

The Science of HAPPINESS

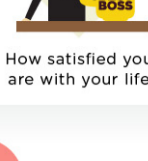
Created by
happify™

Science-based activities & games for a happier, healthier life at Happify.com

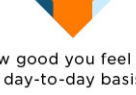
WHAT IS HAPPINESS, ANYWAY?

We all have deeply personal (and different!) definitions of happiness.
But here's how scientists see it:

Happiness is a combination of



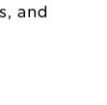
How satisfied you are with your life



How good you feel on a day-to-day basis

40%

of your happiness is controlled by your thoughts, actions, and behaviors



It varies from person to person, but approximately ...

10%

is determined by your circumstances



50%

is genetically determined



Happiness is a skill that you can build with consistent practice.
You have the ability to control how fulfilling your life is!

HERE'S WHAT HAPPINESS IS NOT



Feeling hunky-dory all the time



Having all the money you could ever want



Refusing to see the negative stuff in the world



A final destination

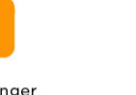
HAPPY PEOPLE ARE HEALTHIER



They have lower rates of cardiovascular disease



They have better immunity



They heal faster after injuries



They're more likely to have a healthier diet



They live longer

Keep It Steady



It's healthier to have steady levels of moderate happiness over a period of time than spikes of extreme happiness.

WHY YOUR HAPPINESS *ISN'T* JUST ABOUT YOU

Happy people...



Are more productive at their jobs



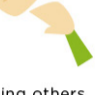
Typically have deep relationships with others



Help others and volunteer more

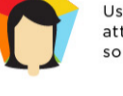


Are more likely to donate money to charity

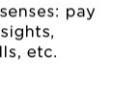


Are more creative problem-solvers

INCREASE YOUR HAPPINESS IN THE LONG RUN BY...



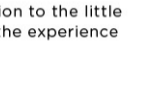
Nurturing relationships



Having new experiences



Helping others



Being grateful for what you have

Get even more happiness out of a good experience by savoring it



Use all your senses: pay attention to sights, sounds, smells, etc.



Pay attention to the little details of the experience



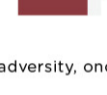
Share it with someone else



Linger! Dwell on the moment

Savoring experiences makes us happier, more grateful and more hopeful while reducing levels of stress, guilt, and depression. They strengthen the parts of the brain connected with happiness.

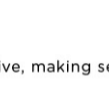
3 Things That Will Fill Your Happiness Over Time



Comparing yourself to others



A lack of close friendships



Holding onto resentment

EMBRACE ADVERSITY



People who've experienced some adversity in life are happier than those who've never experienced any.

After adversity, once we've got some distance and perspective, making sense of our life's challenges helps us:

Shape our identities

Cope better with current stressors

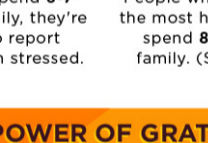
Increase our resilience

Become more optimistic about the future

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

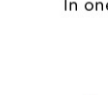
To feel connected to a deeper purpose or mission in life is key for our well-being.

People who report having more meaning in their lives are more likely to have stable moods and show sociable behavior.

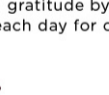


People of all ages report being happier when they have more meaning in their lives.

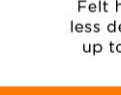
Different Ways People Find Meaning



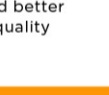
Through a fulfilling career
People who find meaning at work show more motivation and engagement on the job.



Through spirituality/religion
Studies show that Americans who are spiritual or religious tend to be happier. Besides meaning, it also gives people a built-in social network.



By raising kids
85% of parents think that their children bring them the most happiness and fulfillment of any relationship.



By pursuing goals that align with their core values
Goals that include commitment to something outside ourselves (such as our friends, family or community) promote life satisfaction.

MAKE TIME FOR FRIENDS



6-7 HOURS

On days when people spend **6-7 hours** with friends or family, they're 12 times more likely to report feeling happy rather than stressed.



8-9 HOURS

People who work full-time experience the most happiness on days when they spend **8-9 hours** with friends and family. (So make the most of those weekends!)

THE POWER OF GRATITUDE

"In 12 years of research, I have never interviewed a single person with the capacity to really experience joy who does not also actively practice gratitude."

Brené Brown, Ph.D.

In one study, people who practiced gratitude by jotting down 3 good things that happened each day for one week:



Felt happier and less depressed for up to 6 months



Reported better sleep quality



Were more likely to engage in healthy behaviors like exercise



5 WAYS TO BOOST YOUR HAPPINESS INSTANTLY



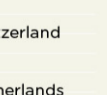
Spend 5 minutes doing something to brighten one's day



Email someone and thank them for something they did for you



Have a meaningful conversation with a good friend



Take 30 seconds to help someone who needs it



Savor a memory
Close your eyes and relive the happiest moment of your life



Find Your Flow
Many people are happiest in a "flow state," engaging in an activity that's enjoyable, requires a degree of skill, and is just enough of a challenge that you can feel "in the zone," losing all sense of time.



Meditate on This
People who regularly practice mindfulness meditation have increased activity in the left prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for calm and happiness.

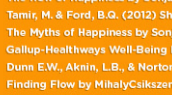


Practice Empathy
Take someone else's point of view. When others feel understood, you have a chance to build intimacy and wellbeing.

HAPPINESS AROUND THE WORLD

As of 2013...

The happiest countries are



1 Denmark



2 Norway

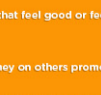


3 Switzerland

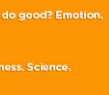
4 Netherlands

5 Sweden

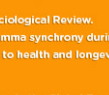
America ranks #17



The least happy countries are



1 Rwanda



2 Burundi

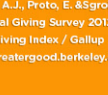


3 Central African Republic

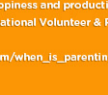
4 Benin

5 Togo

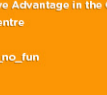
These things are correlated with higher national happiness:



GDP per capita



Freedom to make life choices



Generosity



Longevity

But the most important factor, researchers found, is:

Social support, or "having someone to count on in times of trouble."

Brought to you by
happify™ Build skills for a happier life with fun, science-based activities and games at www.happify.com

Sources
U.N. World Happiness Report 2013 / Gallup World Poll
Graham, J., Kogan, A., et al. (2013) Happiness is best kept stable: positive emotion variability is associated with poorer psychological health. *Emotion*
The How of Happiness by Sonja Lyubomirsky
Tomas, M. & Ford, B.Q. (2012) Should people pursue feeling that feel good or feelings that do good? *Emotion*
The Myths of Happiness by Sonja Lyubomirsky
Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index
Dunn, E.W., Aknin, L.B., & Norton, M.I. (2008). Spending money on others promotes happiness. *Science*.
Finding Flow by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
Bryant, Fred and Vassil, Joseph. *Securing A New Model of Positive Experiences*. Psychology Press, 2007.
Hardwiring Happiness by Rick Hanson
Steger, M. F., Oishi, S., & Kautman, T. B. (2009). Meaning in life across the life span: Levels and correlates of meaning in life from emerging adulthood to older adulthood. *Journal of Positive Psychology*
Rosso, B.D. & Duker, K.H. (2010). On the meaning of work: A theoretical integration and review. *Research in Organizational Behavior*.
Baumeister, M. E. P., Steen, T.A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*
Lim, C. & Putnam, R.D. (2010) Religion, social networks, and life satisfaction. *American Sociological Review*.
Lutz, A. & Greif, L. et al. (2003) Long-term meditation self-induced high-amplitude gamma synchrony during mindful practice. *PNAS*.
Diener, E. & Chan, M.Y. (2011) Happy people live longer: Subjective well-being contributes to health and longevity. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*
Achor, Shawn. (2012) "Positive Intelligence." *Harvard Business Review*.
Oswald, A.J., Proto, E. & Sgroi, D. (2013) Happiness and productivity: Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy.
Individual Giving Survey 2012 / Nielsen & National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre
World Giving Index / Gallup
http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/when_is_parenting_all_joy_and_no_fun