

Nurturing Your Happiness

Adrienne James Consulting

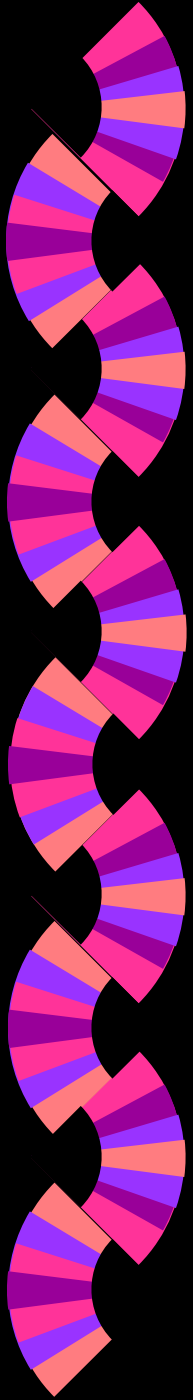
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Objectives

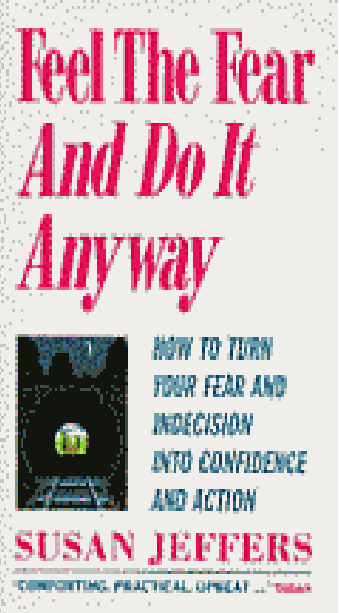
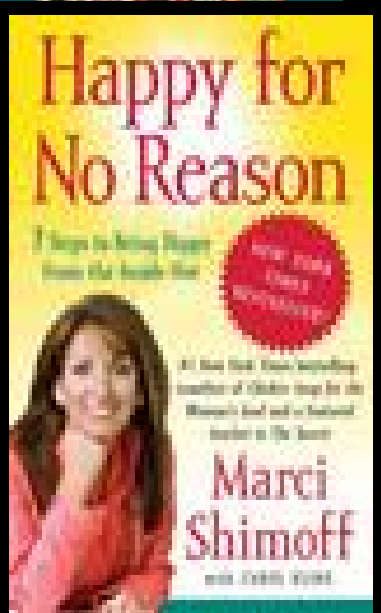
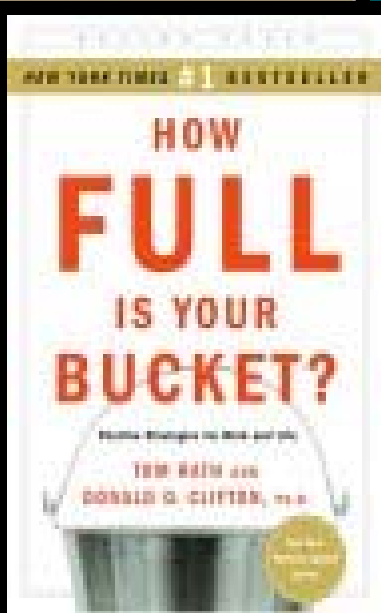
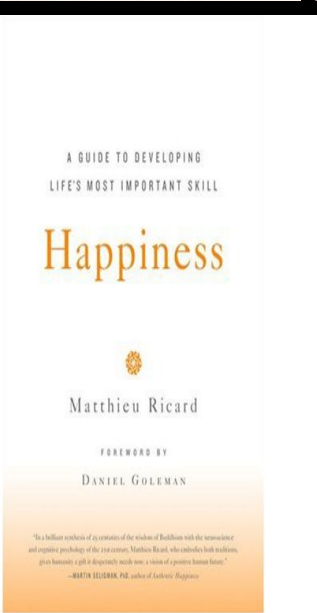
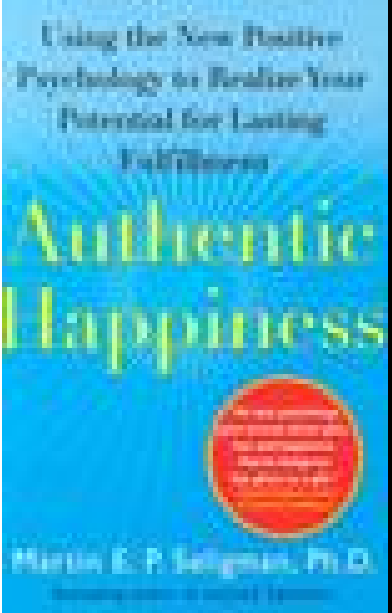
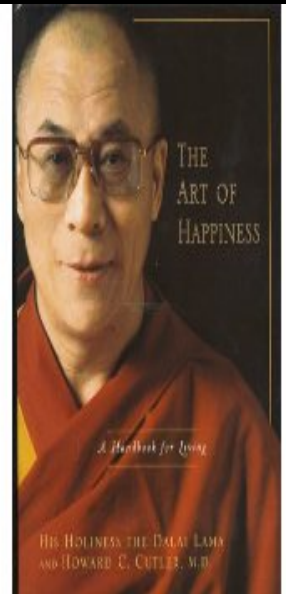
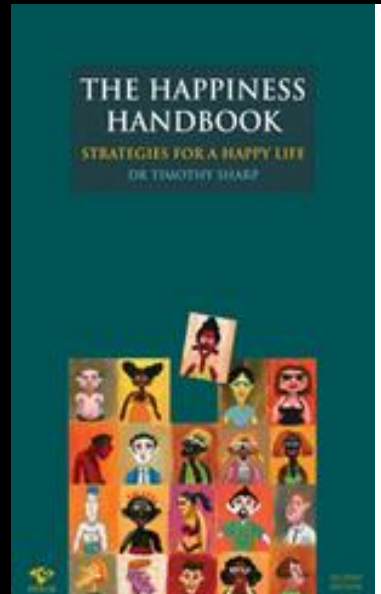
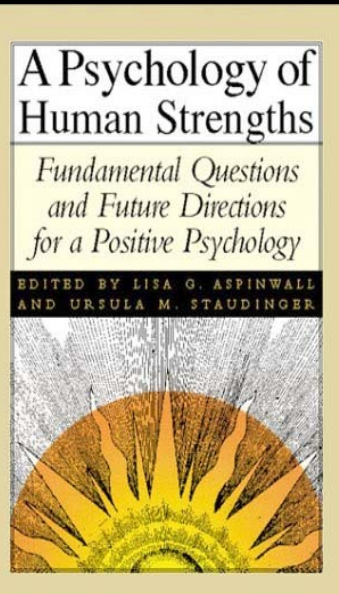
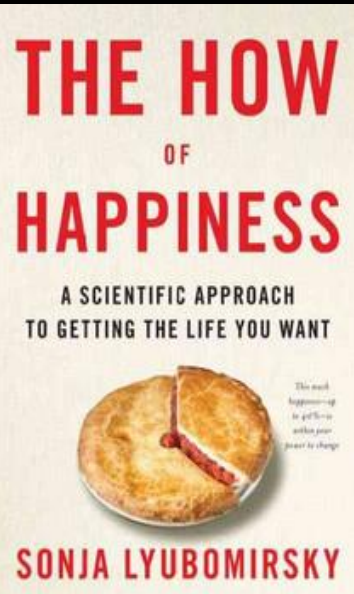
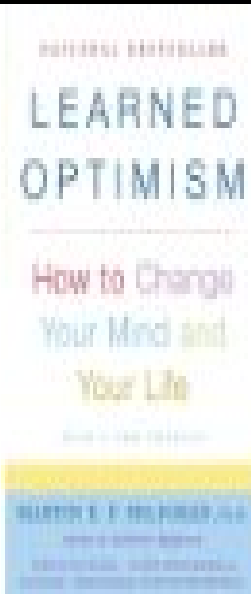
By the end of the session participants should be able to:

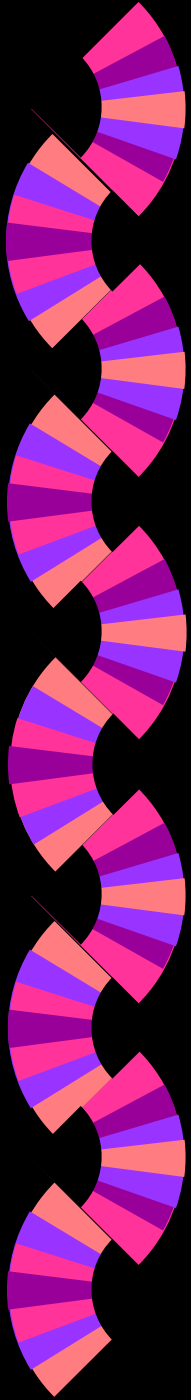
- ◆ Describe why the study of happiness is important
- ◆ Define what happiness means to them
- ◆ Identify their set point of happiness
- ◆ List the fundamental principles of positive psychology
- ◆ Describe the characteristics of happy people
- ◆ List 4 proven happiness strategies
- ◆ Identify what strategies they would like to take on to improve their own happiness



- ◆ Exercise – turn to the person next to you and in a couple of mins each tell them a story about you when you were at your best.

Happiness Books





*Can We Make Ourselves Lastingly
Happier?*

YES!

- ◆ Martin Seligman taught one happiness enhancing strategy to a group of severely depressed people.
- ◆ The exercise involved writing down 3 good things that had happened every day
- ◆ Within 15 days their depression lifted to mildly or moderately depressed and 94% experienced relief

How does this compare with anti depressants!



Happiness is a Serious Issue

Most of us are not flourishing

WHO predicts that by 2020 depression will be the 2nd leading cause of morbidity in the world, affecting 30% of all adults

The Global Burden of Disease: A Comprehensive Assessment of Mortality and Disability from Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors in 1990 and Projected to 2020 (1996), by Christopher J. L. Murray of the Harvard School of Public Health, and Alan D. Lopez of the World Health Organization.



What is Happiness to You ?

- ◆ Experience of joy, contentment, positive well-being, with a sense that life is good, meaningful and worthwhile.

Sonja Lyubomirsky

- ◆ Matthieu Ricard notes it is "a deep sense of flourishing that arises from an exceptionally healthy mind. This is not a mere pleasurable feeling, a fleeting emotion, or a mood, but an optimal state of being."

Happiness: A Guide to Developing Life's Most Important Skill Matthieu Ricard,



What Does Make us Happy?

Research consistently shows us the things that makes us most happy are these:

- ◆ Strong relationships with family and friends
- ◆ Having a sense of meaning or purpose
- ◆ Contributing to the lives of others
- ◆ A sense of control in our lives

Wanting and appreciating what we have.



What Doesn't Make Us Happy

- ◆ **What is **not** associated with happiness?**
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Cultural background
 - Education
 - Urban or rural place of residence
 - Wealth
- ◆ **Set point for happiness**

Within one year of a very positive or very negative event, happiness returns to previous levels



3 Major Myths about Happiness

1. Happiness must be “found out there”

40% of happiness is in our own hands

2. Happiness lies in changing our circumstances.

The myth of more

I would be happy ifor when.....advertising feeds on this

3. You either have it or you don't

We can overcome our genetic programming

Sonja Lyubermirsky 2007



Happiness is Our Fundamental Nature

“Our physical structure seems to be more suited to feelings of love and compassion. We can see how a calm, affectionate, wholesome state of mind has beneficial effects on our health and physical well being.

Conversely feelings of frustration, fear, agitation and anger can be destructive to our health”

The Dalai Lama 2007



Why Happiness as an Aim?

- ◆ It is universal, we all strive for it
- ◆ “The very purpose of life is to be happy” according to the Dalai Lama
- ◆ Yet there has never been such unhappiness and related mental health issues as there are today.

Why is this?

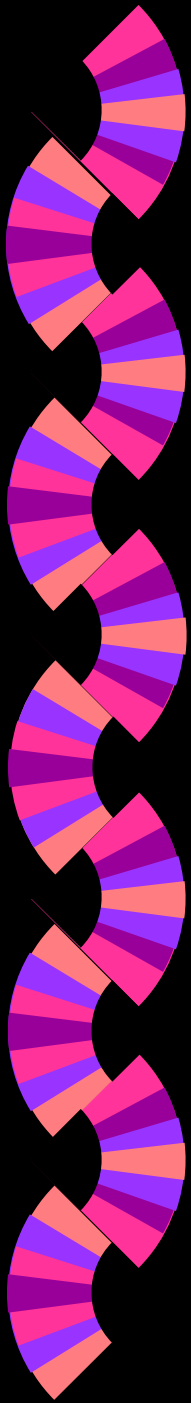


Why are we Unhappy?

- ◆ The modern mind is constantly on the lookout for trouble - we spend much time worrying about things that probably won't happen – losing jobs, getting fines, embarrassing ourselves, getting cancer

- ◆ We needed to belong to a group to survive. Our modern mind wants to make sure we belong and warns us of rejection. It does this by comparing, worrying if people will like us - hence excessive interest in celebrity and comparison...

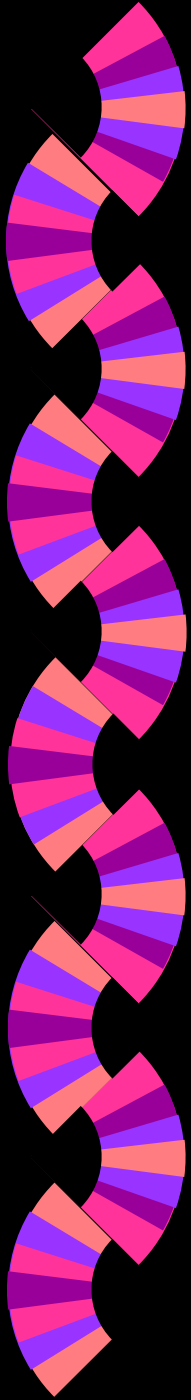
- ◆ Our culture is based on material acquisition, wanting more



- ◆ We often have difficulty in accessing ourselves at our best.
- ◆ We concentrate disproportionately on what goes wrong rather than what goes right.



How Happy Are You ?



Subjective Happiness Scale Handout to Fill In

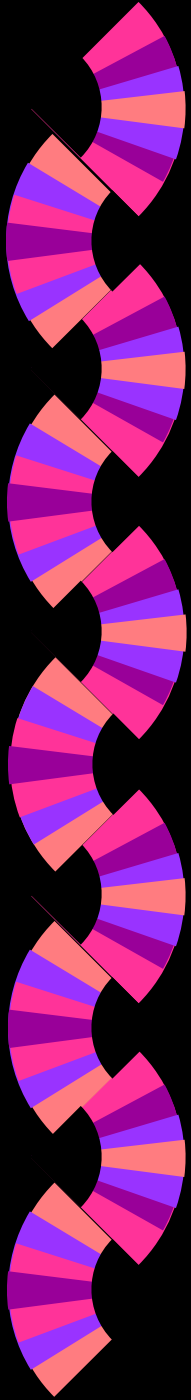


Subjective Happiness Scale

- ◆ Devised by Lyubermirsky and Lepper it is a simple scale that measures your current happiness level.
- ◆ The average score is between 4.5 and 5.5, the higher the happier

It is suggested that you redo this after you have started practicing happiness activities

Sonja Lyubermirsky 1999



- ◆ Happiness is determined more by our state of mind than by external events



States of Happiness

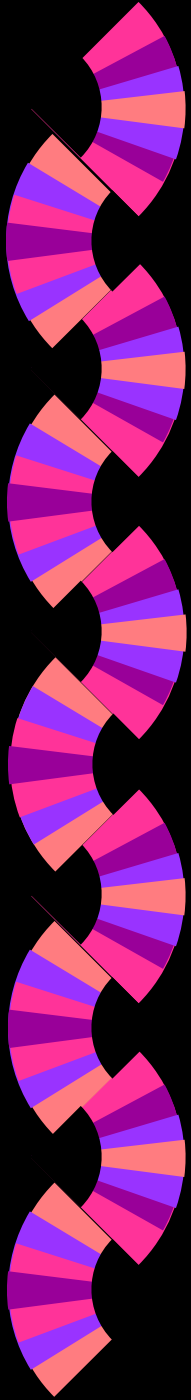
We can be:

- ◆ **unhappy**
- ◆ **happy for bad reason**
- ◆ **happy for good reason**

or

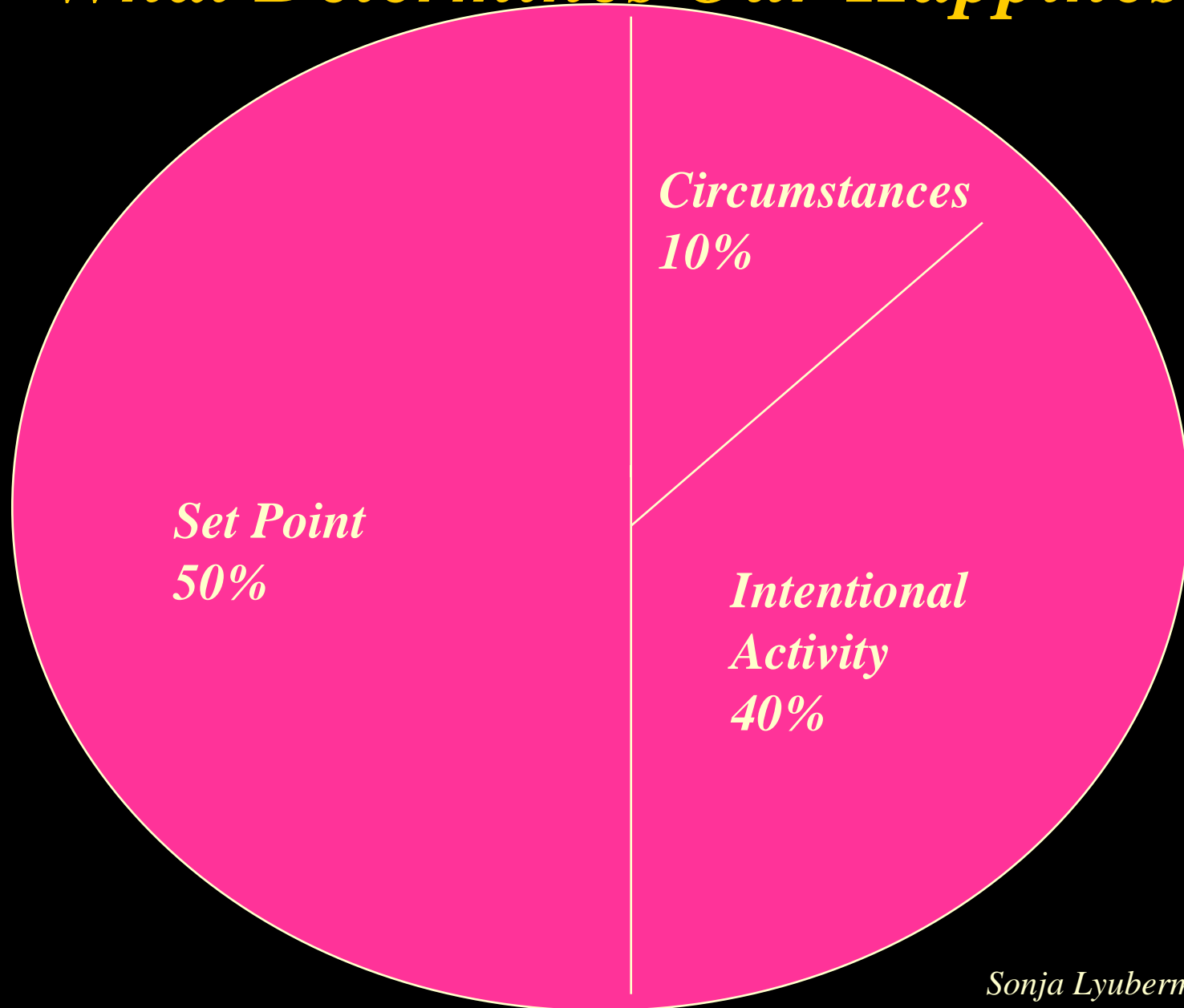
- ◆ **happy for no reason – this is what we are aiming for**

Marci Shimoff 2008



- ◆ **What are some of the I'll be happy when ... statements you might have or hear?**

What Determines Our Happiness





Happiness Set-point

50% of our happiness is determined by our genes
our “happiness set-point”

10% is determined by life circumstance

40% by our intentional activities.

Your happiness set-point will remain the same **unless**
you make a concerted effort to change it

That’s the exciting bit, we can change things



Happiness Set Point

Studies have tracked people who won the lottery - what many people think of as the ticket to happiness.

Within a year, these winners returned to about the same level of happiness they'd had before their win.

The same was true for people who became paraplegic. Within a year or so of being disabled, they also returned to their original happiness level.

Moving to Happy For No Reason



- ◆ This state of happiness is universal and refers to a state of enlightenment or peace within

- ◆ “It is not that your life is always perfect – it’s just that however it looks, you’ll still be happy”

- ◆ Happy people don’t have special powers they have different habits.

Marci Shimoff 2008

- ◆ Our routines hide the “plasticity of our brains” like ruts in a road. The brain is capable of the changing its circuits and is always doing so

Norman Doidge The Brain That Changes Itself 2007



Our Brain's Ability to Change

- ◆ Scientists have discovered that habitual thoughts and behaviours create specific neural pathways in our brains, just as water flowing downhill creates a groove in the earth.
- ◆ When we think or behave a certain way over and over, the neural pathway is strengthened and the groove becomes deeper.
- ◆ Unhappy people tend to have more negative neural pathways -- their minds are literally stuck in a rut.
- ◆ Scientists used to think these neural pathways were set in stone.
- ◆ New research shows that when you repeatedly think, feel, and act in a different way, the brain actually rewires itself. This means you can change your happiness set point.

Richard Davidson, PhD, of the University of Wisconsin-Madison quoted by M Shimoff 2008



Stop Over Thinking

- ◆ Thinking is terribly over rated – you must stop it.
- ◆ We create chaos in our minds with over thinking
- ◆ We can't always fix or change everything – acceptance and allowing is enough, we don't need to have all the answers
- ◆ Come back to your senses
- ◆ Feel the body, hear, smell, look
- ◆ The body is the anchor to the present



Habits of the Happiest people

- ◆ They choose thoughts, feelings and behaviours that expand them rather than those that contract.
- ◆ By developing these habits we can raise our happiness level.



Practising Happiness



Blessings Activity

- ◆ Write 3 things down every night before you go to sleep the things that went well – your blessings



Savouring Activity

What would a perfect day be like for you?

Design that perfect day, write it down

Set a day aside to experience it in the next month



Living in the Moment

Whatever you are doing, pay attention.

- ◆ What do you see?
- ◆ What do you hear?
- ◆ What do you feel?
- ◆ What do you taste?
- ◆ What do you smell?



Activity

Practice all the ways you can say

No

How does it feel?





Now try

YES

How does that feel?





Ways to Enhance Positive Mood

1. Breathe deeply and slowly
2. Laugh
3. Savour momentary experiences
4. Enjoy your environment
5. Find positives in your life
6. Support, help, cheer up someone
7. Be physically active
8. Daydream
9. Use one of your strengths (VIA strengths)
10. Tend something you care about
11. Remove guilt, remorse and regret

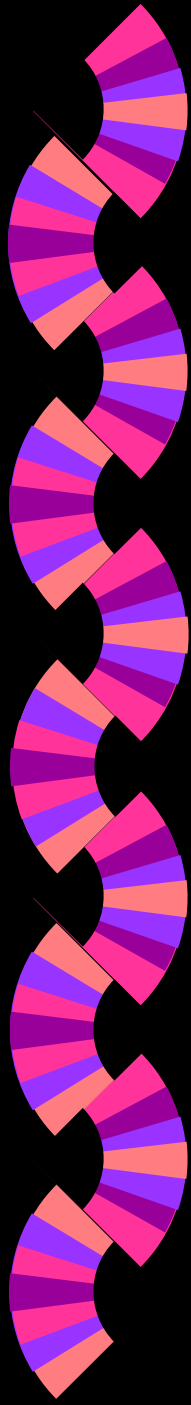
Act like a happy person

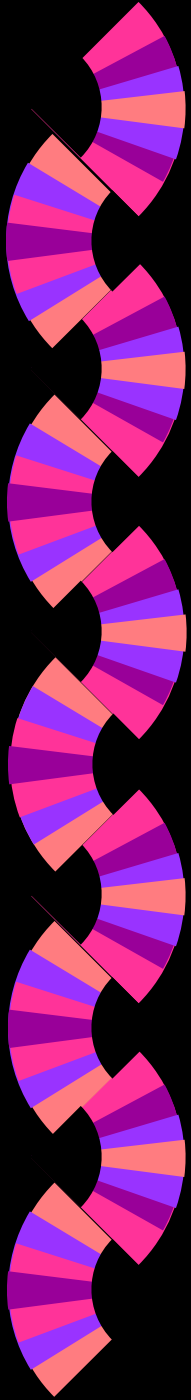


Patterns of Happy People

- ◆ Devote much time to family and friends and enjoy those relationships
- ◆ Are comfortable expressing gratitude for all they have
- ◆ Are often first to offer a helping hand to others
- ◆ Practice optimism when imagining their futures
- ◆ Savour life's pleasures and live in the present
- ◆ Exercise regularly
- ◆ Are deeply committed to life long goals/activities
- ◆ Feel alive, vital, energetic
- ◆ Have a sense of flow, openness
- ◆ Feel love and compassion for self & others
- ◆ Have passion about life and purpose
- ◆ Are at peace with life

Messages to Take Away

- 
- ◆ The pursuit of happiness is worthwhile and takes work
 - ◆ We always have the potential to grow and change – we can change our brain by transforming our mind
 - ◆ We have a set point of happiness determined by our genes but 40% is determined by our mind set
 - ◆ Relationships are number one
 - ◆ Gratitude is a vital - count blessings each night
 - ◆ Go beyond yourself commit to doing things for others
 - ◆ Happiness comes from your core sense of who you are, it doesn't depend on your circumstances but it definitely DOES affect them

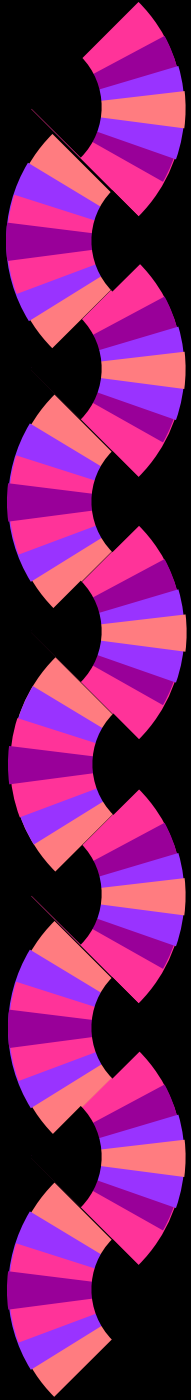


Pursuing happiness takes work, but it
might be the most rewarding work
we'll ever do

Sonya Lyubomirsky 2008

Achieving durable happiness requires
sustained effort in training the mind
and developing a set of human
qualities such as inner peace,
mindfulness and altruistic love

Matthieu Ricard 2006



- ◆ By being aware of and promoting your own happiness you can build resilience and help influence the ways people cope with adversity



Resources

- ◆ VIA Signature Strengths Questionnaire (www.authentichappiness.org)
- ◆ Viktor Frankl, *Mans Search For Meaning* 1956
- ◆ Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now* 2004
- ◆ Echart Tolle, *A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose* 2005
- ◆ Marci Shimoff, *Happy For No Reason* 2008
- ◆ Sonja Lyubomirsky, *The How of Happiness* 2007
- ◆ Martin Seligman, *Authentic Happiness Using the New Positive Psychology to Realise Your Potential for Lasting Fulfilment* 2004
- ◆ Martin Seligman, *Learned Optimism how to change your mind and your life* 2006
- ◆ Dalai Lama and Howard C Cutler, *The Art of Happiness a handbook for living* 1998
- ◆ Matthieu Ricard, *Happiness A guide to developing life's most important skill* 2006