

# The Unhappy Truth Behind the "Happiness Letter"

*"Happiness is the object and design of our existence."*

## Phase 1: The Setup - Engineering a Secret Proposal



**A Husband is Sent Away:** Joseph Smith sends Orson Hyde on a mission, leaving wife Nancy Marinda Hyde behind.

**A "Revelation" Demands Obedience:** Smith delivers a revelation commanding Nancy Marinda Hyde to obey his counsel.



**A Secret Meeting Place is Secured:** Smith orchestrates takeover of a printing office for private meetings, away from his wife.

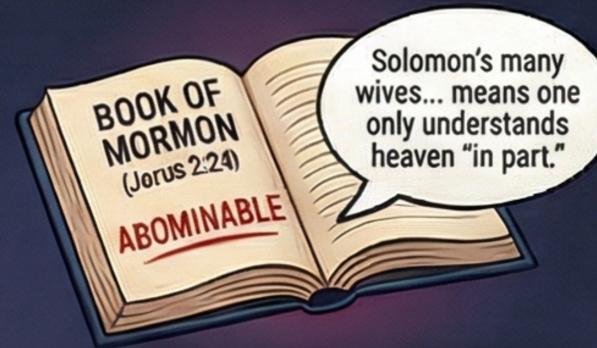


**An Intermediary is Used:** Nancy Marinda Hyde is instructed to bring Nancy Rigdon to the private printing office.

## Phase 2: The Letter's Tactics - A Masterclass in Manipulation



**The Proposal is Rejected.** Nancy Rigdon rejected Joseph Smith's initial in-person proposal, prompting him to write the "Happiness Letter" to persuade her.



To justify polygamy, the letter states that calling King Solomon's many wives "abominable" means one only understands heaven "in part."



**Tactic 3: Spiritual Extortion** Alternates between promises of "Iny and peace" for obedienccs and threats that rejecting this "blessing" will cause her to have "Iaven away that which she hath."



**Tactic 4: False Urgency** Pressures her with the line, "Iis Madness to defer," creating a sense of urgency to circumvent her hesitation and coerce a quick decision.

## Phase 3: The Fallout - Defiance and Defamation



**Nancy Rigdon Says "Ne" Again:** Desoite pressure, Nancy held firm. The letter was not burned as requested and was leaked.



In retaliation, Smith and allies publicly ruined Nancy's reputation, claiming she was promiscuous.

**A Pattern of Retaliation:** Joseph H. Jackson stated Smith threatened dissenters, "If his overtures... were rejected with disdain and exposure he threatened, he would set a hundred hellhounds on them to destroy their reputation."



**A Famous Quote's Tainted Origin** Today, the letter's opening line is still frequently quoted by LDS leaders, completely stripped of its monipalative and coercive original context.