

Because I'm HAPPY

The hidden driver of success



prepared by

Dr Scott Bolland

(scott@ahaentertainment.com.au)

and

Bernadette Alizart

(bernadette@ahaentertainment.com.au)

Because I'm Happy: The hidden driver of success

Contents

1. Welcome
2. Feeling Good
3. The Happiness Advantage
4. Explaining the Happiness Advantage
5. Why is Unhappiness on the Increase?
6. The PERMA Model of Happiness
7. Boosting Positive Emotion
8. The Power of Positive Relationships
9. Boosting Engagement
10. What is the Meaning of Your Life?
11. The Way without a Will
12. Conclusion

1. Welcome

Want to boost your success at work and home without sacrificing your happiness?

What if happiness itself was the key?

Over the last 15 years there has been a growing body of research in the field of *Positive Psychology* – the scientific study of human flourishing. The key findings are: firstly, that happiness itself has a positive effect on nearly every metric of human performance and success, from longevity through to productivity and creativity¹; and secondly, that happiness is like a muscle – it can be strengthened through training².

This workbook is the companion document to the seminar “Because I’m Happy: the hidden driver of success.”

In it, you will find an overview of the material covered in the seminar, including a crash course introduction to the field of positive psychology, describing some of the factors underlying happiness and success, and practical exercises on how to strengthen these in your personal, family and corporate life.

You will notice simple icons to highlight particular points.



We use music as teaching aid, as a way of story-telling and presenting anecdotes that highlight messages. This is to help create an emotional experience, rather than an academic one only. Emotions activate the deeper centres of the brain involved in memory and learning and so information presented with an emotional connection is more likely to be retained. Sections marked with the musical icon are to remind the reader what song was presented, and how the song relates to the material.



Also included are some simple exercises that have been scientifically proven to boost happiness in the general population. This does not necessarily mean that every exercise will appeal to everyone. Please experiment with them and find what suits you best. It is all about experimentation and monitoring what does and doesn’t work for you.

Thank you for attending our presentation. We look forward to hearing about how you go with the techniques and tips presented in our work.

All the best for continued happiness and success in your life ahead!

2. Feeling Good



Song:

Feeling Good

Written by:

Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley

Rationale:

This song sets the scene and is your permission to have fun today! It illustrates the ideal emotional state we all strive for. For many, the strength and power in the music is part of this song's appeal

Happiness is something all humans naturally strive for. It is a fundamental drive to be happy and lies at the core of the brain's navigational system, indicating we are safe and getting things right. Money, possessions, and security are simply a means to this end.

Although it is our natural desire to be happy, unhappiness is now at epidemic proportions:

- depression rates are now 10 times higher than what they were 50 years ago³
- depression has moved from an average onset age of 30, to 15⁴
- Suicide deaths account for more than half of all violent deaths in the world - more than all deaths from wars and homicides combined⁵
- Suicide is now the leading cause of death for Australians aged between 15 and 44⁶

3. The Happiness Advantage

Why should we care about happiness?

There are two obvious answers to this question.

The first is simply: duty of care. If happiness is a state we all strive for and we spend most of our waking hours at work, then ideally, work should be a place that is meeting our basic psychological needs.

The second and perhaps more compelling reason to pay attention to happiness, is that it pays to be happy. According to the science, all measures of performance increase when the brain is in a positive state⁷.

Happy people:

- live on average, 10 years longer
- have stronger immunity to disease
- are more creative and productive
- have better relationships
- make better leaders
- generate more sales
- take less sick leave and are more likely to be promoted

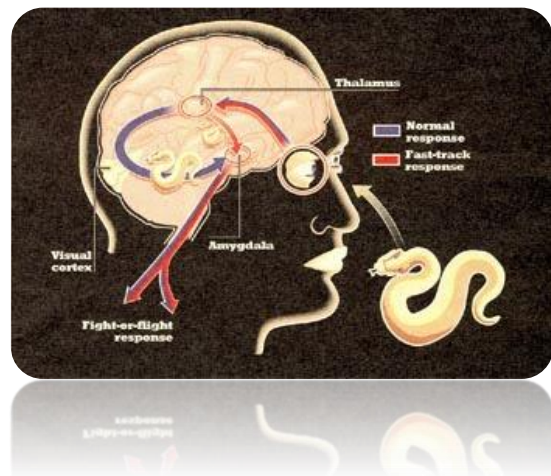
Happiness is good not only for individuals, but for teams, families and organisations as a whole. Investing resources into psychological wellbeing is a worthwhile endeavour.

4. Explaining the Happiness Advantage

The happiness advantage can be readily understood by referencing basic biology.

The human nervous system and brain are shaped for survival, with our emotions acting as the guidance system that drives our behaviour. We gravitate towards things that make us happy, as they are generally good for us. We tend to avoid things that cause us fear or distress as they are likely harmful. Interestingly, positive and negative emotions activate significantly different pathways in the brain and body.

Information about our world is fed from our senses to a part of the brain called the Thalamus and then to the Cortex – the ‘thinking’ part of the brain. It is the Cortex that enables us to think through the consequences of our actions and choose the most appropriate response. However, the Thalamus also sends signals to the Amygdala. If a threat is detected, an ‘Amygdala hijack’ occurs⁸ and the Cortex is bypassed altogether which leads to fast, reflexive responses, rather than creative, deliberate ones. In our evolutionary history, this makes perfect sense, as you do not want to take time to ‘think’ when being chased by a predator.



When we are in fight-or-flight mode, other physiological changes occur. The sympathetic nervous system is activated, and its primary role is to deal with short-term threats. In these events, non-crucial systems like the immune system shut down to divert energy to other more crucial areas. Heart rates increase, blood becomes thicker and more able to clot in case of injury, and blood is redirected to the muscles in preparation for fight or flight. All of these reactions make perfect sense in situations where we are likely to come to physical harm.

So, while society has changed markedly, our brains haven't. We are stone-age minds living in a jet-age world. When we feel threatened or unhappy, we still respond in a reflexive fight-or-flight manner. As a result, in a negative state of mind, creativity, productivity, and most other metrics of organisational and personal performance like health and immunity, are greatly diminished.

The ‘Amygdala hijack’ is starting to become a detriment rather than a benefit. And so, understanding how to maintain a positive emotional state benefits us all.

5. Why is Unhappiness on the Increase?

As happiness is fundamentally important to our personal and professional success, the next obvious question to ask, is, why as a society are we so unhappy?

The answer again is fairly straightforward. Most of what we have been led to believe will make us happy, according to science, simply doesn't².



Song:

Written by:

Rationale:

Stars and Moon from "Songs for a New World"

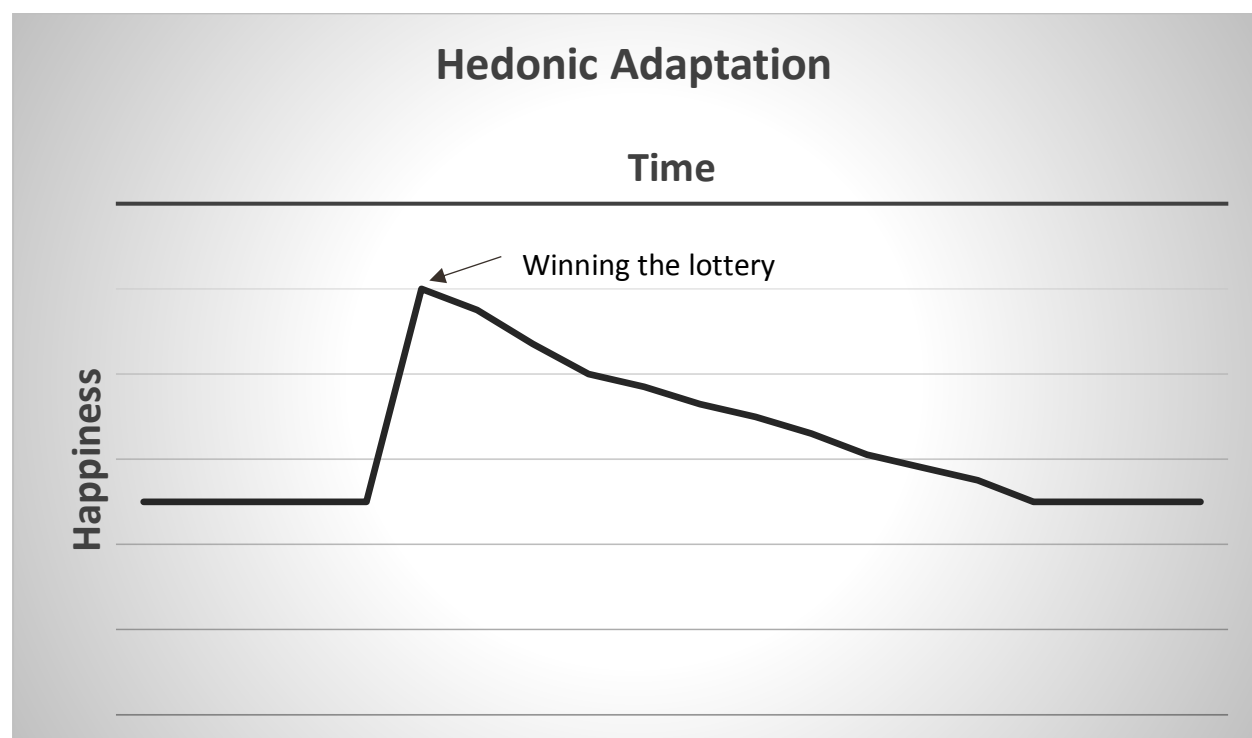
Jason Robert Brown

This song depicts an all too common story of an individual who follows society's 'Hollywood' ideal for her life, only to realise that it doesn't bring the happiness she so desired.

Many of us believe we know what would make us happy: things like, greater wealth, a larger house, or a more attentive spouse. But according to the research we're mistaken.

It is true that such things do bring *some* happiness, but the problem is that it is often short-lived.

Research has found that humans readily habituate to their current situation. Despite major positive events, like winning the lottery, or negative ones like an accident causing paralysis, the research shows that while these events temporarily affect happiness levels, people quickly return to their baseline level of happiness. This is a process called 'hedonic adaptation'⁹.



From the temporary gains made out of hedonic adaption, many of us attempt to ride the “hedonic treadmill” attempting to acquire more than what we have in order to keep our emotions high. For example, buying a new car may temporarily boost your mood, but it’s not likely to bring you lasting happiness.

6. The PERMA Model of Happiness

Although it is largely external factors that generally lead to hedonic adaptation, there are things that we can change internally to have a more permanent effect on our overall happiness.

According to the research only 10 per cent of happiness can be predicted from our situation (i.e. what we *have*), with the remaining 90 per cent having to do with us² – that is, how we *think*, and what we *do*. These aspects of our lives are behaviours that can be learned with practice, and do not cost anything.

According to Martin Seligman, the father of Positive Psychology, there are 5 factors required for individuals, families, teams and organisations to thrive. This is captured by the acronym PERMA¹⁰:

P	Positive emotions	What is it like to live inside your mind?
E	Engagement	Do you love what you do?
R	Positive Relationships	Do you have caring and trusting relationships with others?
M	Meaning and Purpose	Do you know what you live <i>for</i> ?
A	Accomplishment	Do you set and achieve challenging goals?

A major problem is that, in businesses, at schools and at home, generally only one of the five PERMA factors is measured and rewarded - accomplishment. That means we lose sight of the other factors. We are largely worshipping the wrong gods.

The aim of this presentation and workbook is to provide practical strategies to help you boost all factors of PERMA, helping you achieve a deeper level of happiness, and boosting your chances at succeeding in your chosen careers.

We will start with positive emotion.

7. Boosting Positive Emotion

The first crucial factor to wellbeing is not what you have, but what you focus on. What is it like to live inside your mind? Do you focus on the positives or the negatives?

As illustrated by the monkey business illusion, while we feel our thoughts and perceptions accurately reflect reality, we only have a limited spotlight of attention. When we become upset, our perception often becomes tunnelled-visioned and biased, and we lose track of all the positives in our lives. This bias not only affects how we feel, but how we behave, the positive or negative effect we have on others, and how we are treated in return.



A positive mindset is central to success.



The 3 Good Things Exercise

As a species we are generally oversensitive to the threats in our environment and overlook the positives.

One of the simplest techniques scientifically proven to boost happiness is the gratitude diary.

Every day for the next 2 weeks, and then once a week thereafter, simply write down 3 good things that you are grateful for that have occurred recently.

Doing this exercise for 2 weeks has shown to have a positive effect on happiness for up to 6 months¹⁰. It helps rewire the brain to scan for the positives and helps you better notice and therefore pay attention to, the things that bring you joy.



The 3 Good Things Exercise

Write down 3 things that made you smile in the last week:

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____



Good News Radio

Because we are hypersensitive to the negative, this bias is often expressed in how we communicate with others. We often give too much airtime to the negative.

Think about some conversations you've had at work and at home. How much airtime are you devoting to discussing positive or negative events, thoughts or feelings? In good relationships and workplaces, there is generally a 5:1 ratio of positive to negative interactions – how does this compare to your own experience?

To boost positive emotions at work or at home, make sure you dedicate ample airtime to the positive. For example, provide kids and employees with ample praise for what you appreciate about them and their work, and make sure success is openly celebrated.

Think about how you can turn communicating the positive into a habit. E.g., is there a time such as at the dinner table or the start of meetings, where you can dedicate airtime to celebrating success? One top executive allocates an hour every Friday to finding out what people are doing well in his organisation, and writing personalised postcards of gratitude. His employees very much appreciate the effort.

Training the Mind for Positivity

Mindful meditation is also a useful practice that has been scientifically shown to rewire the brain to positive¹².

Most stress is not in the current environment, but due to us ruminating over past events or worrying about future events. Often for example, we're in the shower, thinking about work; or playing with the kids while thinking about work, rather than being emotionally connected with the present.

Meditation can help us retrain our brains to stop ruminating about the negative, and better focus our attention on the positive.



Song:

Written by:

Rationale:

Gaeta's Lament from "Battlestar Galactica"

Michael Angeli and Bear McCreary

This song is used as a guided meditation. It is simply designed for participants to notice and monitor their different sensory experiences, and catch themselves if their minds wander.



Mindful Moments

Most stress lies in our minds, in ruminating about past or present events rather than being linked to the current situation.

Choose an activity, such as walking to work, taking a shower, catching the bus, or brushing your teeth that you can turn into a habit of mindful practice – connecting with the sensations that lie in the moment.

Our minds naturally wander, and this is fine. The exercise is to attempt to stay connected with the present moment – for example, make a habit of noticing what can you hear, smell, touch, taste or see. If your mind wanders, simply bring it back to the task at hand.

Exercises like these, are shown to help rewire the brain, reduce anxiety, and boost positive emotions.

See if you can apply this technique to bring greater joy into your daily activities (e.g., appreciating a meal, the ferry ride to work, or time spent with your family).

Formal meditation practice is also highly recommended. There are many free apps that teach mindful meditation. Why not try to include a meditation break into your daily routine? There are also many classes you can take if you wish to learn more. The more you practice meditating when you're not stressed, the better able you'll be to apply the techniques during stressful situations, like when you're struggling to fall asleep.

A Zen Parable: The Tigers and the Strawberry

Walking across an open field, a monk discovers that he is being stalked by a tiger. As he flees he reaches the edge of a cliff, and escapes the tiger by grabbing onto a vine and jumping over the edge. Hanging on tightly he looks up to see the tiger prowling, waiting for his return. Looking down he notices two other tigers waiting below. Looking up again he sees two mice gnawing away at the vine that is holding him. He knows that his lifeline can break at any moment. Then he notices a strawberry growing within his reach. Reaching out, he picks and eats the strawberry. It was delicious.

Often we are so mentally caught up in worrying about past or future events, we miss the hidden strawberries in our lives.



Taking time to enjoy the strawberries

Write down some things in your life that might be represented by the strawberry in the above parable (i.e. positive things that you could be more mindful of such as nature, food, friends, family, pets):

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Focus on one of the above items. What is ONE habit you could create in your weekly routine that would help you better mindfully appreciate this item? Think about exactly WHEN you would do this activity, and WHAT you would do.

Examples include:

Item	What and When
food	Every Friday night experiment with a new recipe. Mindfully make dinner, smelling the ingredients and feeling their textures etc. Mindfully eat the meal, savouring the taste.
nature	Every morning when catching the ferry to work, try to find something beautiful to photograph on your phone.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO AND WHEN?

The Importance of Positive Focus



What we choose to focus on not only affects how we feel, but affects our actions and the results achieved as a consequence. For example, if you believe that you are unpopular, this may make you feel uncomfortable around others and lead you to avoiding social situations. However, because you avoid social situations, you'll then meet less people, and be less liked than you would otherwise, resulting in a self-fulfilling prophecy. Our focus often becomes our reality.

Studies have shown that optimists (those who have positive expectations about themselves and the future) outperform pessimists in a wide number of domains, from general health and longevity, through to school performance and in their ability to achieve their goals.

Optimism and pessimism can be viewed as patterns of thinking. In dealing with a negative event, optimists and pessimists differ along three factors in how they interpret the situation: personalisation, pervasiveness, and permanence.

	Optimists	Pessimists
Personalisation	Blame the situation or others	Blame themselves for the situation
Pervasiveness	The effects of the situation are limited to a specific area of their life	The consequences will impact everything they do
Permanence	Believe the situation is temporary	Believe the events will last a long time

Research has shown that optimism can be learned through practice, by monitoring and challenging the stories you tell yourself.



Challenge the Story

As a simple example of challenging your story, think of something that you are not currently good at (e.g., dancing, public speaking, cooking, etc.).

Phrase this as a pessimist, thinking that the situation is permanent (e.g., I really suck at dancing):

Now, reframe this as an optimist, thinking that the situation is temporary (e.g., “I am in the process of becoming a good dancer” or “I currently suck at dancing, but just you wait”):

How did this change of focus impact how you feel, and how you might act?



Watch your Thinking

We often believe that our thoughts are a true reflection of reality. But this is rarely the case.

If you are feeling stuck in a negative situation, challenge your thoughts and behaviours:

- (1) Write down a description of the scenario.

e.g., cold calling, and receiving 10 rejections in a row

- (2) Write down any thoughts/beliefs that you have about yourself, the scenario or the others involved. What story are you telling yourself and others?

e.g., I am no good at sales

- (3) Write down the consequences of these beliefs/feelings.

e.g., feeling demotivated, and procrastinating by checking facebook resulting in no sales

- (4) Challenge the story! Look for errors in personalisation, pervasiveness and permanence. Look for alternative explanations.

e.g., It is not me - everyone has days like these. Pick up the phone and keep going!

- (5) What impact does this new story have on your feelings and actions. Explore the relationship between these actions, the results and how they in turn affect your beliefs and thoughts.

I picked up the phone and eventually won a sale! Better than procrastinating! It wasn't me after all.

8. The Power of Positive Relationships

Research suggests that being able to cultivate positive relationships is a skill central to underlying happiness and success. It is estimated that emotional intelligence is twice as important at predicting workplace success than IQ⁸ and that nurturing positive relationships has 3 times the positive effect on your health than going to the gym¹⁵.

According to Deakin University researchers, you only need one special person in your life to have a profound positive impact your happiness and wellbeing¹⁶.

In spite of the importance positive relationships play in terms of our wellbeing and success, it seems this is something, that as a society, we are not doing particularly well at.

For example, currently, more than two thirds of marriages end in divorce¹⁵.



Song:

Say Something

Written by:

Ian Axel, Chad Vaccarino and Mike Campbell

Rationale:

This song reflects the struggle that many of us face in maintaining successful long-term relationships

Fortunately, navigating relationships in a positive manner requires a set of core competencies, collectively known as ‘emotional intelligence’ that can be learned. For example, ‘emotion focussed couples therapy’ has been shown to have a 75 per cent success rate in moving distressed couples into recovery, and improving 90 per cent of relationships generally.

The Science of Positive Relationships

Much is known about the science of positive relationships. For example, Gottman and his colleagues, can predict with 91 per cent accuracy whether or not a marriage will end in divorce, after listening to a couple interact for only five minutes¹⁵.

During conflict situations, there are four types of negative interactions that are proven to be lethal to a relationship. Gottman calls these “the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.” They are criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling.

Criticism	Although anyone can complain about the one-time actions of others, criticisms are more global, attacking the general character of others. Statements such as “you always do this” are a sure-fire way to trigger an amygdala hijack in others.
Contempt	Contempt is any gesture (such as name-calling, eye-rolling, or mockery) that conveys disgust and a sense of superiority. It is the most damaging of the four horsemen.

Defensiveness	Defensiveness is a natural response when feeling attacked. However, it is not necessarily constructive, simply blaming the other for the issue, rather than taking ownership for any partial wrongdoing.
Stonewalling	Stonewalling is the disengagement of one partner from the conflict either by walking away or mentally blocking out the comments of the other, acting as if they are not listening. Again, it is not a constructive behaviour as it is not actively resolving the issue at hand.

Calming the Four Horsemen

Many approaches to emotional intelligence training in the past have attempted to tackle the four horsemen directly, teaching individuals and couples how to argue more constructively in conflict situations. Such approaches have not proved effective, as it requires superhuman emotional intelligence skills, to deal with a situation where you are under direct attack.

Gottman argues that the key to building or strengthening any relationship is what happens *between* potential conflict scenarios. Taking time to strengthen the relationship itself will make it less likely that the four horsemen make an appearance in times of disagreement.

Strategies for Strengthening Relationships



The Power of Knowledge

The first aspect in forming strong relationships is simply getting to know each other. That is, developing a strong mental representation of the other person's inner experiences, history and likes and dislikes.

Apart from close romantic attachments and friendships, getting to know staff and colleagues on a personal basis is central to effective leadership. Leadership is often about influence rather than direct power, and you have more influence if you foster warm and caring relationships.

Make sure you set aside time to explore the inner worlds of the people that you wish to connect with.



Pay Attention to Emotional Bids

One of the highest predictors of good relationships is the kind of attention you give to each other on a day-to-day basis.

For example, if your spouse is a bird enthusiast and points a bird out to you, do you share the experience or turn away and get back to your own activity? According to the research, the strength of relationships can be determined by how many 'emotional bids' are attended to¹⁷. In successful marriages, emotional bids are attended to around 87 per cent of the time whereas in couples headed for divorce, emotional bids are met around 33 per cent of the time.

If you are interested in boosting relationships with others, think about how often you pay positive attention to their emotional bids. What percentage of the emotional bids of your employees, colleagues, family or children do you meet? Do you celebrate in their successes, ask them questions, and show an interest? If not, in what areas could you do better, and how?



Nurture Fondness and Admiration

The antidote of contempt is to consciously foster admiration and fondness. We often devote too much of our attention to the flaws of others, rather than appreciating the good.

Similar to the three good things exercise, take some time on occasion to journal what it is you appreciate about others. Write down some characteristics that you admire (e.g., "I admire..."), and some incidents that exemplify these strengths. Be sure to share these thoughts and your appreciation.



Communicate with L-O-V-E (and Beware the Amygdala Hijack)

Remember that the brain shuts down when we are upset. Heated arguments are the worst possible way to resolve an issue. Instead, call a "time out" if conversations get heated, and communicate with LOVE:

- **Listen.** Seek to understand the other's perspective rather than simply enforcing your own. Reflect back what they are saying until they feel understood.
- **Open Heart.** There are two sides to every story. Be open to alternative perspectives.
- **Validate.** Acknowledge what the other is experiencing as a legitimate experience for them.
- **Express.** Make sure to share your own thoughts, feelings, hopes and dreams.

Practice these techniques frequently with topics that are not emotionally difficult to navigate, so you will be in good patterns for more difficult issues.



Take Time to Strengthen Important Relationships

Think about someone with whom you would like a better relationship.

Given the strategies above, what is ONE habit you could create in your weekly routine that would help you better connect? Think about exactly WHEN you would do this activity, and WHAT you would do.

Examples include:

Person	What and When
spouse	Every night set aside 30 minutes after dinner to explore your spouse's inner world. Ask questions, and provide a feeling that it is "us against the world."
kids	Once a week, give your child an "hour of power" in which they choose the activity. Mindfully attend to them and their interests.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO AND WHEN?

Be a Belayer

Simply put, relationship success depends on how emotionally present you are to the needs of another person. But there is more than we can do than simply paying attention.



Song:

You Raise Me Up

Written by:

Brendan Graham and Rolf Lovland

Rationale:

This video presentation shows Derek Redmond in the 1992 Olympics, who was favoured to win the 400 metre sprint. When he tore a hamstring, Redmond's father broke through security to help his son finish the race.

One way to think about successful leadership, friendship or parenthood, is the metaphor of belaying¹⁸.

A good belayer:

- wants you to succeed
- provides encouragement, suggestions and positive feedback
- provides a safety net for you to take small risks (essential for creativity)
- is there to catch you (not reprimand you) if you fall

Who in your life are you belaying, and who is there to encourage you and catch you when you fall?



Be the Belayer

Be aware that in the real world, we often don't know if something is going to work until we try it. Having a safety net that enables us to explore the world in a 'safe-to-fail' manner is essential. Failure is simply part of the process of learning what does and does not work.

At both work and home, be the belayer. People want to make it to the top. Your job is to create a safe and encouraging environment to help them reach their potential. Occasionally they may slip - it is your job to catch them when they do, and provide encouragement and support.

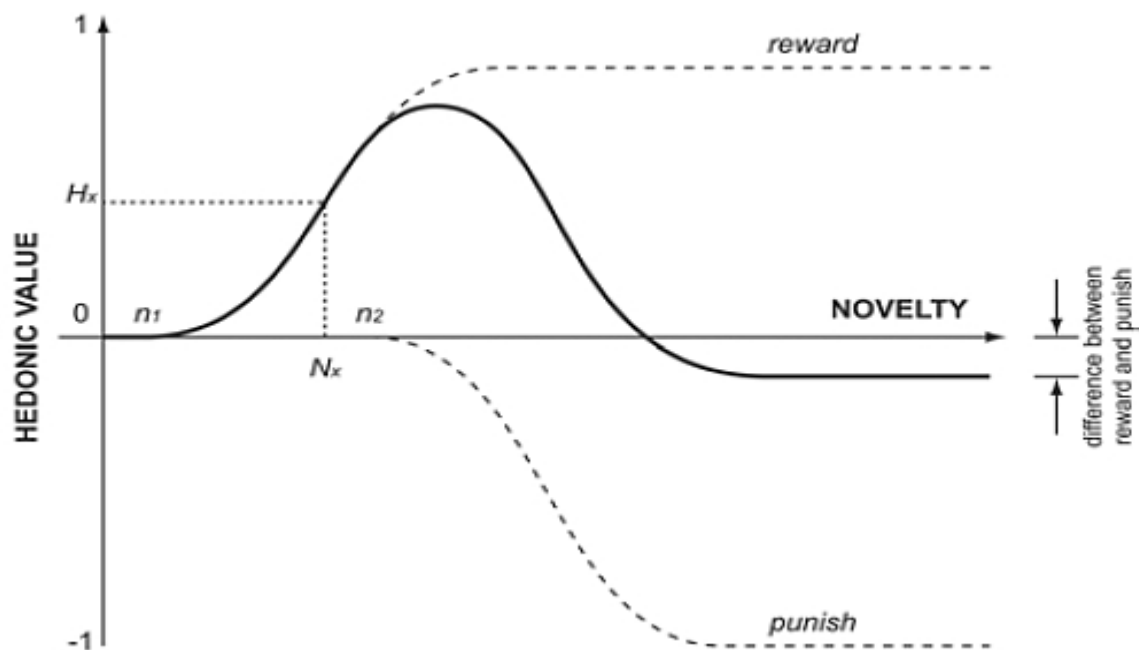


9. Boosting Engagement

Sitting at home bored is a natural enemy to happiness. The brain loves new experiences and to learn new things. Many of the crucial skills and competencies we develop are not with the help of a teacher, but through self-directed exploration and play¹³.

No one shows us how to grasp objects, crawl, or walk – we have an innate desire to master ourselves and our environments. This is why we love television, reading books, and engaging in interesting conversation – because our brain loves to learn.

In the brain, learning is rewarded through the release of Dopamine and Endorphins, following an inverted-u shape with respect to familiarity¹⁴. In short, things that are too familiar become boring, things that are too unfamiliar cause a level of distress, and things that extend upon what we already know and help us learn, are rewarding.





Boosting Engagement at Work

To create a happier workplace, get to know yourself and your people better. What activities replenish people, and what diminishes them? How can you allocate tasks appropriately? How are you supporting autonomy, personal learning, growth and development?



Say “yes” to Life

One of the worst things you can do is to sit at home and be bored.

The brain loves to explore new territory. Get in the habit of saying “yes” to new experiences. Take your family to a drive-in movie (if this isn’t a frequent occurrence), go bushwalking, try a new restaurant, or spend the day at the beach. Make it your goal to do one such activity every week.

If you are feeling particularly low, create a “pleasant event schedule”, making sure you dedicate time every day for events or activities that may bring you joy. After each event, give yourself a score out of 10, for how much enjoyment you experienced. Such experiments will help you find the fun.

Remember, not all things will appeal to everyone or every family member – do try to find common ground, and don’t be hard on yourself. It is all about experimentation and finding what brings you joy.



Song:

Can’t Take My Eyes Off You

Written by:

Bob Crewe and Bob Gaudio

Rationale:

A beautiful song illustrating the natural high achieved when you’ve found the right someone.



Pleasant Event Scheduling

Write down a list of activities that bring you joy, or you would like to try:

Your challenge is to make sure you do at least one every week.

10. What is the Meaning of Your Life?

Perhaps the highest correlate of human happiness is a sense of meaning and purpose.

At the end of our lives, we would all like to be able to reflect back and think that what we did was important.

Unfortunately, many people climb the ladder of success only to find out later that it was up against the wrong wall.



Song:

Cats in the Cradle

Written by:

Harry and Sandy Chapin

Rationale:

This song depicts an all too typical scenario of a workaholic father striving for success, only to realise later that he neglected the “important but not urgent” chances to establish a connection with his son.



Know your Values and Prioritise Them

Arianna Huffington penned an article titled “are you living your eulogy or your resume?”¹⁸

In it she notes that many of us are fixated by urgent but not important matters, neglecting the non-urgent but highly important aspects.

Do you really want your eulogy to read: "He was proud that he never made it to one of his kids' games because he always wanted to go over those figures one more time"?

Write out your ideal eulogy, thinking about how you would like to be remembered by the important people in your life. What are some daily habits you can form that will better align you to this ideal path?

11. The Way without a Will

20 frogs were sitting on a log and 17 decided to jump in. How many were left?

The point here is that there is a big difference in deciding to do something and actually doing it.

Accomplishment is the final factor of the PERMA model. We all like to set and achieve ambitious goals. There is also much research in the area of effective goal setting now than ever before.

One of the first things to realise is that willpower is not enough.

Willpower is not a constant resource that we can rely upon. It fluctuates throughout the day, and is dependent on factors like glucose levels in the brain. When we are stressed, our willpower is drastically reduced.²⁰

Researchers suggest that only 6 per cent of accomplishment has to do with the person and their 'willpower' with 94 per cent related to the environment, such as the resources and social support available²¹.

Creating the right environment is essential to success.

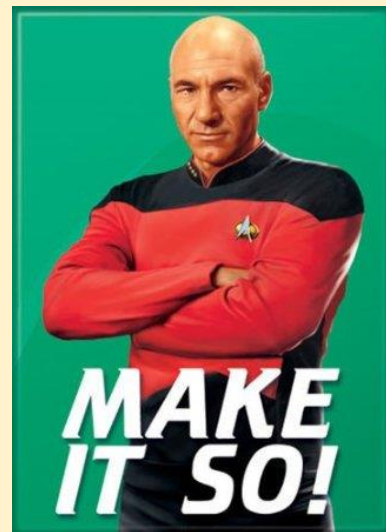


Create an Environment of Success

Think about a goal that you would like to achieve.
E.g., reducing stress

Think about how you can turn this general goal into a specific and achievable set of habits:

- (1) Describe the habit specifically (so you know whether or not you succeeded), and WHEN you would do it. *E.g., every lunch break I will do a 15minute mindful meditation.*
- (2) Gather the resources that you need. *E.g., find a good app that has guided meditations, and buy a yoga mat.*
- (3) WHO will help keep you motivated and accountable? *E.g. find a relaxation buddy, or start a meditation group at work.*
- (4) Once a week, review your progress. Did you achieve what you set out to accomplish. Why, why not? What will you try differently in the coming week?



The trick here is to ensure you dedicate a set time for your goal, have the correct resources, and create a social support network to help keep you on track.



Planning for PERMA

How could you better plan for PERMA (e.g., have a vision board, set aside time every morning for planning your objectives for the day)? What would you do and when?

From today's session, what is one area of PERMA you could be doing better at?

P ositive emotions	Mindfully attend to the positive
E ngagement	Make time to do things you love doing
P ositive R elationships	Invest in strengthening important relationships
M eaning and Purpose	Live by your eulogy not your resume
A ccomplishment	Make time to plan and create an environment of success

What is ONE habit you could experiment with in your weekly routine that would help boost this factor? Think about exactly WHEN you would do this activity, and WHAT you would do.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO AND WHEN?

Don't Avoid the Path to Success

Another common reason people fail to achieve their goals is because of experiential avoidance. Difficult goals often require sacrifice and doing things we don't enjoy.

In extreme cases, you need to willingly crawl through the marshes of despair to reach the higher ground of happiness.

One of the best things you can do in the long run is to know what you stand for, and do it **DESPITE** how you feel.



To do this you need to be clear on your values. Values are short statements that indicate the direction you would like your life to head, such as “being a good parent” or “making a difference”.

Unlike goals, values do not have an endpoint. They are beacons that light the way forward.



Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway!

Be clear on your values. Know what you stand for, and do it despite how it makes you feel.

- (1) Describe your goal, and why it is important.
- (2) Break the goal down into smaller manageable sub-goals. For example, if you wish to improve your public speaking, list a hierarchy of tasks from easy to stressful, that you can work your way through. E.g. practicing a talk in front of your family may be easy, whereas an important talk in front of your boss may be more difficult.
- (3) Reduce the uncertainty. For example, we may not wish to quit a job we hate because we don't know what might be next. Take steps to explore and gain knowledge to reduce this uncertainty.
- (4) Get angry. If you know you need to do something that you don't like because it is aligned with your values, this is not the time to look for the positives in the current situation. Focus on and write down why the current situation is not positive, and what benefits the alternative will bring.
- (5) Don't be a hostage to your emotions. Feel the fear and do it anyway!



Song:

Written by:

Rationale:

The Impossible Dream from “Man of La Mancha”

Joe Darion and Mitch Leigh

This song exemplifies a life of meaning and purpose, following the “right” path irrespective of the adversity that lies ahead.

12. Conclusion

Happiness or a positive state of mind has been shown to drive performance along nearly every dimension of success.

Simply put, it pays to be happy.

But for some of us, happiness does not come naturally. Like a muscle however, it can be trained.

In this seminar, we have sought to provide a high-level overview of the field of positive psychology and a sample set of exercises to perform in your personal or professional lives to help boost the 5 factors of the PERMA Model of Happiness.

The rest is up to you. It will help you however, if you find social support to help keep you motivated and accountable. The trick here is to establish daily habits that are aligned with your personal values to help you gain the life that you wish to be living.

We wish you all the best in your future endeavours. And if we can help in any way, please let us know.



Song:

Written by:

Rationale:

Happy

Pharrell Williams

Does this song really need an introduction? Get up! Have some fun and say Yes to life!



Song:

Written by:

Rationale:

You're the Voice

Andy Qunta, Keith Reid, Maggie Ryder and Chris Thompson

A powerful song, emphasising the potential we have to make a difference. Make a noise and make it clear!

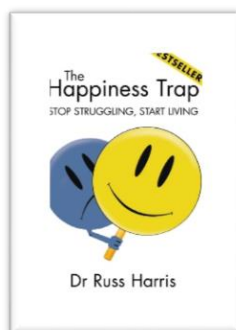
References and Readings

1. Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: does happiness lead to success? *Psychological bulletin*, 131(6), 803.
2. Lyubomirsky, S. (2008). *The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*. Penguin.
3. Wickramaratne, P. J., Weissman, M. M., Leaf, P. J., & Holford, T. R. (1989). Age, period and cohort effects on the risk of major depression: results from five United States communities. *Journal of clinical epidemiology*, 42(4), 333-343.
4. Lewinsohn, P. M., Rohde, P., Seeley, J. R., & Fischer, S. A. (1993). Age-cohort changes in the lifetime occurrence of depression and other mental disorders. *Journal of abnormal psychology*, 102(1), 110.
5. http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/summary_en.pdf
6. <https://www.lifeline.org.au/About-Lifeline/Media-Centre/Suicide-Statistics-in-Australia/Suicide-Statistics>
7. Achor, S. (2011). *The happiness advantage: The seven principles of positive psychology that fuel success and performance at work*. Random House.
8. Goleman, D. (1996). Emotional Intelligence. Why It Can Matter More than IQ. *Learning*, 24(6), 49-50.
9. Lyubomirsky, S. (2011). Hedonic adaptation to positive and negative experiences. *Oxford handbook of stress, health, and coping*, 200-224.
10. Seligman, M.E. (2012). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Simon and Schuster.
11. Seligman, M.E. & South Australia Department of the Premier and Cabinet (issuing body). (2013). *Building the state of wellbeing: a strategy for South Australia*. Adelaide, SA Department of the Premier and Cabinet.
12. Shapiro, S. L., Schwartz, G. E., & Santerre, C. (2002). Meditation and positive psychology. *Handbook of positive psychology*, 2, 632-645.
13. White, R. W. (1959). Motivation reconsidered: the concept of competence. *Psychological review*, 66(5), 297.
14. Berlyne, D. E. (1970). Novelty, complexity, and hedonic value. *Perception & Psychophysics*, 8(5), 279-286.
15. Gottman, J., & Silver, N. (2015). *The seven principles for making marriage work: A practical guide from the country's foremost relationship expert*. Harmony.

16. <http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/health/deakin-university-surveys-reveal-golden-triangle-of-happiness/story-fneuz9ev-1226672800578>
17. <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/06/happily-ever-after/372573/>
18. Kohlrieser, G., Goldsworthy, S., & Coombe, D. (2012). Care to dare: Unleashing astonishing potential through secure base leadership. John Wiley & Sons.
19. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arianna-huffington/are-you-living-your-eulogy-or-your-resume_b_3936937.html
20. Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Muraven, M., & Tice, D. M. (1998). Ego depletion: is the active self a limited resource?. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 74(5), 1252.
21. Deming, W. E. (1986). Out of the crisis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. *Center for advanced engineering study, Cambridge, MA, 510*.

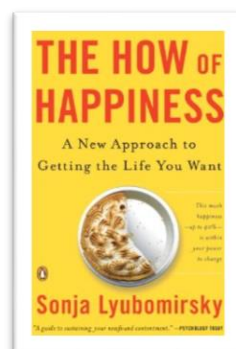
FURTHER RESOURCES – SUGGESTED READINGS

As a follow-up to our seminar, the following are books containing a wider range of simple evidence-based strategies for boosting success in a number of related areas:



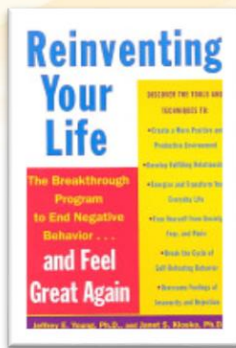
The Happiness Trap: Stop Struggling and Start Living by Russ Harris

This easy-to-read self-help book is based on the principles of Acceptance & Commitment Therapy - an empirically based psychological intervention that helps you rise above your fears, doubts and insecurities and create a rich, full and meaningful life.



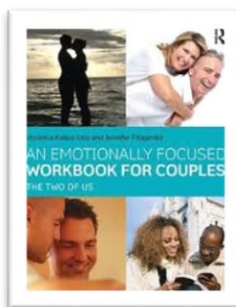
The How of Happiness: A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want by Sonja Lyubomirsky

Drawing on her own groundbreaking research with thousands of men and women, research psychologist and University of California professor of psychology Sonja Lyubomirsky has pioneered a detailed yet easy-to-follow plan to increase happiness in our day-to-day lives-in the short and long term. This book offers a comprehensive guide to understanding what happiness is, and what can be done to bring us all closer to the happy life we envision for ourselves.



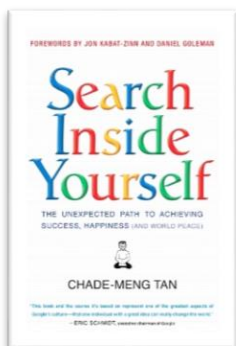
Reinventing Your Life: The Breakthrough Program to End Negative Behavior ... and Feel Great Again
by Jeffrey Young and Janet Klosko

This book shows readers how to free themselves from negative life patterns. Written with compassion as well as clinical insight, this thought-provoking book guides readers through the process of identifying "life traps." For example, "Do you put the needs of others before your own? Are you drawn into relationships with people who are self-centered, cold to you, misunderstand you, or use you? Do you feel inadequate compared to people around you?" Followed by an engaging discussion that makes use of case studies, this book can help people change their lives by stopping the cycle of self-destruction.



An Emotionally Focused Workbook for Couples
by Veronica Kallos-Lilly and Jennifer Fitzgerald

This workbook is a couple's introduction to Emotion Focused therapy – an approach that has been shown to have a 75 per cent success rate in moving distressed couples into recovery, and improving 90 per cent of relationships generally. The material aims to help couples look at their relationship through an attachment lens, walking them through the step-by-step process of creating a secure relationship bond.



Search Inside Yourself: The Unexpected Path to Achieving Success, Happiness (and World Peace)
by Chade-Meng Tan

A useful book overviewing Google's mindfulness program that aims to sharpen emotional intelligence in the office and beyond. Filled with a wide range of evidence-based simple exercises (that could even be taught to children), and an explanation of the science underpinning them.