

AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS

Term comes from Positive Psychology – the study of positive emotions, e.g. joy, gratitude, love. Martin Seligman, Christopher Peterson and Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi are the big researchers in this new field.

Happy people have better health habits, lower blood pressure, better immune systems, more stress resiliency, and live longer. The following information will can be helpful in determining your level of happiness.

Happiness Formula

$$H = S + C + V$$

- H level of happiness
- S set range
- C life circumstances
- V factors under your voluntary control

Set Range

- Can increase happiness to the high point of your set range
- Optimistic – interpret troubles as transient, controllable and specific to the situation
- Pessimistic – interpret troubles as permanent, pervasive and personal
- To increase optimism use this model:

A = adversity, e.g. under stress

B = belief, e.g. can't do anything right

C = consequence, e.g. gain 5 pounds

D = dispute, e.g. when you make time for yourself, even under stress, you have more control

E = energize, e.g. feel better and energized to confront stress by thinking of what you need to do for you first

Life Circumstances

- Education, climate, race, gender, attractiveness and wealth have little effect on happiness.
- They account for between 8 and 15 percent of happiness.
- A support network and marriage have positive effects on happiness.
- Why is the above so?

Hedonistic treadmill – people adapt to good things rapidly; also, major events lose their impact within 3 months.

Voluntary Control

- Need to exercise your character traits or you will feel empty over the course of life.
- Personality traits are descriptive.
- Character traits are prescriptive.
- 50 percent of all personality traits are genetic.
- Positive Psychology has studied character traits. Below are the criteria used:
 - 1) Valued in almost every culture
 - 2) Valued intrinsically – not as a means to an end
 - 3) Are malleable, like clay

Character/Strength Traits

Twenty-four were found in reviewing the traditions, philosophies and religions of the world.

- 1) Curiosity/interest in the world
- 2) Love of learning
- 3) Judgment/critical thinking/open-mindedness

- 4) Ingenuity/originality/practical intelligence/street smarts
- 5) Social intelligence/personal intelligence/emotional intelligence
- 6) Perspective
- 7) Valor and bravery
- 8) Perseverance/industry/diligence
- 9) Integrity/genuineness/honesty
- 10) Kindness and generosity
- 11) Loving and allowing oneself to be loved
- 12) Citizenship/duty/teamwork/loyalty
- 13) Fairness and equity
- 14) Leadership
- 15) Self-control
- 16) Prudence/discretion/caution
- 17) Humility and modesty
- 18) Appreciation of beauty and excellence
- 19) Gratitude
- 20) Hope/optimism/future-mindedness
- 21) Spirituality/sense of purpose/faith/religiousness
- 22) Forgiveness and mercy
- 23) Playfulness and humor
- 24) Zest/passion/enthusiasm

You can take the Authentic Happiness test on www.authentichappiness.org to see your signature characteristics/strengths.

Pleasures and Gratifications

- Pleasures are like good chocolate.
- Gratifications are experiencing your character traits.
- Enhance the pleasures.
- Don't get into habituation.
- Increase savoring, basking, sharing.
- Enhance the gratifications.
- Use your character traits/strengths every day.

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