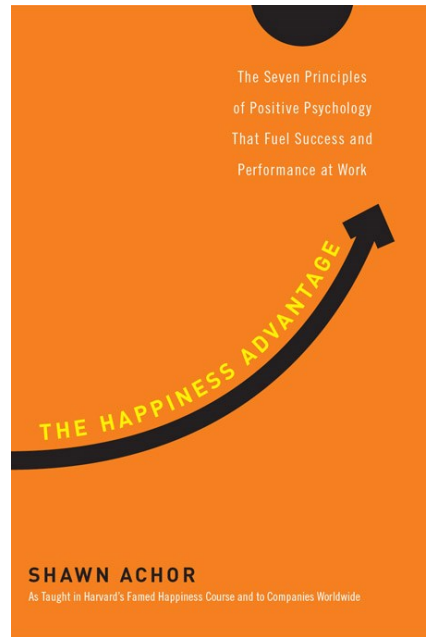


THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

Achor, S. (2010). *The happiness advantage*. New York, NY: Random House Inc.



OVERVIEW

The purpose of Shawn Achor's (2010) book is to help society understand that success does not create happiness. Rather, Achor (2010) proposes happiness stems through training your brain to develop positive and optimistic outcomes, and to manage stress in a positive way. Members of society who follow this formula and fastidiously avoid the belief that hard work creates success will live a happier life. Achor's research has examined how training your brain to be positive fuels greater success. Job success is deter-



mined not only by the intelligence possessed by individuals, but also by the way a individual or group manages stress. This creates social support networks which are vitally important to any organization.

Achor (2010) outlines seven principles of positive psychology that fuel success and performance. In *The Happiness Advantage*, Achor (2010) examines how important positive psychology is within an individual and group atmosphere. We may not fully comprehend the depths of our own potential, but we do know that all kinds of change are possible and probable.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Shawn Achor is the winner of over a dozen distinguished

teaching awards at Harvard University, where he delivers lectures on positive psychology in the most popular class at Harvard. Shawn has become one of the world's leading experts on the connection between happiness and success. In

2007, Shawn founded **GoodThinkInc** to share his research with the world.

Shawn has lectured or researched in more than 50 countries, speaking to CEOs in China, school children in South Africa, doctors in Dubai and St. Jude Children's Hospital, the Royal Family in Abu Dhabi, and farmers in Zimbabwe. He has also worked with many Fortune 500 companies, and

the U. S. Department of Health to promote happiness.

Shawn graduated *magna cum laude* from Harvard and earned a Masters degree from Harvard Divinity School in Christian and Buddhist ethics. For seven years, Shawn also served as an Officer of Harvard, living in Harvard Yard and counselling students through the stresses of their first year.

EADM 826 (01)
Executive Book
Summary Assignment
Dr. Keith Walker and
Bob Bayles

Kevin Froehlich
490870

November 14, 2013

INSIDE

Principle 1—The Happiness Advantage	2
Principle 2 —The Fulcrum and the Lever	3
Principle 3—The Tetris Effect	4
Principle 4—Falling Up	5
Principle 5—The Zorro Circle	6
Principle 6—The 20 Second Rule	7
Principle 7—Social Investment	8
The Ripple Effect	9
Summary and Questions	10

THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

PRINCIPLE 1—THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

This principle examines the importance of defining happiness. Happiness implies a positive mood in the present, as well as an encouraging outlook for the future. There is no one single meaning of happiness, but scientists refer to happiness as “subjective well-being—because it’s based on how we each feel about our lives” (as cited in Achor, 2010, p. 39).

Achor (2010) shares, “the

most successful people, the ones with the competitive edge, don’t look to happiness as some distant reward for their achievements, nor grind through their days on neutral or negative; they are the ones who capitalize on the positive and reap the rewards at every turn” (p. 38). Happiness can improve our physical health, which in turn keeps us working faster as well as longer, therefore making us more likely to succeed.

Achor (2010) explains that the work environment is key to production and success is linked to reducing costs within the workplace. Bosses and leaders who care for their staff members and work to foster a happy workplace enjoy the result of more production and more effective workers. Benefits include less absenteeism and lower healthcare expenditures.

“When we are happy—when our mindset and mood are positive—we are smarter, more motivated, and thus more successful”
(Achor, 2010, p. 37).

The chicken or the egg: “Does happiness come before success or success before happiness?”
(Achor, 2010, p. 41).

“The Order of the Elephant... any employee can give to another as a reward for doing something exemplary. ‘Hey, you got the elephant. What’d you do?’ ... the good stories and best practices get told and re-told many times”

(Achor, 2010, p. 58).

7 WAYS TO CAPITALIZE ON OUR HAPPINESS DAILY

Achor (2010) believes there are a variety of ways in which we can create happiness in our own lives on a regular basis. Consider trying the following suggestions:

1. Taking five minutes every day to **meditate** (focusing strictly on breathing in and out) will help reduce stress levels in our lives.

2. **Finding something to look forward to** can significantly raise endorphin levels. Anticipating future rewards can actually increase pleasure

centers in the brain, just as much as the reward itself.

3. **Creating conscious acts of kindness.** Giving to friends and strangers decreases stress and contributes to improved mental health. Performing 5 conscious acts of kindness a day is recommended.

4. **Infusing positivity into our surroundings** keeps negative emotions out. The less negative TV we watch, specifically violent media, increases our happiness.

5. **Exercise** not only releases endorphins but can also boost mood and enhance work performance.

6. **Spend money, but not on stuff.** People who buy things for others feel better about themselves than if they would have bought something for themselves.

7. **Exercise a signature strength.** Everyone has a propensity for something. If you find a positivity boost is in order, revisit a skill/talent/hobby you haven’t exercised in awhile.

LEADING WITH THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

Sadly in our modern workplace, bosses and managers tend to honour the employees who can go the longest without breaks or vacations, and who do not socialize. Furthermore, quick bursts of positive emotion within the work day (visiting with colleagues, speaking to family on the phone, watching YouTube videos) which are proven to improve job performance are yet all too often viewed as time

wasters. There exists a common, negative misconception that these types of breaks slow the efficiency of production. Achor (2010) suggests to rid management of this belief, leaders and managers should provide frequent recognition and encouragement to their teams, and understand that breaks, socializing, and communication with others is important, valuable, and necessary to efficacy, production, and

perhaps above all, happiness.

Acknowledgement of specific accomplishments is found to be even more motivating than money. The recognized employee will feel valued for their work, and furthermore both the person who made the recommendation and the executive who gets to deliver the praise will benefit from the positive celebration. Everyone gets a mood boost!

THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

PRINCIPLE 2—THE FULCRUM AND THE LEVER

This section examines how our brain has two ways of looking through lenses. One lens is to identify the pain, negativity, stress, and uncertainty in the world. The other is to observe things through a lens of gratitude, hope, resilience, optimism, and meaning. Although we can't change reality, we can use our brains to change how we process the world, and that in turn changes how we react to it.

Achor (2010) reminds us that sometimes we need to adjust our perceptions so that we see the ways to rise above our circumstances.

The fulcrum works by shifting our attitudes and perspectives of ourselves and others. "The most successful people adopt a mindset that not only makes their workdays more bearable, but also helps them work longer, harder, and faster than their negative mindset peers" (Achor,

2010, p. 71). When we reconnect ourselves with the pleasures of a job rather than a fretting the task at hand, our work ethic changes. Coming to work looking at the positives of a job will certainly positively impact the production and work ethic of an employee.



THE LEVER OF POSSIBILITIES—FIXED VERSUS GROWTH MINDSETS

Studies have shown that our beliefs can affect our abilities. "More important still than believing in your own abilities is believing that you can improve these abilities" (Achor, 2010, p. 76). With regularity, we need to focus on our strengths rather than reflecting to our self-daunting weaknesses. Through this, researcher Carol Dweck proposed society can be placed into two categories: the "fixed mindset" and the "growth mindset" (as cited in Achor, 2010, p. 76).

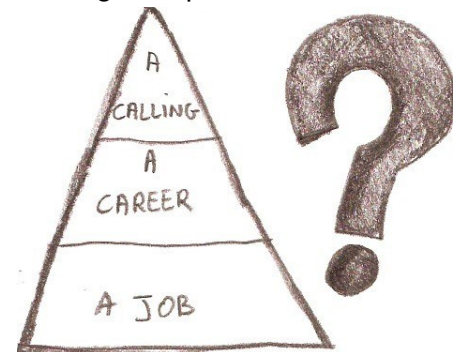
The "fixed mindset" carry the belief that their capabilities are already set and they themselves cannot change. Conversely, "growth mindsets" believe they can enhance their

basic qualities through the efforts of themselves and others. By changing the way we perceive ourselves and our work, we can dramatically improve our daily results.

There is a different mindset that arises when referring to a person's place of work as "a job" versus "a calling". One sounds like a chore and a means to an end while the other bears a sense of passion (Achor, 2010). Our society has put pressure on our future output rather than focusing on the pleasures of the daily task at hand. Achor (2010) challenges us to stop thinking of the world as fixed when in reality is, in truth, relative.

TRY THIS:

Rewrite your "job description" into a "calling description."



CHANGING THE FULCRUM AND LEVER OF THOSE AROUND YOU

Often enough, "a few choice words can alter a person's mindset, which in turn can alter their accomplishments" (Achor, 2010, p. 82). Each and every one of us has the power to influence the performance of those around us, both positively and negatively. What we expect from people (and from ourselves) is revealed in the words we use. Those words can have a powerful effect on daily end results. The best managers and leaders view each interaction as

an opportunity to prime employees for their own excellence.

TRY THIS:

"The Pygmalion Effect: when our belief in another person's potential brings that potential to life" (Achor, 2010, p. 84). The power to get results is a combination of who is on the team, as well as how the team is leveraged by its leader.

"Placebos are about 55-60% as effective as most active medications like aspirin and codeine for controlling pain. The simple change in mindset... is powerful enough to make the objective symptom actually disappear"
(Achor, 2010, p. 69).

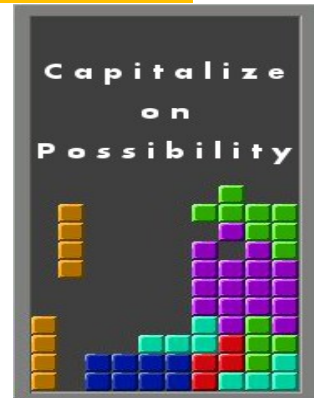
THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

PRINCIPLE 3—THE TETRIS EFFECT

“The Tetris Effect stems from a very normal physical process that repeated playing triggers in ... brains” (Achor, 2010, p. 88). The object of the game is to manipulate a variety of randomly dropped block shapes by moving them side to side and rotating them 90 degrees with the aim of creating as many horizontal lines without any gaps as possible.

The game is deceptively simple, yet surprisingly addictive.

The Tetris Effect is a metaphor for being stuck—stuck in a pattern of thought or behavior. People trapped in the Tetris Effect are essentially prisoners of their own brain as it is our brain that dictates how we perceive the world around us.



Look for
and
Focus
on
the
Positives

THE TETRIS EFFECT AT WORK

“We see what we look for and we miss the rest”
(Achor, 2010, p. 95).

Through years of training in our work and personal lives our brains has been honed to detect problems that arise, stresses that need managing, and injustices that need rectifying (Achor, 2010). This is of course, quite useful, but Achor cautions people against gravitating to a pattern of always looking for the negative.

Constantly scanning the world for negatives comes with a cost. It often undercuts our creativity, raises our stress levels, makes us susceptible to depression and poor physical health, and lowers our motivation and ability to accomplish goals (Achor, 2010). If we approach our professions in such a fashion, it is only natural to have that negative outlook spill over into the other areas of our lives, to take that negativity home to family members and friends. The essence of a negative Tetris effect is that it decreases our success rate

and debilitates our happiness.

TRY THIS:

Can you identify the positives in your life?

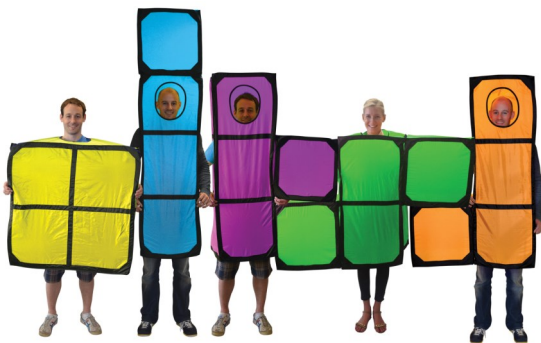
The opportunities?

The possibilities?

The chances for growth?

Can you create a habit of a positive Tetris effect?

Even if you have to find faults as a part of your profession... Do you have the skill to compartmentalize your abilities?



GETTING STUCK IN A POSITIVE TETRIS

According to Achor (2010) when we train our brains to constantly scan for the positive, we benefit from 3 of the most important tools available to us: happiness, gratitude, and optimism.

- 1) **Happiness:** “the more you pick up on the positive around you, the better you’ll feel... advantages to performance” (p. 97).
- 2) **Gratitude:** “the more opportunities for positivity we see, the more grateful we become” (p. 97).

Studies have found that people who are consistently grateful possess more energy, are more emotionally intelligent, are more forgiving, and are less likely to be anxious, depressed, or lonely (as cited in Achor, 2010).

- 3) **Optimism:** “the more your brain picks up on the positive, the more you’ll expect this trend to continue, and so the more optimistic you’ll be” (p. 98).

Achor (2010) cautions wisely against overdoing positivity, which can lead to irrational optimism, blinding us from problems that need fixing or improvements that should be made. “The key, then, is not to completely shut out all the bad, all the time, but to have a reasonable, realistic, healthy sense of optimism” (Achor, 2010, p. 104).

“When we are looking for something, we see it everywhere”
(Achor, 2010, p. 96).

THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

PRINCIPLE 4—FALLING UP — DETERMINE HOW YOU COPE WITH STRESS/SETBACK



Achor begins this chapter with a humorous story about his own resiliency. He reminds us that all decisions we make begin from an “I Am Here” point, and radiate out into a complexity of pathways and options. “On every mental map after crisis or

adversity, there are three mental paths. One that keeps circling around where you currently are... Another mental path leads you toward further negative consequences... And one, ... the Third Path, that leads us from failure or setback to a place where we are even stronger and more capable than before the fall.” (Achor, 2010, p. 108).

Finding the right path in challenging times can be extremely difficult, leading to feelings of helplessness or hopelessness, crippling us in our failure, and crushing our beliefs.

What Achor (2010) delivers in this principle are the wise words of Jim Collins, “we are not imprisoned by our circumstances, our setbacks, our history, our mistakes, or even staggering defeats along the way. We are freed by our choices” (as cited in Achor, 2010, p. 109). Our choice is how we respond to misfortunes. Though we are bound to fail, experience adversity, make a mistake, encounter an obstacle, go through disappointment, or survive through suffering at some time and place, through these experiences we are challenged to make decisions about where the future is heading and where we want to go.

ADVERSARIAL GROWTH

We’ve likely all heard the old maxim “what doesn’t kill us makes us stronger” - and yet it is only in the last 25 years or so that research has turned a focus to “the possibility of something good emerging from the struggle with something very difficult” (as cited in Achor, 2010, p. 110).

Research by Tedeschi

and colleagues has revealed that after trauma, many individuals experienced positive psychological growth. This included “increases in spirituality, compassion for others, openness, ... overall life satisfaction, ... enhanced personal strength and self-confidence, heightened appreciation for and a greater intimacy in social

relationships” (as cited in Achor, 2010, p. 110). A key to Adversarial Growth is how the individual perceives the situation, and what coping mechanisms they have at their disposal. These individuals do not let what has happened define them, but rather, they are defined by what they can make out of the experience (Achor, 2010).



EXPERIENCE... AND OPPORTUNITY!

Achor frequently references the work of Tal Ben-Shahar. In *Falling Up*, Ben-Shahar is quoted as writing, “we can only learn to deal with failure by actually experiencing failure, by living through it. The earlier we face difficulties and drawbacks, the better prepared we are to deal with the inevitable obstacles along our path” (as cited in Achor, 2010, p. 112).

Failure and mistakes are not to be feared, but rather are meant to

be experienced for the opportunity they very likely conceal.

Finding the Path Up:

Consider the fable of the two shoe salesmen who sent to Africa in the early 1900s to assess potential markets. Both sent telegrams back to their boss. The first read: “Situation hopeless. They don’t wear shoes.” The second read: “Glorious opportunity! They don’t have any shoes yet!” (Achor, 2010).



THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

PRINCIPLE 5—THE ZORRO CIRCLE

In this principle, Achor presents the wisdom that a person has to master their own circle before achieving other ambitious goals. Achor references the story of Zorro—the masked crusader of the southwestern United States, who stood up for the underdog, the mistreated, and the downtrodden. Part of the magic of the story of Zorro is that in order to become a fearless, determined, and disciplined hero, he was first coached through his impetuous tendencies by a skillful mentor who was able to identify the potential within. With training and focus, small, purposeful goals and changes existing in the confines of a small circle that spiraled outward laid the solid foundation for the greatness that had been dormant.

Achor (2010) shares the Zorro Circle story because he believes it “is a powerful metaphor for how we can achieve our most ambitious goals in our jobs, our careers, and our personal lives” (p. 129). We often think we have control over our future, but once stress levels and workloads build up, our confidence is usually the first thing that goes. If we would concentrate our efforts on small manageable goals, we could regain the feeling of control which is so crucial to our performance.

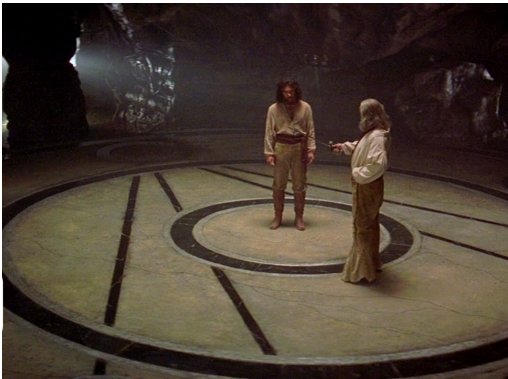
The most successful people in work and in life are the ones who have what psychologists call an “internal locus of control—the belief that their actions have a direct effect on their outcomes” (Achor, 2010, p.

130). People with an “exterior locus of control” tend to believe they are victims of external forces.

If we believe that nothing we do matters, we fall prey to the dangerous grip of learned helplessness. The first goal we need to conquer when regaining our helplessness is recovering our self-awareness. When we improve upon our well-being and decision making skills, our negative emotions diminish almost immediately (Achor, 2010).



REGAINING CONTROL, ONE CIRCLE AT A TIME



Achor (2010) recommends taking back control by starting with our own internal self-awareness circle. To verbalize the stress and helplessness you are feeling...

TRY THIS:

1. Write down your feelings in a journal.
2. Talk to a trusted co-

worker or confidant.

Next, carefully examine the situation you are in and identify things you have control over, and things you don't.

Now choose one small goal that you can devote focus to and accomplish quickly. This is more likely to lead to success.

Why would this work?

Concentrating efforts

on small areas where you know you can make a difference will allow you to tackle a piece at a time, fully experiencing how actions directly impact outcomes, and reinforcing that you are the master of your own fate. As your internal locus of control and your confidence in your own abilities both grow, you can slowly expand your circle and efforts outwards over time.

THE TIPPING POINT (MALCOLM GLADWELL)

In the 1980s and '90s, New York city struggled with an increasing crime rate. In spite of learned officials, hefty investments, and well-meaning actions, the problem was overwhelming.

A small group of officials devised an ingenious new strategy—based on the Broken Windows Theory—to approach the problem at a small, man-

ageable place, the subway, literally cleaning up one car at a time. Gladwell explained, “many... told [them] not to worry about graffiti, to focus on the larger questions... worrying about graffiti at a time when the entire system was close to collapse seems as pointless as scrubbing the decks of the Titanic as it headed toward the ice-

bergs” (as cited in Achor, 2010, p. 144).

But officials stuck to their plan, slowly expanding their circle of influence, which expanded results: the subway cars were clean, subway crime dropped, and crime across the city declined. “Small success can add up to major achievements” (Achor, 2010, p. 144).

THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

PRINCIPLE 6—THE 20-SECOND RULE

“If our brains have the capacity to change, as we now know they do, why is changing our behavior so hard, and how can we make it easier?” (Achor, 2010, p. 147)

Achor (2010) proposes, **we are “mere bundles of habits”** (p. 147):

- “Habits are so automatic that we rarely stop and think about the enormous role they play in shaping our behavior, and in fact our lives” (p. 148).
- “Habits are like financial capital—

forming one today is an investment that will automatically give out returns for years to come” (p. 148).

- “Habits form because our brain actually changes in response to frequent practice” (p. 149). It becomes effective if it is ingrained in through uninterrupted occurrences.
- “We have the power to create new habits and then reap the benefits whether we’re 22 or

72” (p. 150). (Can’t teach an old dog new tricks is truly not the case.)

WHY WILLPOWER IS NOT THE WAY

“The reason willpower is so ineffective at sustaining change is that the more we use it, the more worn-out it gets” (Achor, 2010, p. 152). The issue is that we seek to draw from a rather common resource, “self-control strength, which is quite limited and hence can be depleted readily” (as cited in Achor, 2010, p. 154).

Each day we face a steady stream of tasks that test our willpower and deplete our reserves. Everything from staying away from a dessert tray to sitting through a lengthy meeting, to exercising with regularity challenge our resolve. “It’s no wonder, really, that we so easily give in to our old habits, to the easiest most comfortable path, as we progress

through the day” (Achor, 2010, p. 154). This incredibly powerful yet invisible pull toward the path of least resistance is what may direct more of our lives than we consciously realize, creating an impassible barrier to change and positive growth (Achor, 2010).

THINK ABOUT:

Your last New Year’s Resolution!

“To be excellent, we cannot simply think or feel excellent, we must act excellent.”
~ Aristotle

REDIRECTING THE PATH

Achor (2010) proposes several different ways in which we can develop better habits:

- Is 20 seconds of extra effort acting as a major deterrent? “Put the desired behavior on the path of least resistance” (p. 161).
- “Lower the activation energy for habits you want to adopt and raise it for habits you want to avoid” (p. 161).
- “Save time by adding time” (p. 164). This means making it difficult for yourself to fall back into old patterns by increasing the number of hoops you have to go through to do so.
- Reduce choices and learn to follow a few simple rules. Eg: Mornings are tough. Plan your exercise routine before bed, set out your clothes and shoes, etc. “The less energy it takes to kick-start a posi-

tive habit, the more likely that habit will stick” (p. 167).



THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

PRINCIPLE 7—SOCIAL INVESTMENT

What is social investment? Achor (2010) describes this principle as holding on tight to the people around you while you are in the midst of challenges, stress, change, or threats. Achor believes this social support network is absolutely, unequivocally vital to success. In times of crisis, social support may be the precise resource required. According to Achor (2010) in trying times, successful people know their social relationships are the single great-

est investment they can make.

We often mistakenly believe that imposing tight dead lines will spur people to become more productive, engaged, and determined to get the work done. We start eating lunch at our desks, working late and coming in on weekends, forego time with family and friends, and find ourselves falling into crisis mode. Lost time for “social perks” within the workplace creates a fur-

ther sense of despair and anxiety.

Achor (2010) explains that at this crossroads, often one of two things happens. We either falter and fail to finish the project, or if we get it done, we are rewarded with another challenging assignment.

Relying on others for help and cultivating positive, supporting social relationships are among the greatest investments a person can make.



“If you don't know where you are going, every road will get you nowhere.”

~ H. Kissinger

SURVIVING AND THRIVING WITH SOCIAL INVESTMENTS

“Like food and air, we seem to need social relationships to thrive” (as cited in Achor, 2010, p. 176).

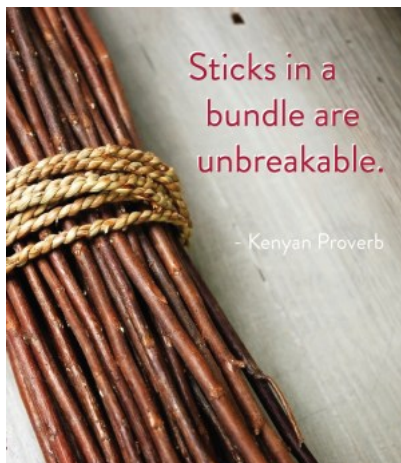
We are biologically wired to need and enjoy social support. As we make positive social connections, our bodies release pleasure-inducing hormones into our blood-

stream. This reduces anxiety, and improves our concentration and focus (as cited in Achor, 2010).

“When we enjoy strong social support... we can accomplish impressive feats of resilience, and even extend the length of our lives” (Achor, 2010, p. 177).

When we are equipped

with the resources of interaction with those around us, we capitalize on the smallest moments spent with others. We decrease stress levels, prime our brains for higher performances, capitalize on ideas and energy, and motivate others within the group. Social investment pays huge dividends!



APPRECIATING ASSETS

There is an important part of maintaining social bonds between co-workers, both physically and emotionally, and that is simply being “present”. New research suggests being there to provide support in the good times is more important to the quality of a relationship than being there for the

bad (as cited in Achor, 2010).

Achor (2010) reminds employees that they have the power to strengthen connections and encourage a work environment that values social investment. This includes creating a connection with staff members through active listening, giving full attention,

and allowing others to have their say.

Connecting to employees face-to-face also provides opportunity to put into practice frequent recognition and feedback. This strengthens social relationships and social cohesion while providing opportunities for individual motivation.

THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

THE RIPPLE EFFECT—BEING CONTAGIOUS

Using the 7 Principles of the Happiness Advantage, can create an upward spiral of success and attitude improvement within an organization. This has the opportunity to multiply between individuals, creating a more positive and pleasant workspace.

The Ripple Effect can impact many people, not only at work, but also extending to encompass family and friends. Consider, if a person is constantly negative and remains that way throughout the day, how will the employees around that person feel? How will those feelings fester and

transfer to others?

Emotional Contagion

Luckily, positive emotions are highly contagious (Achor, 2010). The



power to spark positive emotional acts (a smile, a wave, a body gesture) can impact a person within seconds. Achor (2010) reminds us, the happier everyone is around you, the happier you will become. Likewise, the happier we are at work, the more positive we will work together. Because corporations are not run by just one person, all the people who are involved in its operation convey their own personality and emotion. Often, success relies on how effectively people can work together.

MY THOUGHTS ON THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

I thoroughly enjoyed reading and reflecting upon this book. This book creates a wonderful insight toward leadership as well as self direction within one's life and career.

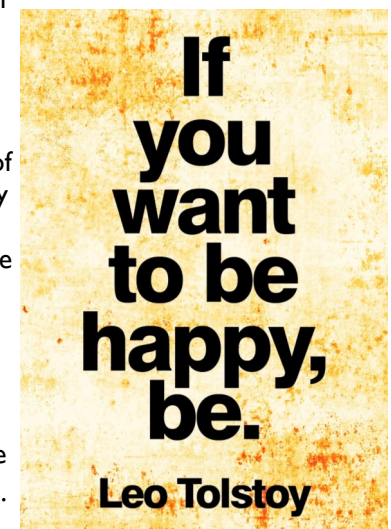
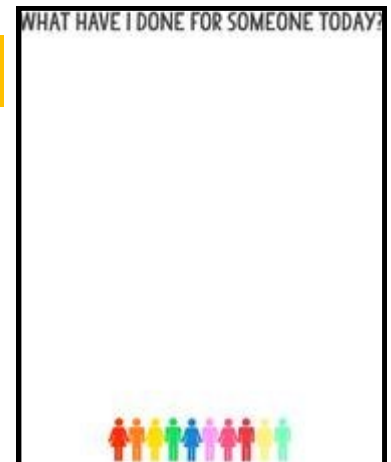
The Happiness Advantage has the ability to impact an individual, a staff, a workplace, or even society as a whole, by creating a sense of unity and compassion from within. Achor puts the prime focus on pursuing happiness, not only for ourselves, but for the betterment of everyone.

“Google is famous for keeping scooters in the hallway, video games in the break room, and gourmet chefs in the cafeteria”
(Achor, 2010, p. 57).

This book really made me conscious of my own actions. Being around people who are positive boosts morale and allows for an unencumbered flow of communication. If a group can work together and share their insight and knowledge, workers are not needed to work harder, but smarter, and people feel valued and appreciated—integral to the running of their organization or workplace.

I feel that this mindset is particularly important in the Education field. In the news we hear how burnout rates are on the rise, how workplaces have become cultures of fear under ever increasing demands for increased accountability, new reporting methods, and less autonomy. For everything that is piled on teachers, unfortunately it is students who often reap the downfall.

From a human resources perspective, if we could all work together, be happy, and help others, I think our education system would function more efficiently and effectively than it does today. By honouring the people who have chosen to teach, by appreciating their gifts and talents, their knowledge and experience, their hopes and dreams, we might truly have a system that is stronger from the ground up. When I think of how innovative companies like Google and Patagonia have been, I am sadly disappointed by the backwards world the rest of us live and work in. It is my hope that a book like The Happiness Advantage can be the push we need to put people, and their happiness back at the forefront—as joy in a job well done and being valued is what I believe will ultimately increase productivity and innovation.



THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

SUMMARY OF THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

1. The Happiness Advantage:

capitalize on positivity to improve productivity and performance – re-train your brain to be more positive.

2. The Fulcrum and the Lever:

adjust your mindset (the fulcrum) in ways that give us more power (lever) – we control how we think about the world.

3. The Tetris Effect: retrain our brains to find opportunity wherever we look or wherever we are – focus on opportunity.

4. Falling Up: find the path out and up from the negative events of our lives – how can this make us

stronger.

5. The Zorro Circle: regain control in the midst of chaos by bringing our circle in – focus on small, manageable goals until we get stronger.

6. The 20-Second Rule: with limited willpower we need to make small energy adjustments to re-route the path of least resistance and instead build better habits.

7. Social Investment: invest in our friends, peers, and family so that when challenges and stress present themselves, you have a social support network.



QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. Which of the 7 principles resonated the most with you? (And which didn't?)
2. What are three quick things you could do to prime your brain to be positive before attempting a difficult task during your daily routine?
3. Do you practice "frequent praise and recognition" with your employees (or family)? And when you do praise someone, do you focus only on the outcome, or on the process as well?
4. What kind of tone do you usually use when delivering instructions to your employees (or family members)? Have you noticed whether that makes a difference in their performance? How might you adopt a more positive tone, that still feels authentic to your own personality and motivational style?
5. Have you ever gotten stuck in a negative Tetris Effect? How did that affect your life and work? The next time this happens, what are some ways you might get out of it? Are there things you and your colleagues/friends could do to help each other avoid this trap?
6. Does your work team (or family) function above the Losada Line? In other words, do you have at least a 3 to 1 ratio of positive to negative in your team interactions? Have you noticed how your ratio correlates to your team's success? What are some ways you could raise the ratio?
7. Did Shawn mention a positive habit in the book that you have already made an important part of your life? (Could be exercise, meditation, gratitude, journaling, etc.) What benefits do you receive from this positive habit? Share your habits with each other, as well as your tricks for making sure they stick.
8. Pick one positive activity that Shawn mentions in the book that you'd like to turn into a habit over the next 21 days. How could you use the 20 Second Rule to lower the "activation energy" of that activity?
9. Now think of one negative habit that you'd like to curtail. How might you raise the "activation energy" required for that activity, so that you're less likely to do it?
10. All 7 principles are important, but research has shown that the 7th one—Social Investment—is perhaps the most crucial to long term happiness, health, and success. How socially cohesive is your work team (or volunteer group, mom group, etc.)? What is one way you might increase the number of high-quality connections you have during your daily routines?
11. Does your work (in the home or out of the home) allow you the time and energy to cultivate meaningful relationships? What is one (small) thing you could do in your daily life to strengthen one of these relationships?