

# Ryan's hope: DVD, book aims to motivate happiness

By ADINA GENN

**W**hen prospects evaluate your work, you want them to see you at your finest. So if your Web site aims to show your best self via an online video clip, be sure it has impact.

Jim Ryan, a Northport-based motivational speaker who wants to take his local speaking gigs national, strongly believes in presenting his best self.

On July 13, before a crowd of 40 business contacts, prospects, influencers and friends, Ryan hosted a live filming of his presentation: "Jim Ryan Talks: Simple Happiness." Filmed at the Huntington Country Inn in Huntington Station, Ryan revealed the eight characteristics of happy people and quoted prominent thinkers from the Dalai Lama to Albert Einstein, on such topics as giving and appreciation; he also played guitar and encouraged the audience to step outside its comfort zone.

Prior to the show, guests spoke on camera about the meaning of happiness; afterward, over dessert and coffee, they provided program feedback through on-air testimonials.

The end result will be a polished two- to four-minute mini-infomercial streaming from Ryan's Web site, [www.jamesryanms.com](http://www.jamesryanms.com), and professionally produced on a DVD; he expects to have the finished product in August.

With the infomercial, prospects will "see me at my very best, and get a flavor of what I do, what my message is and if it fits into their agenda," Ryan noted.

Ryan, also a financial planner and a former guidance counselor, hopes this effort will help him break into the big leagues. He plans to tuck the DVD into sales kits and register with speaker's bureaus.

The investment, which Ryan anticipates will run between \$7,500 and \$10,000, will include an upgrade of his Web site and a fall release of his book, "Simple Happiness: 52 Ways to Lighten Up."

Speaker bureaus recommended the video clip, said Maggie Kalas, the marketing coordinator at Jim Ryan Talks. As Ryan began getting gigs – including an ongoing personal



**COME ON, GET HAPPY:** Motivational speaker Jim Ryan is banking on a new DVD and his new book, "Simple Happiness: 52 Ways to Lighten Up."

development course for offenders in the Suffolk County DWI Alternative Facility and for engagements at library and local professional organizations – a business contact filmed the events. Ryan ran clips on his Web site, enabling him to land local appearances, but he and Kalas said that with this next push, they needed a more polished product.

So, Ryan said, he retained a professional video company, Huntington-based C&L Video Services.

"More and more companies are utilizing video on their Web sites or as podcasts," said Donna Drake-Dunninger, director of client communications at Melville-based Progressive Marketing Group. "It's a great tool."

Well-done productions are "short, sweet and well-lit," Drake-Dunninger added. "Otherwise it becomes grainy. And if it's not high quality, don't put it on your site. It needs to be technically excellent."

When streaming video, "find that least common denominator – such as Windows Media Player or Quick Time file. And make sure it's short enough so people aren't frustrated when

it's loading," Drake-Dunninger said.

If a prospect thinks the quality of the clip is poor, he or she might also assume your product or service is inferior, she added. Drake-Dunninger also recommended retaining a duplication house for assistance in creating promotional DVDs.

Ryan and Kalas studied other motivational speakers' clips prior to filming on July 13. Of the 40 people in the audience, 15 had not seen Ryan talk before. The crowd seemed engaged, laughing during the lighthearted moments and answering questions when prompted.

"There was an energy that came from the crowd," Ryan said later. "It was the optimal scenario."

Ryan hopes to recoup his investment with new appearances garnered from the endeavor. It's a gamble, but a necessary one in putting together a professional package. Now his effort boils down to whether he can parlay the talks he's given so often on Long Island to a broader audience.

As Ryan put it, "If we're going to flunk, it's not going to be because someone let me down."