



# STUDY GUIDE

## WHY BE HAPPY?

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**KEY TERMS:** happiness      altruism      moral-obligation  
influence      acting

<b>NOTE-TAKING COLUMN:</b> Complete this section <u>during</u> the video. Include definitions and key terms.	<b>CUE COLUMN:</b> Complete this section <u>after</u> the video.
<p>What do most people think of happiness as?</p> <p>What are people free to control?</p> <p>What is another great benefit of acting happy?</p>	<p>What is happiness about?</p> <p>Why is the perception that you are happy so important?</p>

## DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Mr. Prager states that, "...happiness is far, far more than a selfish desire. In fact, it is a moral obligation... We are morally obligated to at least act as happy as possible – even if we don't feel happy." What framework does Mr. Prager lay out to support this claim? Do you agree with this assertion? Why or why not?
- Mr. Prager explains that, "Our happiness affects others – profoundly... People can't be guided by feelings because it is how we act that affects others – not how we feel." Do you agree with this sentiment? Why or why not? Do you think that the opposite is true as well – that our unhappiness can profoundly affect others as well? Why or why not? What are some examples that support your answer?
- Later, Mr. Prager asserts that, "No matter how unhappy you may feel at any given moment, you can – and have to – make a decision on how to act. We may not be free to control whether we feel sad or happy, but we are free to control whether or not we present a happy countenance to others." Do you think that this is easier for some people than others? Why? Under what circumstances might presenting a happy demeanor be nearly impossible? What factors might make it easier to do so?
- Mr. Prager goes on and shares with us that, "Being happier is good for us and it is what we owe everybody who is in our lives." How exactly can being happier be good for you? In what ways? Why do we owe it to others to be happy? What makes it a moral obligation, both in terms of people in our lives and in the global community?
- Mr. Prager ends the video by reminding us that, "[President Abraham] Lincoln was right, we are as happy as we decide to be; and it's time to make that decision." Do you agree with the notion that you can choose, at least to some degree, to be happy? Why or why not? Do you often choose to be happy or choose to appear to be happy? Why or why not?

## EXTEND THE LEARNING:

### CASE STUDY: Happiness Twitter Chat

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “How Happiness Affects Your Health,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What is happiness, and how can it be measured? What happened to the women in the ‘Happy Heart Study?’
- What correlations have studies found between happiness and health?
- During the chat, a participant noted that, “...happiness is a continuum and perhaps a lifelong project rather than an end goal...” What did the article suggest you could do to be happy? What are some other things that you could do to work towards being happy?



# QUIZ

## WHY BE HAPPY?

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1. Whether or not you act happy is about \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Selfishness.
  - b. Altruism.
  - c. How other people see you.
  - d. How you really feel.
  
2. Our happiness, or lack of happiness, can affect:
  - a. Family
  - b. Friends
  - c. Coworkers
  - d. All of the above
  
3. A bad mood should be regarded as bad breath because:
  - a. Just like bad breath, we don't want to inflict our unhappiness onto others.
  - b. Both are gross.
  - c. Bad breath correlates to our bad mood.
  - d. Bad breath can put people in a bad mood.
  
4. When we don't feel happy, we should:
  - a. Still control whether or not we present a happy countenance to others.
  - b. Show the world our true feelings.
  - c. Snap ourselves out of it to become happy.
  - d. See a professional to help with our feelings.
  
5. The happier we act, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. The happier our animals will feel.
  - b. The more depressed we will feel.
  - c. The happier we will feel.
  - d. The more at peace humanity will feel.



# QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/health/2013/03/27/how-happiness-affects-your-health/>

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# How Happiness Affects Your Health

March 27, 2013

By ABC NEWS via [GOOD MORNING AMERICA](#)



Being happy is good for you. (Image credit: Getty Images)

By Dr. Anjuli Srivastava

In recent years, physicians, psychologists and economists have embarked on a journey to illuminate the connection between joy and wellness. Fascinating research exists, and there is value in understanding the effect of happiness on our lives.

To start a conversation about the secrets of happiness, ABC News' chief health and medical editor Dr. Richard Besser hosted a Twitter chat Tuesday. Experts from the National Institutes of Health, Mayo Clinic, Harvard University and TEDMED, as well as clinicians and people from across the country, joined the one-hour discussion.

Here are some of the highlights.

## **How Do We Measure Happiness?**

There are countless ways to evaluate happiness, a subjective and often dynamic state. With research on the topic soaring, investigators have devised surveys to study people's sense of well-being.

Dr. Amit Sood, a specialist in integrative mind-body medicine at the Mayo Clinic, tweeted that we can measure happiness "through validated happiness scales. Assessment is subjective."

@toddkashdan noted that, "despite problems with self-reports, [there is] no better way to assess happiness than capturing personal thoughts & feelings."

Angela Haupt, health and wellness editor for U.S. News and World Report, tweeted "happiness indicators include life satisfaction, health, community, and civic engagement."

While scientists attempt to quantify elements of happiness, others often believe that true joy is more ethereal. Dr Friedman, a psychiatrist at New York Presbyterian-Weill Cornell Hospital, said that "happiness is hard to measure, but easy to recognize."

Still, common themes about fulfillment emerged in these conversations. Finding meaning in daily work was important. Indeed, researchers have found that having creative and purposeful work to do is a key factor in happiness. But participants were quick to stress the importance of balancing work and personal obligations.

@judymartin8 found value in a "better work-life merge, solid relationships, [and] redefining success," and @pauladavislaack tweeted "I burned out at the end of my law practice - happiness to me is about meaning and connection!"

Chat participants agreed that money does not guarantee bliss. And studies agree: Once people's basic needs like food and housing are met, higher incomes do little to boost happiness. Ultimately, people found value in their connections with others. Research shows that having support through friends, family, and social networks reliably predicts happiness. Many echoed the sentiments of @drmommy, who tweeted "I measure my happiness by the loving people that surround me."

## **How Does Happiness Affect Our Health?**

Although there is a well-established body of research examining negative health effects of stress and anger, there are also key studies that look at associations between health and happiness. It's important to note that these studies focus on correlations, things that go hand in hand but are not necessarily caused by one another.

The results are compelling.

Happiness has been correlated with better health, both in individuals and communities. Some studies have even suggested that states of happiness may be associated with lower stress-related hormones and better immune function. @krash63 pointed out that "there's a growing body of evidence of well-being [as] a protective health factor and a predictive health factor", and @renjain agreed that "happier people can live longer, healthier lives."

Moreover, Dr. Malissa Wood of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston noted that "Women in a Happy Heart Study became happy and content while improving heart risk."

Data show that positive mood, optimism and humor are linked to better health and well-being.

### **What are the Secrets of Happiness?**

So, can we increase our happiness? "Studies show that relaxation techniques - a mind/body practice - can release tension," experts from the National Institutes of Health National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine tweeted.

Research suggests that people who meditate have improved sense of calm and wellness. People who express religious or spiritual faith also report being happier.

Expressing gratitude is a demonstrated way of fostering happiness. Researchers have found that people who regularly write down things for which they are grateful in "gratitude journals" have increased satisfaction in life, higher energy levels, and improved health. In one study, people who read a letter of appreciation to someone in their lives were measurably happier almost one month later. Performing acts of kindness or altruism boosts moods. Twitter chat participants stressed the importance of smiling and laughing, pointing to movements like "laughter yoga" around the world.

Data show that our relationships matter, too. People who engage in meaningful conversations with friends or family report being happier than those who don't. Close interpersonal ties and strong social support are crucial for happiness. Investigators recently showed that the capacity for loving relationships was the strongest predictor for life satisfaction in men.

And happiness is contagious: Having a happy friend or family member who lives within a mile of you appears to increase the probability, up to 15 percent in one study, that you will be happy, too.

Thus, happiness plays a crucial role in our daily lives. Ultimately, as @susannajsmith noted during the chat, "happiness is a continuum and perhaps a lifelong project rather than an end goal, as [is] health."

You can find the transcript of Tuesday's chat [here](#).