

Are We in the Happiness Business?

Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life,
the whole aim and end of human existence. Aristotle

1. Some Definitions

- We refer to “happiness” as “subjective well-being” in scientific parlance, because it is about how people evaluate their lives and what is important to them. Subjective well-being encompasses people’s life satisfaction and their evaluation of important domains of life such as work, health, and relationships. It also includes their emotions.... In other words, happiness is the name we put on thinking and feeling positively about one’s life. Ed Diener & Robert Biswas-Diener, 2008
- “...the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one’s life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile.” Sonja Lyubomirsky, 2007
- Martin Seligman - a framework of happiness that has three types of life:
 - The pleasant life that successfully pursues positive feelings
 - The good life that uses our signature strengths to obtain abundant gratification in the main realms of life, and
 - The meaningful life – using strengths and virtues in the service of something larger than yourself. Martin Seligman, 2002

2. Exercise: Beginning to get clear on my own definition & how I experience happiness *I experience happiness and well-being when:*

Pleasures	Gratifications
Using Strengths	Meaning

3. Exercise

Dumps | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | Flying High

4. Seligman’s Equation : H = S + C + V

H = your enduring level of happiness (note enduring versus episodic)

S = your set-point – the “genetic steersman” or hardwiring

C = the circumstances of your life

V = the factors under your voluntary control.

The Happiness Pie Chart:



5. What do happy people have in common & what are the benefits?

Two prominent researchers put it simply: Happy people function better. Evidence shows:

- Happy people experience better physical Health
- Happy people have more satisfying Social relationships
- Happy people are more effective on the job

Money? *There is a positive correlation between money and happiness but after basic needs are met we can expect only modest gains in happiness and those may not last. "It is generally good for your happiness to have money but toxic to your happiness to want money too much."* Diener 2008

Happiness = what we have ÷ what we want (the ratio of attainment to aspiration)

6. How do I take more responsibility for my own happiness?

Think more intentionally

Gratitude	Forgiveness	Savoring

Get outside yourself – Relationships are the primary activity. Happy relationships are characterized by a ratio of 5 to 1: 5 positive expressions for every 1 critical or negative one.

Go for it – “Committed Goal Pursuit”- the Six Benefits from Lyubomirsky

- Provides us a sense of purpose & feeling of control over our lives
- Bolsters our self-esteem, stimulating us to feel confident & efficacious
- Adds structure & meaning to our daily lives
- Helps us to master our use of time (identify goals, devise steps, develop schedule)
- Helps us cope better with problems
- Often involves engaging with other people & connections are happiness-inducing.

All Sources Listed at www.bruceascott.com/other-services-resources/

The U. S. Constitution doesn't guarantee happiness, only the pursuit of it. You have to catch up with it yourself.
Benjamin Franklin