

Introduction to Happiness Studies



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The course comprises twenty-six one-hour lectures. Each lecture is sub divided into four sessions. Following is a brief description of each lecture, with a series of questions that correspond to each of the four sessions. The purpose of these questions is to open up your mind to the quest you're about to take, to reinforce learning by reminding you of the main threads in each of the lectures after you've watched them, and also to provide you a map that you can refer to later as you search for material you'd like to revisit.

Lecture 1: Introducing a New Field of Studies

In this opening lecture I introduce happiness studies as a new field of inquiry.

- 1.1 Why happiness studies? What is the ultimate currency? How is our modern understanding of happiness different from past understanding?
- 1.2 What is the definition of happiness? What is *Wholebeing*? What is *SPIRE*? What is the paradox of happiness?
- 1.3 What are principles and why do we need them? What are the twelve principles of *Wholebeing*? Do I need to remember all of them? (Spoiler: The answer is “no”—but regardless, you'll probably remember them all by the end of the course).
- 1.4 What is the structure and substance of the field of happiness studies? What can we learn from Helen Keller about pursuing *Wholebeing*?

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Lecture 2: The First Wholebeing Principle (W1)

I introduce and explore the first of the twelve principles: “The aim of life is and ought to be wholeperson wellbeing.”

- 2.1 Does Wholebeing capture the essence of happiness? Why insist on the word *happiness*? Is a meaningful life a happy life? Is happiness synonymous with pleasure? What is *The SPIRE Check-in*? How are you... really?
- 2.2 Is happiness as Wholebeing our highest end? What is the *Infinitely Regressive Why* pattern? What are the wrong paths to happiness? What is the right path?
- 2.3 Should Wholebeing be our highest end? What is the relationship between success and happiness? Are you being selfish by pursuing happiness? And, if so, are you immoral? (If the answer is “yes”, it’s only the second lecture, so it’s not too late to turn back and pursue another path...)
- 2.4 Who is Aristotle? What is a human being’s unique and defining characteristic? How does Aristotle address each of the five SPIRE elements?

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Lecture 3: The Second Wholebeing Principle (W2)

In this lecture I discuss the second of the twelve principles: “Everything is interconnected.”

- 3.1 What is the butterfly effect? What is the connection between pizza and politics? What is the connection between health and whole? Between peace and whole? What is the “secret” to happiness?
- 3.2 What is *systems thinking*? What is *symptomatic thinking*? What is the role of leverage (and I’m not talking bank loans here)?
- 3.3 How can you induce and cultivate systems thinking? What is the relationship between time and systems thinking? Why should we all sometimes shut up and do nothing? Why is zooming-out as well as zooming-in important for happiness?
- 3.4 Who was *The Good Samaritan*? What is Darley and Batson’s experiment of *The Good Samaritan*? How does time impact moral behavior? How can you take more time for yourself, right now?

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Lecture 4: The First Spiritual Principle (S1) Part 1

Over the next twenty lectures I will spend two lectures for each of the ten SPIRE principles. In this lecture, I introduce the third of the twelve principles: “A purposeful life is a spiritual life.”

- 4.1 What is spirituality? Is religion necessary for leading a spiritual life? What is the existential vacuum that exists today? What are the benefits of a strong sense of purpose? Where can you find purpose? (Hint: No need to go far).
- 4.2 How are meaning and commitment related to purposeful living? Why is it the pursuit rather than the achievement of meaningful goals that leads to a purposeful life? What is the goal of goals? In what ways do goals liberate us?
- 4.3 What are the characteristics of a job? A career? A calling? What can you do to experience your work as a calling? How about your personal life? How about this course?
- 4.4 Who was Viktor Frankl? What helped Frankl and others survive the harshest conditions? What advice does Frankl provide for finding meaning?

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Lecture 5: The First Spiritual Principle (S1) Part 2

I continue to explore the principle that “A purposeful life is a spiritual life.”

- 5.1 What are self-concordant goals? Why do academics often use complex terms—such as self-concordance—to describe simple ideas? (I don’t know. Do you?) What are the three A’s? What do you really, really want to do? What is the difference between liking something and liking the idea of it?
- 5.2 What is a self-concordant journey? What is the strengths-based approach? What are your strengths? In what ways can you use your strengths more often?
- 5.3 What are *passion strengths*? What are *performance strengths*? What is your *peak potential zone*? What questions can we ask to identify our strengths?
- 5.4 What is Shakespeare’s *Henry V* about? What does *coz* mean? How does King Henry V inspire his troops? What is the role of choice in finding purpose? What can we learn from war (other than that violence is bad)?

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Lecture 6: The Second Spiritual Principle (S2) Part 1

In this lecture I introduce the principle that “The ordinary is elevated to the extraordinary through mindful presence.”

- 6.1 What is mindfulness? What are enlightened moments? What is the difference between formal and informal meditation? What are some of the benefits of meditation (beyond the fact that it’s cool to meditate)?
- 6.2 What are the four key guidelines to a meditation practice? What is the monkey mind (in humans)? What are “oops moments”? Are you present, now?
- 6.3 Where and when can you practice informal meditation? If we are so rich, why aren’t we happy? When/where did you experience life as a miracle? Are you present, now? How about now?
- 6.4 Who was Ralph Waldo Emerson? How can you be perpetually present to the sublime? What can we learn from children? When/where do you experience the interconnectedness of all things? How about now?

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Lecture 7: The Second Spiritual Principle (S2) Part 2

I continue to discuss the principle that “The ordinary is elevated to the extraordinary through mindful presence.”

- 7.1 What are the two parts that make up an emotion? Why use your emotions as the object of mindful observation? Why “friendly curiosity”? What is the value of seeing emotions as impermanent? Why is cutting an emotion to size important?
- 7.2 What is Flow? What are the benefits of Flow? What conditions lead to Flow? Where do you experience Flow in your life?
- 7.3 How can mindfulness facilitate a sense of meaning? Where can becoming more mindful help you? What has mindfulness practice got to do with making shoes? Historically, what has the West mostly focused on? The East?
- 7.4 Who was Gautama Siddhartha? Who are you? (not sure you’ll actually get the answer to this question in this lecture, but worth trying). What, according to the Buddha, is the source of suffering? What are the Four Noble Truths? What are the eight principles for the attainment of enlightenment?

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Lecture 8: The First Physical Principle (P1) Part 1

In this lecture, my focus is on the principle that “Mind and body are connected.”

- 8.1 What is Cartesian Dualism? What is the *Dualistic Mindset* and how is it different from the *Wholistic Mindset*? What are the consequences of the two mindsets? Who was David Servan-Schreiber?
- 8.2 What is the Dream Mile? What are your dreams? What are the guidelines for effective visualization? Can you visualize your dreams?
- 8.3 How does John Sarno explain most aches and pains? Why do so many men suffer from back ache after becoming parents? What are you keeping inside that you can let go of? What is the placebo effect? What is priming?
- 8.4 Who was Auguste Rodin? Who was Berton Brailey? Why did Rodin choose to create *The Thinker* in the way that he did? How is Brailey’s work related to Rodin’s? What do we need to do to capture the promise of modernity?

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Lecture 9: The First Physical Principle (P1) Part 2

I continue to discuss the principle: “Mind and body are connected.”

- 9.1 What, according to Martin Seligman, is the problem with psychology today? What is the Body Feedback Hypothesis? What is the MBI method?
- 9.2 What is the “As If” principle? What is *Self-Perception Theory*? How can you or other people overcome shyness? Where and how can you act “as if” to become happier?
- 9.3 What is the hotel maids study? Why was I so wrong and Ellen Langer so right? How can you actually reverse back the clock and become younger?
- 9.4 What are the Yoga Sutras? What are the Eight Limbs of Yoga?

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Lecture 10: The Second Physical Principle (P2) Part 1

This lecture focuses on the sixth of the twelve principles about how “A healthy life requires adherence to our given nature.”

- 10.1 What philosophical idea gave birth to the scientific revolution? What is the connection between this idea and physical health? What is Abraham Maslow’s *Growing-Tip Statistics*? What is the *Psychopathology of the Average*?
- 10.2 What are *The Blue Zones*? What is the wonder drug?
- 10.3 How can we make sense of the conflicting views around nutrition? What is the Glycemic Index? What kinds of food do we know for sure are good for us? Why go nuts? What is the 80% rule?
- 10.4 What are the psychological benefits of physical exercise? Why is not exercising is like taking a depressant? What are some of the physical benefits of exercising? How can you inconvenience yourself?

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Lecture 11: The Second Physical Principle (P2) Part 2

I continue to explore the principle that “A healthy life requires adherence to our given nature.”

- 11.1 How can we turn stress from an enemy to a friend? Why is lack of recovery the problem? What are the benefits of getting injured before running a marathon? What do you need to do to enjoy sufficient recovery in your life?
- 11.2 What is the impact of sleep or its absence? What is the importance of sleep for cognitive functioning? For physiological functioning? For psychological wellbeing? What is the value of naps? Are you awake?
- 11.3 What are the physiological benefits of touch? The psychological benefits? What are the consequences of touch deprivation? How many daily hugs do you need? How can you improve foreplay and afterplay?
- 11.4 Who is Thomas Sowell and what’s *The Conflict of Vision*? What is the constrained vision? What is the unconstrained vision? How is the second physical principle related to the constrained vision?

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Lecture 12: The First Intellectual Principle (I1) Part 1

We turn to the “I” of SPIRE, and to the principle that “Curiosity and openness help us make the most of what life has to offer.”

- 12.1 How are our eyes, ears, hands, and feet connected to intellectual wellbeing? What is ReflAction? What are the pitfalls of just reflection? How about of just action?
- 12.2 Even though curiosity killed the cat, how do we not kill curiosity? In what way is saying “I don’t like learning” similar to saying “I don’t like eating?” How can faking it help? What’s the beginner’s mind?
- 12.3 How can you fail more? How can you embrace failure? I meant it! What word, similar to the word “yes”, is critical for success and happiness? Where can you risk gamely?
- 12.4 Who was Walt Whitman? What does the word “Allons” mean? How does Whitman’s advice break from traditional intellectualism? To grow and develop, what advice could you get from Whitman?

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Lecture 13: The First Intellectual Principle (I1) Part 2

We continue with the principle that “Curiosity and openness help us make the most of what life has to offer.”

- 13.1 Why am I asking you so many questions? What is the essence of Positive Psychology? What is *Salutogenesis*? (You’ll still pass this course if you don’t get the right answer). How is the word “question” tied to curiosity and openness?
- 13.2 How many geometric shapes are there on the screen? How do the questions that you ask determine your reality?
- 13.3 How do questions create reality by defining reality? What sandwiches did Sam bring to work? What’s your favorite sandwich? What are some good questions that you can ask to help yourself and others?
- 13.4 How can questions inform our understanding of the SPIRE elements? How can you live the question?

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Lecture 14: The Second Intellectual Principle (I2) Part 1

This is the lecture where I explore the principle that “Engaging in deep learning fulfills our potential as rational animals.”

- 14.1 How does the overload of information affect the joy of reading? How does it affect how smart we are? What makes the *great books* great? Why read the great works? What does cultural knowledge have to do with wellbeing?
- 14.2 Why should you take a *Slow Reading Course*? What has deep learning got to do with your love life? What has deep learning got to do with business success? What book or books can you read and learn from again and again?
- 14.3 What are Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences? What’s your dominant intelligence? How can we cultivate intellectual wellbeing through art? Through exploring nature? What is *Idiocracy*?
- 14.4 Who is George Orwell? What does writing have to do with politics? What is “slovenliness”? What is common to overly complex and overly simplistic language?

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Lecture 15: The Second Intellectual Principle (I2) Part 2

I continue with the principle: “Engaging in deep learning fulfills our potential as rational animals.”

- 15.1 Is a grazing cow happy? Is a pig satisfied? And are they happier or more satisfied than a thinking person? Do you overanalyze your life? Do you play enough? What kind of introspection is helpful, and when?
- 15.2 What are the benefits of journaling? How little can we journal for and still benefit? What is a sense of coherence?
- 15.3 How can you lose the most IQ points? How can you make sure you don’t enjoy spending time with your kids, or anyone else you love? (this sounds like a depressing lecture—but it’s not). What is *Time Affluence*? Why say “no”?
- 15.4 Who is Zora Neale Hurston? Emmy Noether? Clara Wieck Schumann? Georgia O’Keeffe? Natalie Du Toit? Karen Horney? Aung San Suu Kyi? Rachel Carson? Simone Du Beauvoir? Who are you?

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Lecture 16: The First Relational Principle (R1) Part 1

The topic of this lecture is the principle: “Relationships are crucial for a full and fulfilling life.”

- 16.1 What are espoused versus in-use theories? What are the happiest nations in the world, and why? What do we know about the happiest individuals? What is the story of Rosetto? What are the benefits of relationships?
- 16.2 What does it mean to make relationships a priority? What are real relationships? What has language acquisition got to do with relationships? What is the number one addiction?
- 16.3 What do we learn from the *Harvard Study*? What are the characteristics of high-quality relationships? What have relationships got to do with a saltshaker? What is the *Titanium Rule*?
- 16.4 In this session we turn to two really important questions: Who is the sexiest man alive? Who is the hottest woman of the 21st century? Other less important questions: What is the *Coolidge Effect*? How can love flourish?

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Lecture 17: The First Relational Principle (R1) Part 2

This lecture continues with the principle stating that “Relationships are crucial for a full and fulfilling life.”

- 17.1 What is the relationship between cellulite and sexual potential? When do men and women peak sexually? What are people-growing machines? What are the characteristics of thriving and lasting love?
- 17.2 What does it mean to know and be known? What is the role of intimacy? What are love maps?
- 17.3 What’s the 5:1 ratio? Why is conflict important? What lesson did a Harvard lawyer learn from his wife? What is *Active Constructive Responding*?
- 17.4 What is *maugre*? What is *irradiation*? Who is the author using such words? What is a *Beautiful Enemy*? What is *Ezer Kenegdo*????

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Lecture 18: The Second Relational Principle (R2) Part 1

The principle I discuss in this lecture is: “The foundation of healthy relationships with others is a healthy relationship with oneself.”

- 18.1 What is the first love affair that we need to consummate? What is the glue that connects the self to others? What is the upward spiral of generosity? What is paradoxical thinking? What is *the genius of the AND*?
- 18.2 What’s morality got to do with happiness? Is being selfish wrong? What about self-love? What did Confucius and Rabbi Hillel have in common (other than both being brilliant)?
- 18.3 Can Egoism and Altruism unite? What is *selffulness*? What is *tsewa*? What distinguishes successful givers from unsuccessful ones? What’s the most powerful four-letter-word you’ll ever hear?
- 18.4 Who is Kahlil Gibran? What does the journey towards intimacy look like? What can we learn from a fruit tree? What can we learn from the flowers and the bees?

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Lecture 19: The Second Relational Principle (R2) Part 2

I continue with the principle that “The foundation of healthy relationships with others is a healthy relationship with oneself.”

- 19.1 What is the relationship between personal development and interpersonal development? Between personal development and independence? Between interpersonal development and intimacy? And finally: What is a *mashber*????
- 19.2 What is a *gridlock*? Do you have any good mother-in-law jokes? What is (often) a better choice than divorce? What is self-validated intimacy? What is differentiation?
- 19.3 What is *The Spell of Anonymity*? What is courage? What lessons can you learn from Warren Bennis about personal development?
- 19.4 What’s Rudyard Kipling’s most famous poem? How are crowds and kings related to social psychology? Why hold on? What’s an *unforgiving minute*?

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Lecture 20: The First Emotional Principle (E1) Part 1

In this lecture I introduce the eleventh of twelve principles: “All emotions are legitimate, acceptable, part of being human.”

- 20.1 What is “The permission to be human”? What is the paradox of emotions? Can you stop thinking about a pink elephant? Can you become more anxious? What have painful emotions got to do with the law of gravity?
- 20.2 How can you best deal with envy? How can the way we treat painful emotions contribute to our development in relationships? In leadership? Personally? Can a Superman doll fly?
- 20.3 What’s the *Great Deception*? What is *Active Acceptance*? How does the permission to be human relate differently to emotions and behaviors in the moral domain? In relation to courage? In raising children?
- 20.4 Who is Lao Tzu? What does *Tao* mean? What is the excellence of water? What lessons does nature teach us?

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Lecture 21: The First Emotional Principle (E1) Part 2

I continue with the eleventh of twelve principles: “All emotions are legitimate, acceptable, part of being human.”

- 21.1 Why would anyone reject pleasurable emotions? Do you feel worthy of happiness? What is a *positive-sum game*? What did eating ice cream teach us about a monkey’s brain? What are *mirror neurons*? Did Gandhi like sugar?
- 21.2 What does *Broaden and Build* mean? What is the evolutionary role of pleasurable emotions? What is the secret of long-living nuns?
- 21.3 What are your *pleasure boosters*? What are you grateful for? What made Giant John shed a tear? What happens when you appreciate the good? Do we need to wait?
- 21.4 What can Helen Keller teach us about seeing and hearing? What would you do if you had three days to see? What would you do today if it was your last day? Have you already printed *Three Days to See*? If not, now is the time!

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Lecture 22: The Second Emotional Principle (E2) Part 1

And we get to the twelfth and final principle: “Emotions are the outcome of our thoughts and deeds and inform our thoughts and deeds.”

- 22.1 Do you know your (psychology) ABCs? Why is willpower not enough? What is *waypower*? What do the happiest people do? What is the difference between sadness and depression? Why is Blaise Pascal so pessimistic?
- 22.2 What is cognitive therapy? What are the 3 *E*'s? What are the 3 *M*'s? Do you like Jon Stewart?
- 22.3 What are some questions that can help you restore rationality? How can you overcome anxiety? Why do psychologists get people to play the *Wall Street Game*? Why do they ask offensive questions and play with a hula hoop?
- 22.4 When was Marcus Aurelius born? (Extra bonus question on the exam). What is the path to tranquility and calm? What spiritual exercise does Marcus Aurelius recommend? How can we learn to appreciate what we already have?

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Lecture 23: The Second Emotional Principle (E2) Part 2

I continue with the final principle stating that “Emotions are the outcome of our thoughts and deeds and inform our thoughts and deeds.”

- 23.1 What is William James' theory of emotions? What did the Rabbi tell his wife? What is *Emotional Therapy*? How does *The Spire Check-In* unite the ABCs?
- 23.2 Is zooming-out enough? Is zooming-in enough? What is *Psychological Maturity*? What is the *Marshmallow Test*? Would you like a marshmallow (or two)? What happens when you delay gratification indefinitely?
- 23.3 What has dance got to do with psychological maturity? What can you do to avert anger? What did Abraham Lincoln do when he got angry?
- 23.4 What are the twelve principles of Wholebeing?

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Lecture 24: Wholebeing Schools

In this lecture I apply the Wholebeing approach to education.

- 24.1 What do parents mostly want for their children? What do schools teach? How can we help students find a sense of purpose? What are the benefits of teaching mindfulness in school?
- 24.2 What is the *Pygmalion Effect*? What are the benefits to students of exercising regularly? Can happiness and academic performance peacefully coexist?
- 24.3 What is *Pseudo Self-Esteem*? What is the *Growth Mindset*? How can we teach emotional wellbeing? In summary, how can you inSPIRE a school?
- 24.4 Who is Marva Collins? How can we turn “unteachable” students to thriving students? What one book should you read?

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Lecture 25: Wholebeing Organizations

In this lecture I apply the Wholebeing approach to organizations.

- 25.1 How does happiness pay? What do the most successful companies focus on? (Hint: not profits). How does your smartphone impact how smart you are?
- 25.2 How can you develop leaders? Why is sitting the new smoking? What is *Psychological Safety*? How can organizations retain their employees?
- 25.3 What is the *Hawthorne Effect*? Do you have a best friend at work? Does it matter? How can you fill others’ bucket? How can organizations do good and do well?
- 25.4 What is *Conscious Capitalism*? Why does Capitalism have such a bad reputation? How can you inSPIRE an organization?

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Lecture 26: Wholebeing Society

In this lecture I apply the Wholebeing approach to society.

- 26.1 Why are happiness levels declining? How is technological progress hurting us? How can technology make us happier? What is a *Happiness Revolution*? How is it different from the *Communist Revolution*? What is GNH?
- 26.2 How is the media hurting us? How can the media make us happier? Is electricity bad? How can movies improve your relationships?
- 26.3 What is a *Happier Center*? What can we learn from the Greek gymnasia? From Bhutan? From the *Blue Zones Vitality City Initiative*? In summary, how can you inSPIRE society?
- 26.4 What was Abraham Maslow's vision? Would you like to receive \$100,000 a day for thirty days? How can you get to the moon? What idea is common to the Kabbalah, the Japanese art of Kintsukuroi, and the Maori creation legend?