



Happiness: learning from positive psychology

Reflection guide

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Overview

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Define happiness and understand the role of positive psychology
- Identify what drives genuine happiness
- Understand the latest research on happiness and where you have the greatest impact and influence on your happiness levels
- Clarify some of the barriers to happiness
- Learn research-based tips and strategies for sustainable happiness

Key takeaways



Main points:



Learning insights:



What areas do I need to improve on?



My action plan:

Job aids or activity materials

Positive psychology

- Positive Psychology is the scientific study of well-being and the understanding of what allows people to flourish
- Positive Psychology focuses on 'What's Right' with people and helps us go 'North of neutral'

Characteristics of happy people

- Spend time nurturing relationships with family and friends
- Strong self esteem
- Make a regular commitment to exercise and staying physically well through healthy behaviour
- Positive traits (optimistic, agreeable, social, grateful, etc.)
- Work and leisure "flow"
- Have a strong sense of purpose and meaning
- Cope well through challenges and seem to demonstrate a resilient spirit
- Able to give of themselves
- Live in the moment and savour the small pleasures in life

Hedonic treadmill

Chasing happiness is like being on a treadmill. The more we get, the more we want. We always think that happiness is just around the corner.

Take-away:

- Don't expect things / people / experiences to bring happiness
- Use tools to recommit to and recreate positivity

Increasing happiness through intentional activities

1. Expressing gratitude
2. Savour life
3. Cultivate optimism
4. Goal setting and meeting
5. Nurture relationships
6. Meditation, physical activity, and other self-care activities
7. Avoid social comparison
8. Practice acts of kindness

1. Expressing gratitude

Strategies to Cultivate Gratitude:

1. Keep a gratitude journal.
2. Write a gratitude letter to someone.


My Gratitude Journal

Before you go to bed each night or at other times during the day, think about things, experiences, and activities for which you are grateful. Develop a gratitude journal. Use it to record your feelings and thoughts. When you wake up in the morning, read what you wrote and focus on your appreciation during the course of the day. If you continue this activity for a month, you will probably notice a more upbeat feeling and greater sense of satisfaction with your life.


Today I'm grateful for:

Monday

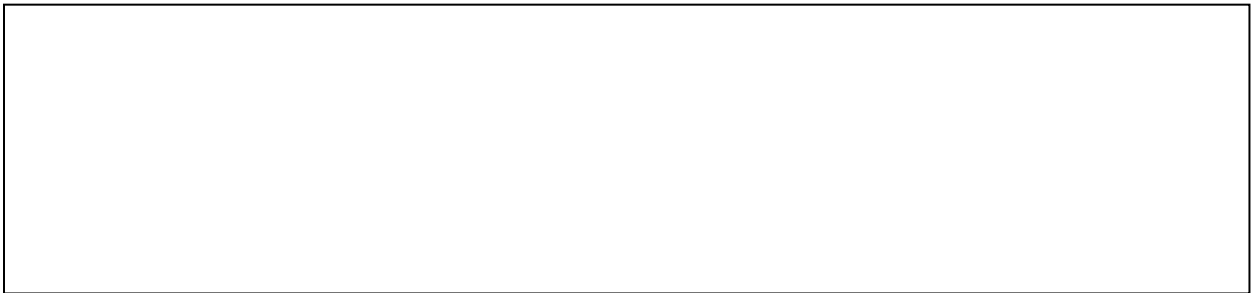
Tuesday

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for notes or a schedule for Tuesday.

Wednesday

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for notes or a schedule for Wednesday.

Thursday

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for notes or a schedule for Thursday.

Friday

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for notes or a schedule for Friday.

Saturday

Sunday

2. Savour life

Savouring is being attentive and appreciative of a particular experience.

Strategies for Savouring Life:

- Create rituals around savouring
- Set a primer for yourself to remind you to be present and savour the situation or positive moment
- Celebrate positive experiences with others

3. Cultivate optimism

- Optimism is the belief that you have the ability to influence the events of your life
- It is a positive, hopeful attitude in the face of adversity and challenges

Think of one good thing that happened to you. Write it down below:

What would be an optimistic explanation of why it happened?

What would be a pessimistic explanation of why it happened?

Think of one bad thing that happened to you. Write it down below.

What would be an optimistic explanation of why it happened?

What would be a pessimistic explanation of why it happened?

4. Goal setting and meeting

Goals provide direction, purpose, and control.

Exercises to Help You Start with Your Goal Setting:

- Create a wants list
- Create a bucket list
- Complete a 5 and 10-year vision for your life areas

Create your wants list below:

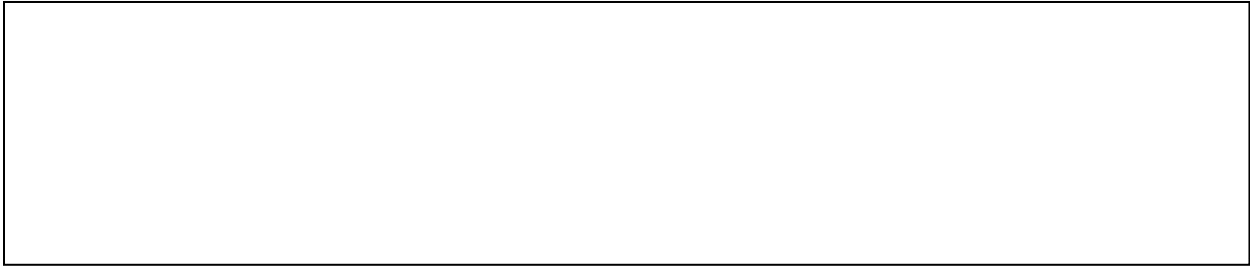
Create your bucket list below:

My 5 and 10-year Vision.

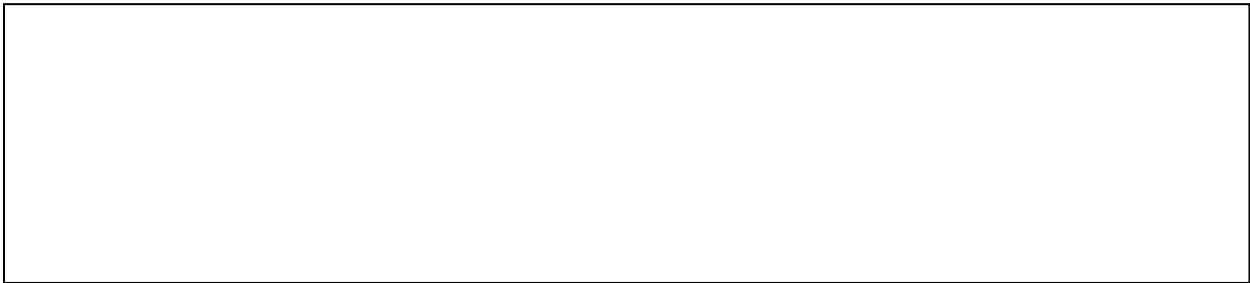
You may use this as a template, but you are free to modify it to suit you.

Wellness: 5-year and 10-year vision

Home: 5-year and 10-year vision



Career: 5-year and 10-year vision



Wealth: 5-year and 10-year vision



Others: 5-year and 10-year vision



5. Nurture relationships

Relationships provide meaning, purpose, confidence, and optimism.

Strategies to Start Nurturing Your Relationships:

- Reconnect with a family member or friend you haven't been in touch in a long while
- Pick one person with whom you have lost touch and reach out to them today
- Send an e-mail or text
- Better yet, pick up the phone

Make a list of family members or friends you would like to reconnect with.

6. Meditation, physical activity, and other self-care activities

Engage in activities and practices that allow you to recharge, replenish and restore yourself physically and emotionally through:

- Exercise and moving frequently
- Eating nutritious foods
- Getting enough sleep
- Practicing relaxation or meditation

7. Avoid social comparison

Comparisons often result in resentment which breeds negative emotions such as envy, decreased self-esteem and even depression.

Strategies to Avoid Social Comparison:

- Stop yourself when you become aware that you're ruminating over something which decreases your own energy and doesn't provide any momentum for you to move forward with your own goals
- Work to compassionately redirect your energy and attention to your own goals and how to best achieve them

8. Practice acts of kindness

Kindness helps people shift into a self-perception of "I do good in the world," which produces more pro-social behavior.

Strategies to Practice Kindness:

- Begin each day with a positive email to a colleague
- Praise friends, family, or colleagues regularly for something you appreciate
- Express your gratitude to someone
- Think of a person who can benefit from your help

Summary

- Remember that 40% of our happiness is within our control – we can take control of our level of happiness
- Chasing after happiness doesn't work. We have to do the work to find what makes us happy and engage in those activities
- Intentional activities require time, consistency, and commitment to practice