

Tobe's Story – We Serve Life ([Interview](#))

Personal

- Name: Tobe and Alecia Finch (Lewiston, ID) (<https://happydayrestaurants.com/>)
- Family: 3 daughters, Sydney, Ryann, and Payton
- Education: BS in Public Relations/Business
- Business/Vocation: Happy Day Restaurant President
- Hobbies: Skiing, Cycling, eating out
- Ministry: Happy Day Restaurants, small group leader

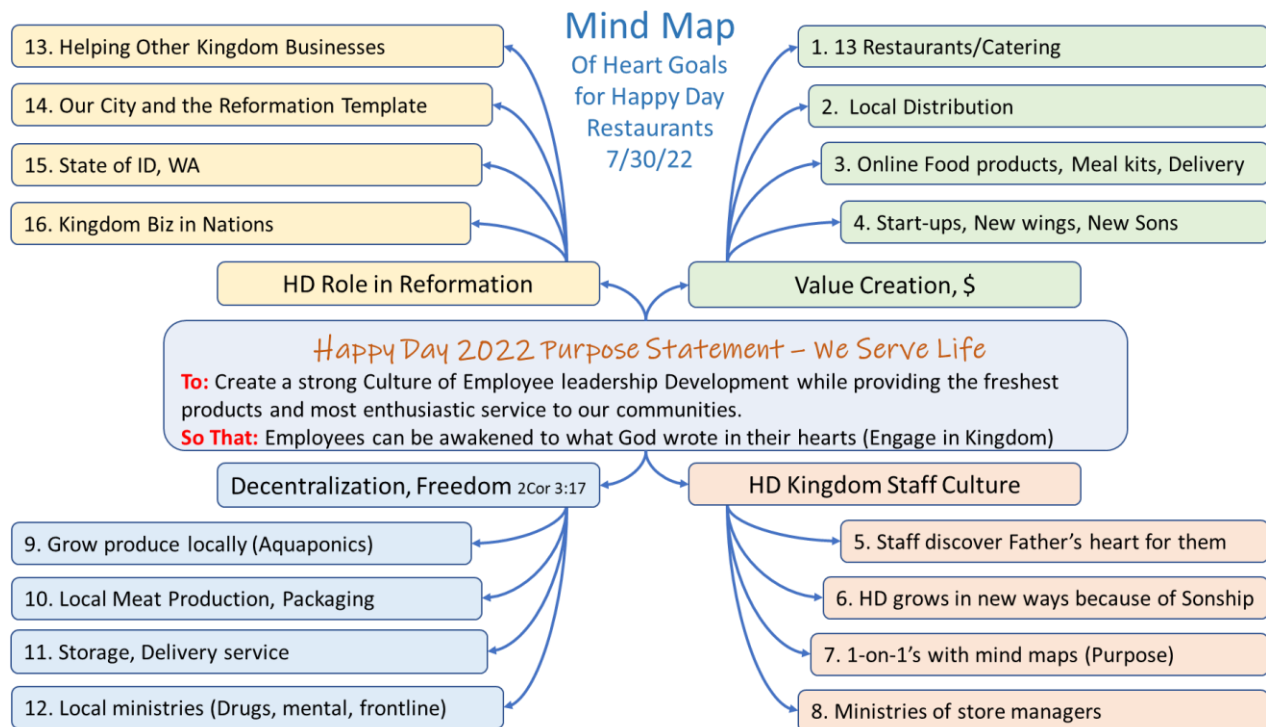


Happy Day Beginnings: Happy Day Restaurants was birthed in 1969 by Bruce and Joy Finch. Bruce's Dad Charles supported the opening of 3 Taco Times. The idea was that Joy would run them, and Bruce would teach welding at the local high school. That was the plan until Joy got pregnant with Tobe. Suddenly the plan changed and 26-year-old Bruce Finch was pushed into a business he didn't anticipate running. He was totally out of his box. He had to learn the restaurant business, engage customers, and learn to count back change. It wasn't his plan. It was Father's plan. Bruce learned the business in the business, and Father's favor has been with him ever since. Today Happy Day operates the Taco Time franchise's #1 and #2 stores. The company has expanded to 8 other concepts with 11 different restaurants and a Catering and Event company. Bruce has always rooted for the underdog because he saw himself as one. He has helped many employees walk through the dark places in their lives. His passion for excellence and grace towards his employees have been foundational stones in the company.

How it started for Tobe: Tobe attended a vibrant church and bible college while attending the University of Idaho. He and his college friends dreamed of being in ministry one day. After graduating from college, he faced the decision to work with his dad in the restaurant business. The business was an opportunity for the mentoring he'd received in church. Don Clifton (works for Gallup and wrote StrengthFinder2.0) prepared an interview form for Happy Day that is still in use. Their interview questions are designed to touch strengths in people that support the hospitality industry. Tobe loves to prophetically touch the book God wrote in every heart, the strong points. It's a Kingdom value they are instilling in the business. People carry something God created in them. Tobe has 550 opportunities in 13 restaurants to discover the gold in people.

Personal Passion: The entry positions in the restaurant business have a high turnover. Tobe's passion is developing people, so turnover is graduation to something better, a reason for celebration instead of a threat to the business and discouragement to the store managers. Working at Happy Day is a growth phase that develops young people for the next chapter in their life. The goal is that people want to work at Happy Day for professional and spiritual development opportunities. Tobe's vision is to work with other companies looking for employees with a healthy foundation and work ethic from Happy Day. Their training department monitors metrics for the development of people. Tobe is growing and mentoring people. Father has him in the *ministry* and doing what his Father is doing.

What it Feels Like: It feels like being connected to something Father is doing with people in Lewiston. They are not waiting for anything. Despite storms in the nation and economy, a door is open to grow people and their business. Tobe's dream is clear, and it feels good to make progress in a Kingdom business. His management team is embracing the culture and the assignment of Kingdom.



Personal Benefit: – I’ve always wanted to be part of what Father is doing and change the world. It’s gratifying to have some clarity on my book and see it unfold in our team and in the business. The momentum of a Kingdom business that ministers to people and makes money feels right and exciting! Who wants to sit on the bench when we can be in the game? This venue to be part of the Kingdom is the answer to Tobe’s wish from college to be *in-the-ministry*.

Value to others: – Happy Day is about knowing who people are and what is in their hearts. The turnover comes from poor lifestyle habits, addictions, unemployment, immaturity, and lack of purpose/discipline. Although current employment levels are about 500, the Happy Day staff touches is more like 10,000 over decades. They are unveiling the goodness of God in a way that offers captives the opportunity to become themselves and trade for the dreams God wrote in their hearts. Five hundred people get to *see the Kingdom at work* every day. And they get paid for it!

Business Potential (upside): – Growing people grow restaurants. They are much more excited about growing something when they realize it’s part of their calling from Father. Jesus is not a theory. His fingerprints and voice are evident in my life and this work. My life matters, I was created with purpose, and I’m going somewhere important. Everyone comes with a question in the heart, “Is there something for me in this life?” We get to help answer that question, celebrate what we find, and celebrate the creator that put it in you.

Complexities, failures (downside): – The business is successful enough that occasionally people suspicion that Tobe is building his own Kingdom. A healthy family, lifestyle, and business can provoke envy in those who feel robbed by life’s circumstances. Happy Day has a constant focus on employee benefits, ministry, development, and advancement. The few dust-ups are offset by many other celebrations of staff accomplishments and fruit. In spite of the accusation of selfishness, Happy Day is a blessing to the community and their team. People esteem their brand and their vision for the city because they can see the fruit.

The spiritual accusation of selfishness has been traded for a budgeting process that is more conscientious about setting aside money for the ministry expression of Happy Day in the city for growing people and expanding the business into new areas that benefit the community (like decentralization). In the Kingdom, growing the business and growing people are the same thing.

Vision for the Kingdom: – Tobe loves to ignite the passion hidden in hearts. The excitement of Kingdom comes that causes people to come to life and go for their dream is a contagious part of the Happy Day culture.

How Does This Help Others? – We start with where people are and avoid putting pressure on them. Our culture is *inviting*, not *demanding* – just like Kingdom. Business problems come from a lack of vision for their own life. Outside life quite often sabotages business excellence. We want to see our young families healthy, even if it means offering marriage classes. We're fighting for who people really are. The resistance often comes from them, the other voice in their head (accusations, defensiveness, hopelessness).

How has your relationship with John helped? – It's helpful having someone walk along side to stereo what Father is speaking to me about Kingdom. John helped the yearning in my heart to realize I'm a son, called to do exploits, thought of like one of David's mighty men, and invited into the courts and council of heaven. You helped me get my arms around the concept of Kingdom business and how it translates into our staff culture.

My role as president is in transition. Some of the things I carry need to be delegated to make room for setting the vision for Happy Day to engage the staff, and helping those around me clarify their purpose, mind map, and story. It's nice to have a sounding board to walk through it all.