

# Developing & Growing Happiness

“The goal of life is not really space travel, backyard swimming pools, glider planes, entertainment extravaganzas, big fast cars, or thrillpills. What humans are really seeking is individual happiness, self-realization.”

- Cleon Skousen

The research on happiness suggests that a portion of our happiness is genetically determined (up to 50%), which means that much of our happiness can be improved by intentional and consistent acts.

Let's begin with a quiz. Answer the questions below stating whether you believe the statement is true or false. Then, check your answers.

#	Questions:	True/False
1.	Does wealth make us happy?	
2.	Does education make us happy?	
3.	Does being younger make us happy?	
4.	Does marriage make us happy?	
5.	Do sunny days make us happy?	
6.	Does religious faith make us happy?	
7.	Do friends make us happy?	
8.	Do major accidents make us unhappy?	
9.	Does a loss of a job make us unhappy?	
10.	Do our genes influence our happiness?	
11.	Are women happier than men?	
12.	Are most people happy?	
13.	Is happiness the opposite of unhappiness?	
14.	Is social status related to happiness?	
15.	Can our happiness be increased?	

Answer Key: 1F,2F;3F;4T;5F;6T;7T;8F;9T;10T;11F;12T;13F;14F;15T

It's important to recognize that increasing your happiness can take place through a variety of practices, each of which can make a contribution.

Please review the brief synopsis of happiness research below and consider of how each might be used to inform your happiness strategies.

Check the box next to each that you are most interested in exploring or developing an intentional practice.

Check Mark	Research Findings
	Comparing oneself to others can be detrimental to your happiness (Li, Young, Wei, Zhang, Zheng, Xiao, Wang, and Chen 1998).
	People who ruminate on the negative are 70% less likely to feel content than those who focus on the positive (Scott and McIntosh, 1999)
	Counter factual thinking (thinking about what could have been) has been associated with less satisfied people after a performance (Gilovich and Medvec, 1995)
	Any religious affiliation has been associated with more life satisfaction as compared to those without a religious affiliation (Gerwood, LeBlanc, and Piazza, 1998)
	Volunteering your time to a cause (as compared to not being involved) contributed to happiness and purpose. Volunteers, according to Crist-Houran, 1995) are twice as likely to be happy as non-volunteers.
	Exercise, including brisk walks, increase happiness by 12%. Plus exercises raises self-confidence and self-ratings (Fontane, 1996).
	Perception of events (not the actual event itself) is a stronger predictor of life satisfaction (Staats, Armstrong-Stassman, and Partillo, 1995)
	In hundreds of studies, happiness is directly related to humor. People who enjoy silly humor are one-third more likely to feel happy (Solomon, 1996)
	Happy people are those who can look at all of the events in their life and not focus too much on any one aspect of life (Bhargava, 1995).
	Social people are generally happier than people that are isolated. (Finch, Barrera, Okun, Bryant, Pool, and Snow-Turek, 1997)
	Busy people tend to be more happy than complacent people (Bailey and Miller, 1998).

	Happiness is generated by what you compare your current experience to. Happy people tend to have a lower threshold rating of positive events, even though they have similar life experiences as unhappy people (Parducci, 1995)
	People who appreciate what they have (not compared to others) are more happy than people who see themselves as having less (Sirgy, Cole, Kosenko, and Meadow, 1995)
	Taking stock, measuring concrete progress, and thinking concretely is associated with a meaningful and worthwhile life (Lindeman and Verkasaio, 1996)
	Happiness is connected with people who don't assume they are "solely" the cause of their own problems (Panos, 1977)
	Individuals who feel they are in control (during work) are happier (28% more) than people who felt out of control (Thakar and Misra, 1995).
	Moral people feel happier than non-moral people (Garrett, 1996).
	Individuals who can freely communicate their issues and concerns with others are 40% more satisfied than people who are not (Ferroni and Taff, 1997).
	Sleep contributes to happiness and well-being. For every hour of sleep lost (under 8 hours) there is an 8% decrease in how you feel about your day (Pilcher and Ott, 1998)
	Allow things to make you happy, but putting too much emphasis on things decreases happiness (Oropesa, 1995).
	While happy people still have negative experiences, they are able to think about other things that more clearly define their lives (Bless, Clore, Schwarz, and Golisano, 1996).
	Individuals who pick themselves up and believe in themselves are 20% more satisfied than those who do not reinforce one's own self-confidence (Seybolt and Wagner, 1997).
	Being involved with a group has shown to increase satisfaction by 7 % (Coghlan, 1989).
	People who eat fruit (a positive life habit) are 11% more likely to feel capable and satisfied (Heatey and Thombs, 1997).

	Attitudes and beliefs that are positive have a significant impact on personal happiness (Chen, 1996).
	Being altruistic can improve life satisfaction by 24% (Williams, Haber, Weaver, and Freeman, 1998).
	Smiling invokes happiness in self and others (Lundqvist and Dimberg, 1995).
	Individuals that made decisions for themselves (autonomy) were three times more satisfied than individuals who did not (Fisher, 1995).
	Balance, or having more than one goal that contributes to one's mood, increases life satisfaction (Smith, 1997).
	People who have regular fun are 20% more likely to feel happy and 36% more comfortable with their age than people who have little or no fun (Lepper, 1996).
	Believing in ultimate justice can increase life satisfaction by up to 13% (Lipkus, Dahlbert, and Siegler, 1996).
	Being disciplined, deliberate, and dutiful has an 18% positive effect on happiness (Furnham and Cheng, 1997)
	Enjoyment and satisfaction comes, not by extreme feelings, but by daily engagement in the ordinary and enjoying the process (Deiner & Deiner).
	People with hobbies were found to be 6% happier than people who did not (Mookherje, 1997).
	Individuals who don't expect to be perfect or reach all of their goals all of the time tend to be the happiest (Chen, 1996).
	Developing emotional awareness can lead to higher levels of happiness and life-satisfaction (Ramanaiah and Detwiler, 1997).
	Reading contributes to happiness by engaging the mind. Regular readers are 8% happier than non-readers (Scope, 1999).

	The difference between college students who enjoyed their lives vs. those who were uncomfortable was a sense of purpose (Rahman and Khaleque, 1996).
	Financial status does very little, if anything, to improve one's happiness after given point (Hong and Giannakopoulos, 1995).
	Happiness is not based on the sum of one's events, but instead what the individual makes of these events (Suh, Deiner, and Fujita, 1996).

After considering the research above, in addition to practices you may already do, which 3-5 might you use to increase your happiness as a general practice?

Happiness Strategies I'll Try Out:	Describe Strategy and Use

[illegible]