

Leadership & Happiness

Spring 2021

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**HARVARD
BUSINESS SCHOOL**

Class description

Albert Schweitzer once said, “Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success.” Was he right? Sort of. According to the best research available (which we will read in this class), to be a successful leader, you need to *understand* happiness and *manage* to it—yours and others’. Unfortunately, most leaders have to learn this fact by hard experience. Furthermore, they are never exposed to the expanding science of happiness, which contains a wealth of information on how to be happier as a leader, and make others happier as well.

This class has four objectives:

1. Students will create a map of their own happiness, desires, motivations, strengths, and weaknesses. In short, they will know themselves much more deeply.
2. Students will become conversant in the expanding science of happiness, reading original research in the field.
3. Students will learn tactics and strategies to manage their levels of well-being and life satisfaction.
4. Students will learn how to lead others in a way that increases happiness.

Students will self-administer the best surveys on happiness, read some of the most influential modern research on the topic, discuss the research in class, and apply their knowledge to leadership scenarios. They will leave after seven weeks, prepared to use the material during the balance of their time at HBS and in the workforce. Not only will this give them a competitive advantage in the labor market; it will also help them enjoy their work and lives.

This will take place as a hybrid class, subject to ongoing HBS guidelines. The material will be optimized for this environment, including asynchronous interviews and supplementary asynchronous lecturettes that students can consume on their own schedule (and as many times as they want).

Academic Honesty

Students should familiarize themselves with HBS policies regarding academic honesty and plagiarism. Please consult the Harvard Business School Policies and Community Values for specific details and guidelines. If students experience any ambiguity, they should consult teaching team.

Grading

- Weekly reflections: **30%**
- Final take-home exam: **35%**
- Participation: **35%**
 - Clarifying questions about lectures and readings
 - Observations about lectures and readings

- Examples from real-life experiences and leadership
- Discussion and disagreement with me and fellow students
- Emailed questions and comments get credit

Office Hours

To schedule a meeting with Prof. Brooks during his office hours, please sign-up [here](#) or contact Darlene Le (dle@hbs.edu, 617-495-6695).

Deliverables

Practica: Before each unit, you will take several self-tests pertaining to the material to be covered in the unit. The purpose is to increase your self-knowledge and show you how the material covered in class can increase your well-being as a person and leader, as well as help you to improve the wellbeing of others. Detailed instructions will be given in the course website.

Tests are available at: <https://www.authentic happiness.org> (Links to an external site.) and <https://www.yourmorals.org/> (Links to an external site.).

Please be aware that as external sites, neither the surveys or the hosting entities have been reviewed by HBS (although past classes have used them successfully and the instructor has confidence in the hosts and materials). If you have concerns about privacy and use of personal information, please reach out to course staff. If you are especially concerned, you may consider registering for the surveys using a fictitious name and e-mail.

Please retain your survey results (recommend to select "Save as PDF" when printing from the results pages). You will upload these survey results via Qualtrics in advance of the designated classes. All data will remain confidential at the individual level. Additionally, print a copy of your PDF results and bring them to class so you can refer to them during our discussion.

Please note - you will be unable to re-access your results on the above websites when revisiting, even if you retain your registration information. You will be asked to complete the survey instruments again.

Practica (Instruments/Surveys) due by 11:59pmET:

Unit 1 January 26
Unit 2 January 30
Unit 3 February 7
Unit 4 February 15
Unit 5 February 21
Unit 6 February 28

After you take each test, print out the results and bring them to class so you can refer to them in our discussion.

Exercises: After each unit are applications of the material. They are not required as assignments, although many students will find them useful as material for the weekly reflections and final memo.

Weekly reflection memos, due each week (except Week 1): In 300 words or less, describe something of particular significance that you learned the preceding week from the practicum self-test and/or the readings, lecture, and discussion. Focus on how you plan to use the insight in your work and life.

For example:

- What did you learn about yourself?
- What surprised you?
- What are your self-management action items based on this information?
- How will this information change your behavior as a leader?

Reflections, due by 11:59pmET on:

1. Friday, February 5
2. Friday, February 12
3. Friday, February 19
4. Friday, February 26
5. **Saturday, March 6***

****Please note that the final reflection is due on a Saturday, due to the HBS Open Day, scheduled for Friday, March 5.***

Final memo, due on Monday, March 22 at 11:59pmET (to be uploaded on Canvas), six pages double-spaced (maximum). This is a summation of what you learned in this course about yourself and how it affects your professional plans. This is an opportunity to show the instructor the depth of your knowledge and commitment to applying it. It should reflect your best writing and most careful thought.

- Describe the changes you have made to your habits over the last two months.
- Detail your personal and professional goals related to this material for the remainder of your time at HBS.
- Lay out how you hope this will improve the next five years of your life and career.
- Be specific about how you have been sharing, and plan to share, the ideas in this course.

Class schedule

Unit 1. The fundamentals of happiness

Practicum prior to the unit: General Happiness Scale

<https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/user/login?destination=node/424>

Reading (to be completed prior to each unit):

- McMahon, D.M., "For most of history, people didn't assume they deserved to be happy. What changed?" *Quartz*, April 18, 2017 <https://qz.com/958677/happiness-a-history-author-darrin-mcmahon-explains-when-the-idea-of-happiness-was-invented/>
- Walsh, L. C., Boehm, J. K., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2018). Does Happiness Promote Career Success? Revisiting the Evidence. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 26(2), 199–219.

- Diener, E., Heintzelman, S. J., Kushlev, K., Tay, L., Wirtz, D., Lutes, L. D., Oishi, S. (2017). Findings all psychologists should know from the new science on subjective well-being. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 58, 87-104.

Podcast: “Love in the time of corona” with Paul Zak, *Professor of Economic Sciences, Psychology & Management, Claremont Graduate University. Director, Center for Neuroeconomics Studies, Claremont Graduate University.*

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/love-in-the-time-of-corona/id1505581039?i=1000471333351>

January 25 (shopping day): Introduction to the science of happiness

January 28: Applying the science: Happiness lessons from COVID-19

Unit 2. Affect and emotions

Practica prior to the unit: (1) Authentic Happiness Inventory, (2) PANAS Questionnaire, (3) PERMA

- (1) <https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/user/login?destination=node/423>
- (2) <https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/user/login?destination=node/438>
- (3) <https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/user/login?destination=node/628>

Reading

- Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.
- Xeno Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology. *American Psychologist*, 56, 218-226.
- Izard, Carroll E. (2009). Emotion theory and research: Highlights, unanswered questions, and emerging issues. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60, 1.
- Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 377-389.

Podcast: “Happy Monkey” with Martin Seligman, *Zellerbach Family Professor of Psychology, University of Pennsylvania. Director, Positive Psychology Center, University of Pennsylvania.*

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/happy-monkey/id1505581039?i=1000494499479>

Watch video: “Paint Your Longing”

February 1: Emotional basics

February 2: Emotions and the brain

February 8: Positive psychology

Unit 3. Love and relationships

Practica prior to the unit: (1) Close Relationships Questionnaires, (2) Compassionate Love Scale

- (1) <https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/user/login?destination=node/509>
- (2) <https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/user/login?destination=node/442>

Reading

- Demir, M. (2015). "Friendship and Happiness Among Young Adults." In *Friendship and Happiness: Across the Life-Span and Cultures*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Twenge, J., & Campbell, M. (2019). Media Use Is Linked to Lower Psychological Well-Being: Evidence from Three Datasets. *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 90(2), 311-331.
- Rokach, Ami (2014). "Leadership and Loneliness." *International Journal of Leadership and Change* 2(1): 48-58.
- The Dalai Lama and Arthur C. Brooks (March 12, 2019). "All of us can break the cycle of hatred." *The Washington Post*.

Interview: Robert Waldinger, *Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School. Director of the Center for Psychodynamic Therapy and Research, Massachusetts General Hospital. Director, Harvard Study of Adult Development.*

Podcast: "Love Your Enemies"

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/love-your-enemies/id1505581039?i=1000477201144>

Watch: "Thy Sweet Love"

February 9: Philosophical and psychological foundations of love

February 16: Loneliness and fear

Unit 4. Worldly rewards

Practicum prior to the unit: Materialistic Values Scale

<https://www.yourmorals.org/explore.php>

Reading

- Easterlin, Richard A. "Explaining happiness." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* vol. 100,19 (2003): 11176-83. doi:10.1073/pnas.1633144100
- Niemiec, C., Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2009). The path taken: Consequences of attaining intrinsic and extrinsic aspirations in post-college life. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 43(3), 291-306.

- Daniel Kahneman, & Angus Deaton. (2010). High income improves evaluation of life but not emotional well-being (Vol. 107). National Academy of Sciences.
- Brooks, Arthur C. (2007). "Does Giving Make Us Prosperous?" *Journal of Economics and Finance* 31(3): 403-411.
- The Dalai Lama and Arthur C. Brooks (November 4, 2016). "Behind our anxiety, the fear of being unneeded." *The New York Times*.

Interview: Jean Twenge, *Professor of Psychology, San Diego State University*.

Watch video: "True Freedom"

February 17: Money

February 22: Fame and prestige

Unit 5. Meaning and purpose

Practicum prior to the unit: Meaning In Life Questionnaire

<https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/user/login?destination=node/422>

Reading

- Baumeister, Roy & Vohs, Kathleen & Aaker, Jennifer & Garbinsky, Emily. (2012). Some Key Differences between a Happy Life and a Meaningful Life. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. 8. 10.2139/ssrn.2168436.
- Martela, F., & Steger, M. F. (2016). The three meanings of meaning in life: Distinguishing coherence, purpose, and significance. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 11(5), 531-545.
- Vohs, K., Aaker, J., & Catapano, R. (2019). It's not going to be that fun: Negative experiences can add meaning to life. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 26, 11-14.
- Gazica, M., & Spector, P. (2015). A comparison of individuals with unanswered callings to those with no calling at all. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 91, 1-10.
- Brooks, Arthur C. (November 22, 2015). "Choose to Be Grateful. It Will Make You Happier." *The New York Times*.

Podcast: "Meaning and purpose in life and work" with Jennifer Aaker, *General Atlantic Professor, Stanford Graduate School of Business. Coulter Family Faculty Fellow, Stanford Graduate School of Business*.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/meaning-and-purpose-in-life-and-work/id1505581039?i=1000475750654>

Watch video: "Reinventing Music"

February 23: The science of meaning

March 1: Passion and calling

Unit 6. Designing your future

Practicum: Grit Survey

<https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/user/login?destination=node/465>

Reading

- Brooks, Arthur C. (July, 2019). Your Professional Decline Is Coming (Much) Sooner Than You Think." *The Atlantic*.
- Duckworth, A., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92, 1087-1101.
- Vaillant, George E, and Mukamal, Kenneth. "Successful Aging." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 158, no. 6 (2001): 839-47.

Interview: Robert Waldinger, *Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School. Director, Center for Psychodynamic Therapy and Research, Massachusetts General Hospital. Director, Harvard Study of Adult Development.*

Podcast: "A look into your future" with Dr. Robert Waldinger

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/a-look-into-your-future/id1505581039?i=1000489753937>

Watch: Waldinger, Robert. "What Makes a Good Life? Lessons from the Longest Study on Happiness." TED.

https://www.ted.com/talks/robert_waldinger_what_makes_a_good_life_lessons_from_the_longest_study_on_happiness?language=en#t-754869.

Interview: Angela Duckworth, *Rosa Lee and Egbert Chang Professor, University of Pennsylvania. Rowan Fellow, Wharton School of Business. Founder and CEO, Character Lab.*

Watch video: "The Journey of Life"

March 2: Aging well

March 8: How life changes

March 9: Your happiness strategic plan