

C'mon Get Happy...or Sad:
Finding Balance by
Feeling the Feels



AGENDA

Why

When Bad is Good

The Happiness Equation

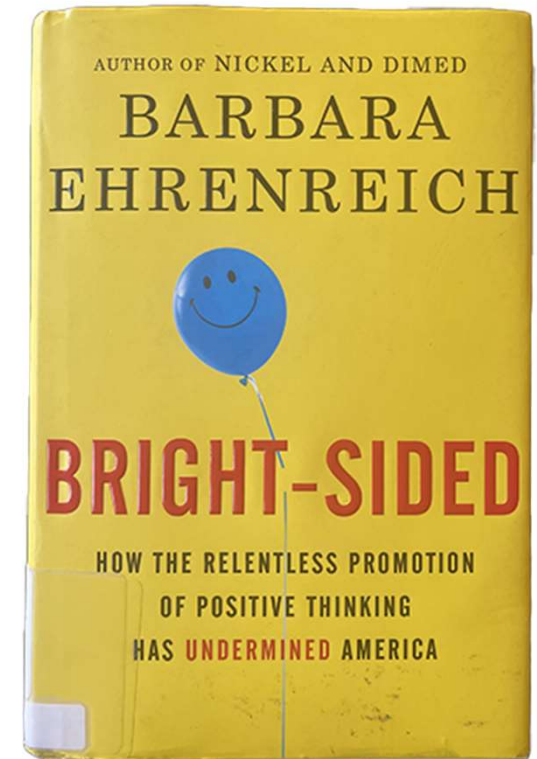
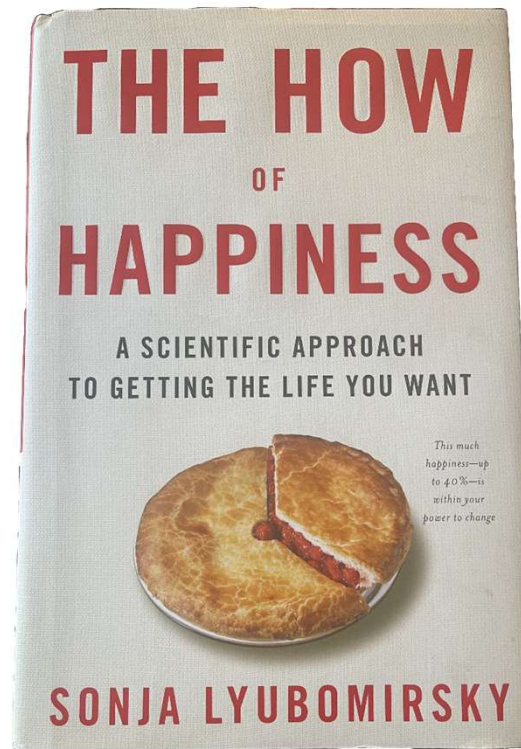
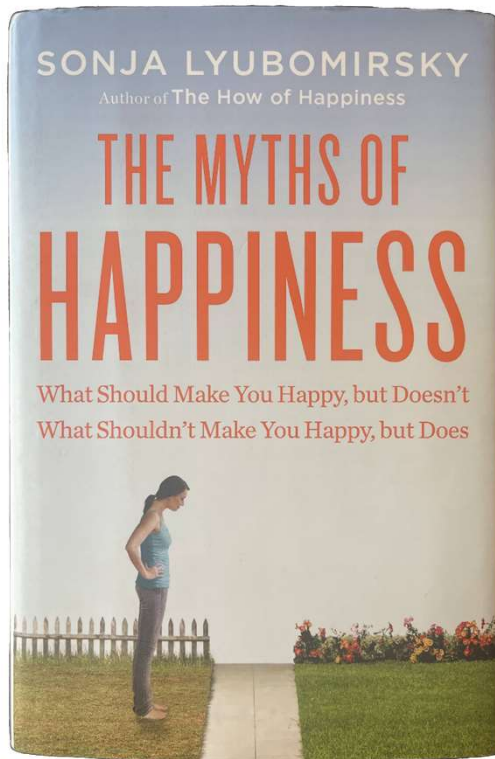
The Happiness Myth

When Happiness Sucks

But seriously, how do you get happy?

Q&A

Following Along At Home



Disclaimer

These books and this webinar are not meant to diagnose or treat depression or other mental health disorders.

It is okay to not be okay and help is available.

National Helpline



1-800-662-HELP (4357)

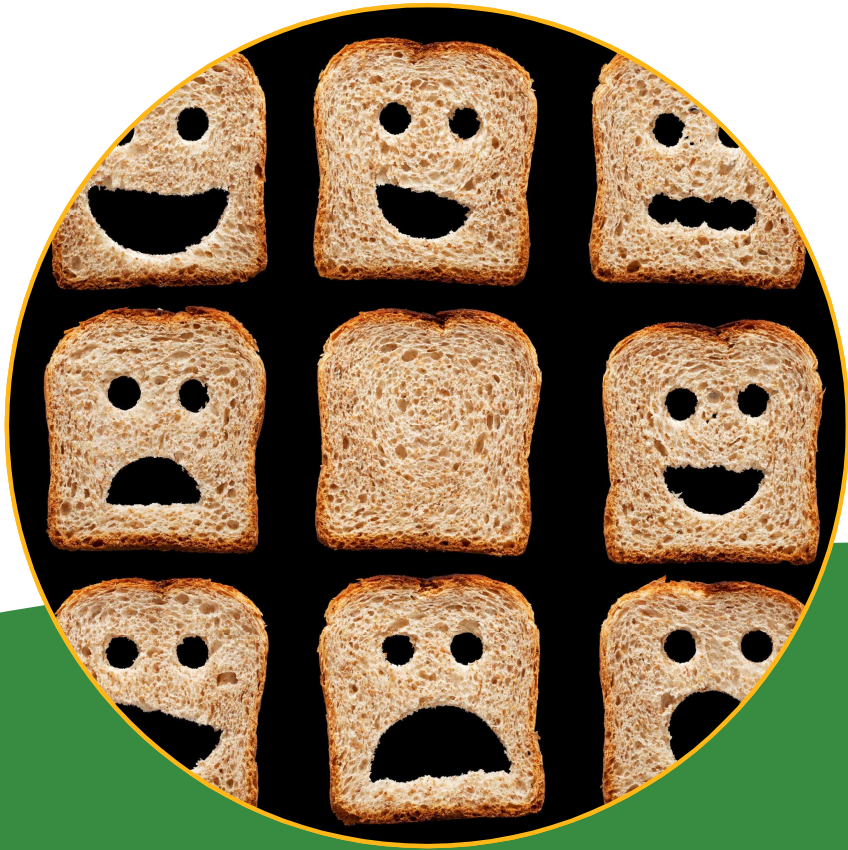


www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline

SAMHSA's Helpline is a free, **confidential**, 24-hour treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

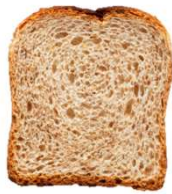


HHS.gov



How Are You Feeling?

This is a safe space!



Why This Topic? Why Now?

Look Around...



Does it all seem to be piling up?

- COVID/pandemic
 - Loss: family/friends, financial, employment, normalcy
 - Increased social media use
- Political divides
- Social justice and inequity issues
- Natural disasters
- War

Issues Within Higher Education

volt

Features Insights Resources Podcasts High

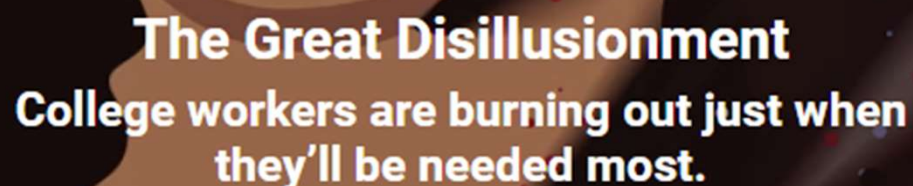
- Enrollment declines
 - 6.9% drop in undergrad enrollment since 2019
 - 14% for community colleges
 - Largest decline in 50 years
- COVID safety
- Doing more with less = Burnout
- The Great Resignation

The Great Resignation Hits Higher Ed

Three industry veterans discuss the wave of departures in higher ed, and share why they each left institutions for agencies in the last year.

Financial Aid Offices Face Turnover and Staffing Shortages as 'Great Resignation' Hits Home

By Owen Daugherty, NASFAA Staff Reporter



The Great Disillusionment
College workers are burning out just when they'll be needed most.

Source: The Hechinger Report, Nov 2021

The Age of L A N G U I S H I N G

There's a Name for the Blah You're Feeling: It's Called Languishing

The neglected middle child of mental health can dull your motivation and focus — and it may be the dominant emotion of 2021.

f s t e b i 12:12



Illustration by

By Adam Grant

“Languishing is the neglected middle child of mental health. It’s the void between depression and flourishing — the absence of well-being. You don’t have symptoms of mental illness, but you’re not the picture of mental health either. You’re not functioning at full capacity. Languishing dulls your motivation, disrupts your ability to focus, and triples the odds that you’ll cut back on work. It appears to be more common than major depression...”

Source: NYT, There's a Name for the Blah You're Feeling: It's Called Languishing, 2021

The Age of L A N G U I S H I N G

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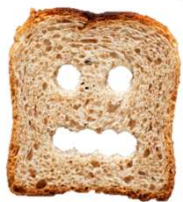


Mitchell L.

By Adam Grant

“It wasn’t burnout — we still had energy. It wasn’t depression — we didn’t feel hopeless. We just felt somewhat joyless and aimless. It turns out there’s a name for that: languishing.”

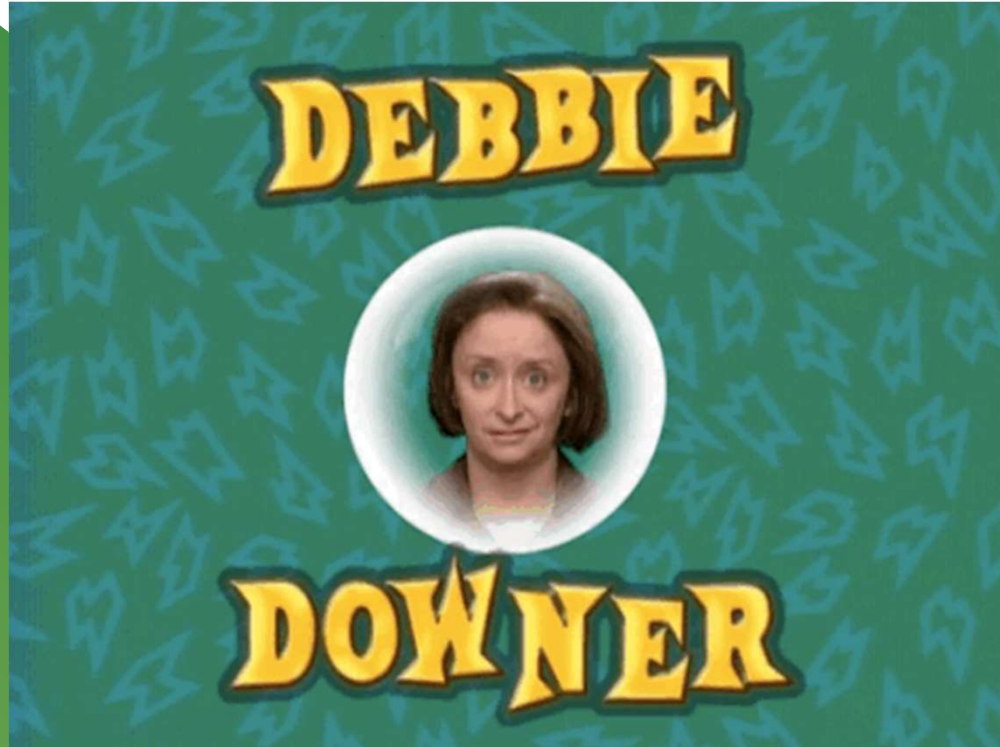
Source: NYT, There's a Name for the Blah You're Feeling: It's Called Languishing, 2021



When Bad is Good

Negative Emotions

- Fear
- Anger
- Disgust
- Sadness



BAD IS GOOD



Evolutionary Benefit

Improved work performance

Shift from happy to meaningful

Emotional Resilience

Sources: The Atlantic, Sit With Negative Emotions, Don't Push Them Away, 2020

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMMUNITY

“Much as our immune cells protect us from pathogens and disease...[our ‘psychological immune system’] protect[s] us from buckling in the face of adversity or stress.”

Sonja Lyubomirsky

© Dana Patrick



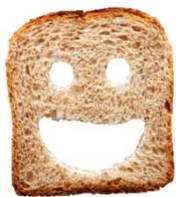


“

In sum, if we want a life full of deep meaning, true love, and emotional strength, it's going to involve the risk (and often the reality) of discomfort, conflict, and loss. This means there will be sadness, fear, anger, and disgust. If we eliminate negative emotions and experiences from our lives, we will be poorer and weaker for having done so.

Arthur C. Brooks

Sources: The Atlantic, Sit With Negative Emotions, Don't Push Them Away, 2020



The Happiness Equation

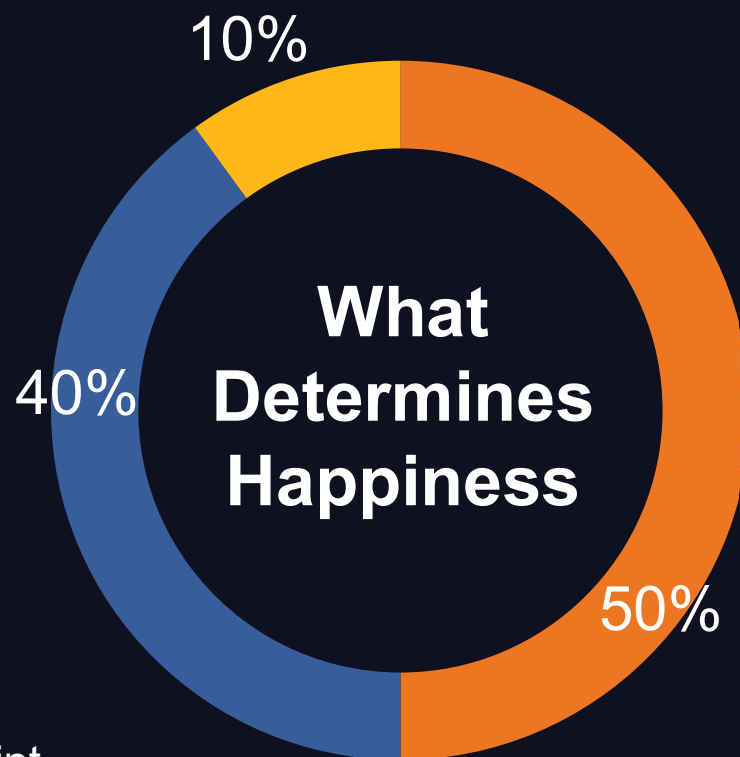
BADD NEWS



This much happiness
– up to 40% –
is within your power to change.



Source: The How Of Happiness, p. 20



- Set Point
- Intentional Activities
- Circumstances



SET POINT: JUST ONE FACTOR

Regardless of set point, the happiest people:

- Nurture close relationships
- Express gratitude
- Help others
- Practice optimism
- Appreciate the little things
- Commit to goals/values
- Develop healthy trauma responses

For each of the following statements and/or questions, please choose the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing you:

SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS SCALE

How To Calculate Your Score

Total your scores from questions 1 – 4 = _____

Divide that total by 4 = _____

That's it!

There's no right or wrong score. This is simply an indicator of where you fall in relation to the average.

According to Lyubomirsky, the average score of working adults is 5.6. If your score is higher than this, you are happier than average; if your score is lower than 5.6, you are less happy than average.

Lyubomirsky, S., & Lepper, H. (1999). [A measure of subjective happiness: Preliminary reliability and construct validation](#). *Social Indicators Research*, 46, 137-155. The original publication is available at www.springerlink.com.

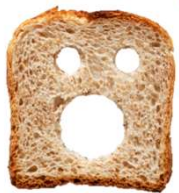
But what about LANGUISHING?

“We each normally have a set point that we return to after things go particularly well or badly for us. However, **sustained changes** in our circumstances can increase or **lower our set point**. This is especially true if the changes have wide-ranging and long-lasting positive or negative effects...

There is a good chance that your overall emotional set point will go down a few notches. To a large extent, this is what has happened to all of us during the pandemic...

It makes sense that our emotional set point is lower than it was. **The lowering of our set point is what it means to languish.**

Source: Psychology Today, Languishing? Learn How to Raise Your Happiness Set Point, 2021



The Happiness Myth

It's Fine, I'm Fine, Everything's Fine.



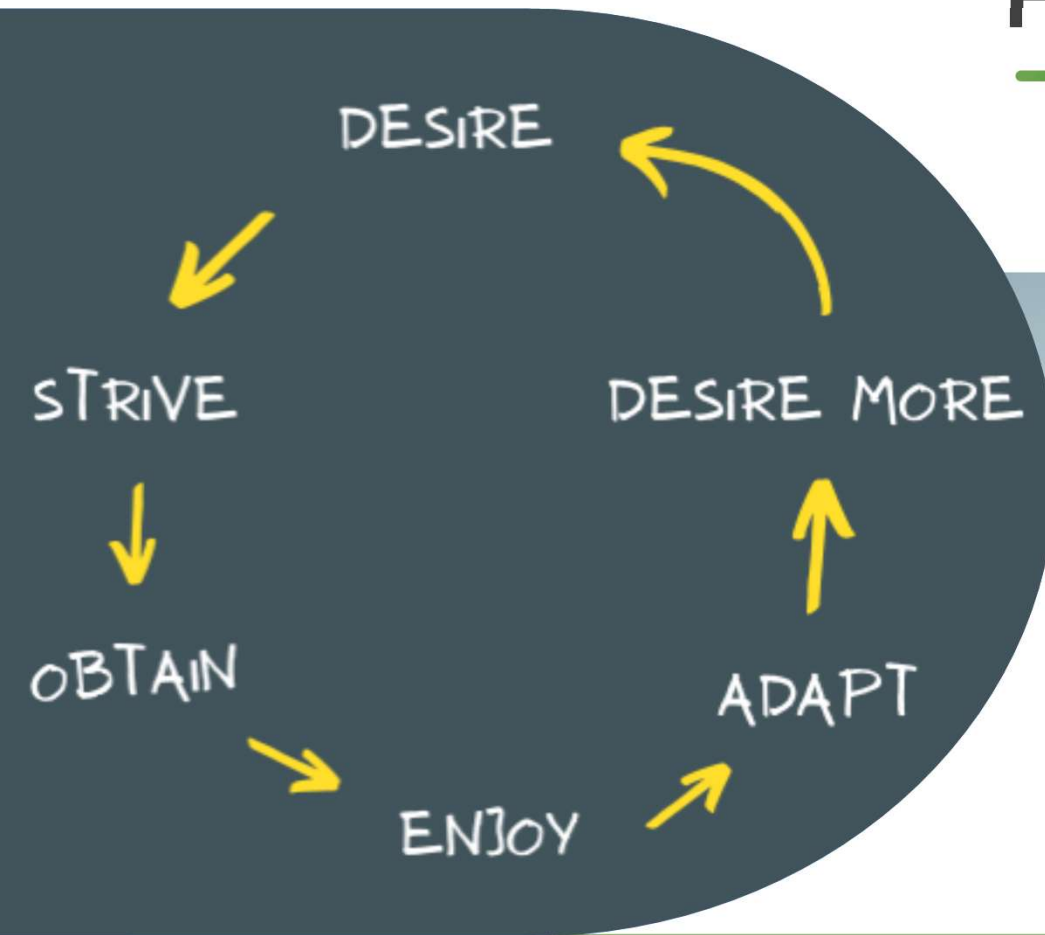
HEDONIC ADAPTATION

HEDONIC ADAPTATION

AKA Hedonic Treadmill

Familiarity Breeds Contempt

What now increases our happiness (or sadness) will not continue to do so over the long term. We will eventually return to that happiness set point, and the cycle will start all over again.



Source: <https://dismantledmind.com/hedonic-adaptation-why-happiness-is-elusive/>

How did you feel when you...

Got a new:

- Relationship?
- Job?
- Car?
- House?

How long did it take for that rush to wear off?

Lost a:

- Friend or loved one?
- Job?
- Relationship?
- Dream?

Were you as deeply affected for as long as you at first believed you would be?

BLESSING AND A CURSE

— ...



...we overestimate how long and how intensely a particular negative life event...will throw us into despair, and how long and how intensely a particular positive event...will throw us over the moon.

The Myth of Happiness



LET'S RECAP

- We're all probably languishing
 - Because...*gestures broadly at everything*
- Feeling bad is actually good for us
- Happiness is 50% predetermined
 - Genetic baseline happiness
- But 40% of it we control
- For better or worse, we adapt and return to our happiness set points
 - Hedonic Adaptation



When Happiness Sucks

A photograph of three people (two men and one woman) jumping joyfully in a snowy outdoor setting. They are wearing winter clothing and have their arms raised. The background shows snow-covered trees and a building. A blue semi-transparent box with rounded corners is overlaid on the image, containing a quote and attribution. A large white circle with a blue double quote is on the left side of the blue box.

“

“Toxic positivity is the assumption, either by one’s self or others, that despite a person’s emotional pain or difficult situation, they should only have a positive mindset or — my pet-peeve term — ‘positive vibes.’”

Dr. Jaime Zuckerman

Source: Healthline, 'Toxic Positivity' Is Real – and It's a Big Problem During the Pandemic, 2021

Why Is Toxic Positivity So...Toxic?

- Minimizes and invalidates
 - Your emotions are wrong
- Forces us to internalize our negative emotions
 - Unhealthy processing causes more psychological damage
- Puts the needs of the listener first
 - “Your discomfort is not as important as my comfort.”
- Insensitive

TOXIC POSITIVITY: GREATEST HITS



Being negative won't
get you anywhere!

Everything happens for a reason!

Look on the bright side /
Look for the silver lining...

It will all work out in the end.

You've still got XYZ, don't
let this bother you!

It can always be worse.

At least XYZ didn't happen!

TOXIC POSITIVITY: PANDEMIC EDITION

— ...



...social media is flooded with messages about how to take advantage of quarantine: Start a side hustle! Be productive! Learn a new foreign language or how to cook! Make bread! Reorganize the garage!

Not everyone copes with stress by getting busy. And for many, these messages are harmful, leading to increased feelings of depression and anxiety.

Source: Healthline, 'Toxic Positivity' Is Real – and It's a Big Problem During the Pandemic, 2021

TOXIC POSITIVITY: INSTAGRAM EDITION — ...



reesewitherspoon 🌟 Let's talk about habits! Are there any that have improved your daily life? Here are some I'm working towards:

1. Start the day with a big glass of water.
2. Get 10 mins of outdoor light.
3. Spend 30 - 60 mins reading without distraction everyday.
4. In bed by 10pm. *no late night TV binges. Try to get 8 hours of rest!

Edited · 6h

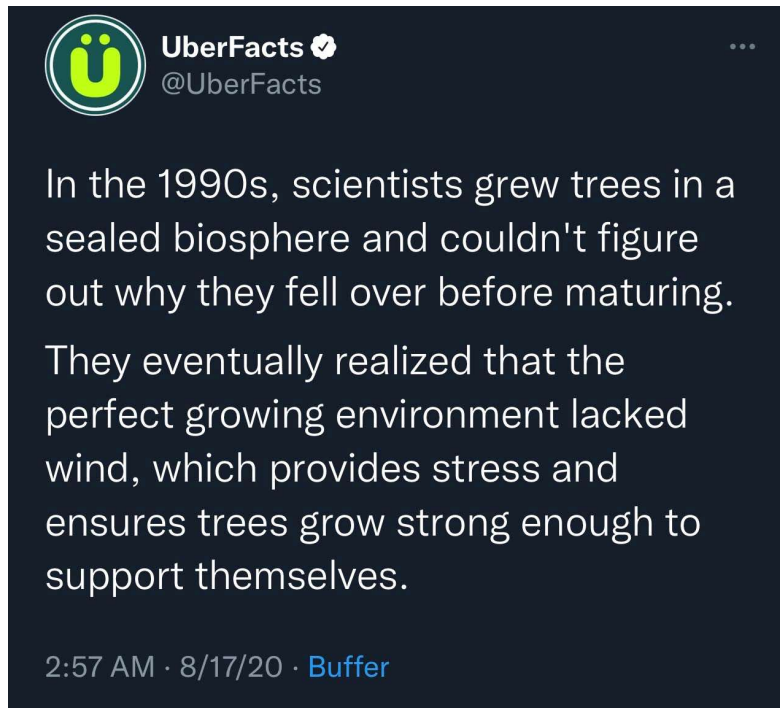


inagarten 🌟 To quote @reesewitherspoon - that sounds great but I'm probably not doing any of those things! LOL!! My formula is easier to follow:

1. Drink more large cosmos
2. Stay up late watching addictive streaming series,
3. Stay in bed in the morning playing Sudoku instead of reading a good book.
4. Spend more time (safely) with people you love. In a pandemic, I do what I can!



Sometimes We Need Adversity



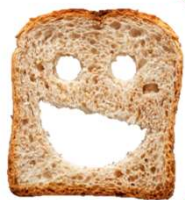
Psychological Immunity

“Much as our immune cells protect us from pathogens and disease...[our ‘psychological immune system’] protect[s] us from buckling in the face of adversity or stress.”

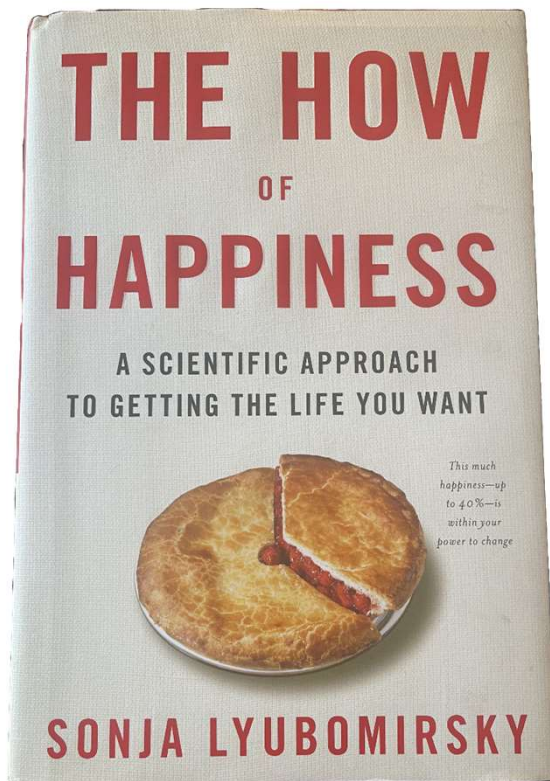
Sonja Lyubomirsky

© Dana Patrick





But seriously, how
do you get happy?



HAPPINESS ACTIVITIES

- THIS is the 40% of happiness you control
- Personal inventory in the book that identifies your ideal activities
- Six categories:
 - Practicing Gratitude and positive thinking
 - Investing in Social Connections
 - Managing Stress, Hardship and Trauma
 - Living in the Present
 - Committing to Your Goals
 - Taking Care of your Body and Soul



1

Practicing Gratitude and Positive Thinking

- Keep a gratitude journal or write someone a letter of gratitude
- Envision what your best possible life/self looks like; identify goals to get there
- Stop overthinking/ruminating by asking yourself if it will matter in a day? A week? A month? A year?



2

Investing in Social Connections

- Practice acts of kindness, random or otherwise
- Express your admiration, appreciation and/or affection
- Be their biggest cheerleader
- Make time



3

Managing Stress, Hardship and Trauma

- Identify your problem-focused and emotion-focused coping skills, and when each may be appropriate
- Use journaling/expressive writing to process trauma
- Label your emotions and reframe your ideas
- Practice empathy and imagine forgiveness



4

Living in The Present

- Never stop learning and look for the extraordinary in the everyday
- Make routine tasks enjoyable
- Look for leisure activities that allow you to lose your sense of time and become fully absorbed

A man wearing a grey t-shirt, a black Adidas cap, and a necklace is sitting and writing in a notebook with a black pen. He is wearing several bracelets on his left wrist.

5

Committing to Your Goals

Choose goals wisely! You will be most successful at achieving goals that are

- Intrinsic
- Authentic
- Approach-oriented
- Harmonious
- Activity-based
- Flexible



6

Taking Care of Your Body & Soul

- Define your own sense of meaning and purpose; don't adopt someone else's
- Practice meditation
- Move your body, in whatever way that works best for you

Finally, Avoid Toxic Positivity

Try these phrases instead:

- It's okay to cry. And it's okay to give up. What do you want to do?
- It's important to let it out. What can I do to make this easier for you?
- I see you and I'm here for you, good and bad.
- It's probably hard to see anything positive right now. We'll make sense of it the best we can.
- No feelings are off-limits. This is a judgement-free zone.

K E E P L E A R N I N G

TEDTalk

How to Stop Languishing
and Start Finding Flow

Hidden
Brain

Where Happiness
Hides

Inceptia
On-Demand
Webinar

Still Nudging:
Helping Students
Make Optimal Choices

Inceptia
On-Demand
Webinar

Supporting Students
in a Virtual World



**WHAT ARE YOUR
QUESTIONS?**



THANK YOU

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