative thought."

Although Edelson said much of his accomplishments and work relies on having positive thoughts, it's remarkable how he has managed to stay positive despite his difficult childhood.

"There's a saying that good luck happens to people who work hard," he said. "I think there is some truth to that."

Brownsville Youth

Edelson grew up in Brownsville, Brooklyn. His mother was an illiterate Russian immigrant who couldn't sign her name. His father passed away before he reached one.

"I was the poorest kid in a poor neighborhood," he said. On most days, he didn't have a nickel to buy a hot dog.

No one ever taught him how to brush his teeth. He learned basic hygiene practices, among many other things, on his own. And he didn't mind. "I was always happy, even as a child," he said.

At age 21 Edelson fought in the Korean War for two years. He came back and returned to school. He did not allow himself to fall into post-traumatic stress disorder.

Edelson studied physics at Brooklyn College.

He went on to get an MBA in management at New York University. He said he was led to believe that he could combine his master's program with a PhD program, but NYU denied the merge at the last minute.

That is something that bothers him—a little bit—to this day. Sometimes he thinks about going back to university to get a PhD. If he did, he said he'd probably get one in finance. At 80, he's not even close to thinking of retiring. The PhD would not be to advance his career, but purely for his own interest. Edelson has a ceaseless sense of curiosity and even finds interest in things that most people would consider boring.

"Some things are less interesting than others, but I can make myself interested in anything," he said.

After his Master's, he took up an interest in engineering. So he went to Cornell Graduate School of Electrical Engineering. It didn't matter that he had never been an engineer.

"There were moments when I was completely lost," he recalled. "But it wasn't anything I couldn't catch up on with some extra reading on my own."

When others used slide rules, Edelson used his head. "Nothing is faster than the head," he said.

With his expertise in a wide range of sectors, Edelson played a role in the creation of the Internet.

In the early '60s, Darpanet, the progenitor of the internet, hired Edelson as head of marketing and sales of its data terminal companies. He was the first analyst to have worked extensively with both computers and telecommunications.

He met with people such as Al Gore, and CEO's of computer companies, and told them that computers needed portability.

"I was the one who told these people that they needed to connect telecommunications with computers," he said.

He said, in a way, he put the idea of the Internet in some very important people's heads.

Speed Reading and Math

Yet Edelson is humble. He attributes his success to his grasp of speed reading, speed math, and mnemonics, which he says anyone can do if they put the effort in training themselves.

"I know a lot of mental tricks, it's just tricks," he said. "Speed reading, speed math, and mnemonics are three of the most important things to teach children."

With practice, Edelson has trained himself to read 4,000 words per minute. He can read a pocket-sized book in 10 minutes and comprehend it clearly.

"I'm never stressed. I always feel that there is a lot of time in the day," he said. "There is a lot of time to read books."

He has time to review books that publishers send him; he has time to read everything before going to a board meeting.

'Little Moments'

Edelson has lived in the same home in New Jersey for 40 years. He still mows the lawn himself. "I don't feel tired, I think life is great and fun even when I'm mowing the lawn," he said.

He remembers the days when he used to walk down his Brooklyn neighborhood, and follow the Dodger's game as he passed the radios of each house on the block.

On weekends, Edelson still plays baseball with his team in New Jersey. Most of the players are in their 20's.

When asked what was the happiest event in his life so far, he said, "My whole life is built on these small moments."

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