

Happy Managers

A Business Perspective

Samuel A. Malone



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HAPPY MANAGERS: A BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

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1st edition

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ISBN 978-87-403-3040-3

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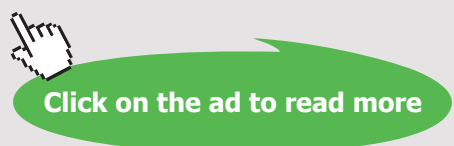
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The author's latest books have been published online by bookboon.com in 2018/2019 namely:

- The Role of the Brain in Learning
- How Adults Learn
- Learning Models and Styles
- Experiential Learning
- Learning with Technology
- The Ultimate Success Factor
- Memory Skills for Managers
- Series of Books on People Skills for Managers
- Series of Books on Creativity Skills for Managers
- Series of Books on Training Models for learning facilitators
- Series of Books on Marketing for the Non-Marketing Manager
- Learning Maps for Managers
- Lifelong Learning Skills
- Business Communications
- Reading Skills for Managers
- Learning from Mistakes

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to explore the subject of happiness for managers in a practical, clear, and understandable way. Happiness has important consequences for both individuals in the workplace and for organisations and in the past its role in the successful operation of a business has been underestimated. Happiness at work includes job satisfaction, work engagement, well-being, motivation, and positive attitudes and relationships. Each chapter starts with a set of questions to prime the mind, arouse curiosity and interest, and is illustrated with examples, acronyms, quotations and diagrams. Five activities to improve peoples' and manager's level of happiness is included at the end of each chapter. Managers can improve their level of happiness by becoming more aware of the things that make them happy, by avoiding the things that make them unhappy and by enthusiastically undertaking the activities at the end of each chapter.

Managers in turn can increase the happiness of the workforce by creating the right conditions of employment, adopting flat organisation structures, democratic styles of leadership, ergonomically designed machines and equipment, having scientific recruitment and selection methods and designing jobs that provide satisfaction, variety, purpose and enhance performance. Jobs should provide sufficient challenge to use the full range of abilities of the employee. Those with more ability should be given increasing levels of autonomy and responsibility. Jobs that cannot be redesigned to cater for the full abilities of the employee should be automated or given to those with a lower level of skill.

We spend most of our life at work so it's important that it is a happy and fulfilling place. A happy environment is one with good communication systems, positive relationships and opportunities for training and development. It creates a healthy, happy and productive workplace which is a source of great customer and competitive strength. If a company discovers a cost reduction technique that provides higher quality products at the same price to customers, then the outcome is likely to be happier customers and happier stakeholders.

The purpose of life is to be happy. Surveys on happiness consistently show that people throughout the world desire the same things in order to be happy, including a decent standard of living, a good family and social life, a nice neighbourhood in which to live, good health and a satisfying rewarding meaningful job. Health, beauty, money and power are highly valued because we expect them to make us happy. Generally, they do, but not always. The 'Hedonic Treadmill' means that you need to keep running to have your happiness stand still. We gradually adapt to ever higher standards of living as we get used to changed circumstances and take things for granted so that we are no happier than before.

Comparing ourselves with those who are better off may engender feelings of envy, discontent and resentment rather than happiness. You will feel happier if you compare yourself with those who are less well-off than you are. Happy people are more likely to be extroverts than introverts. Managers find the greatest sense of happiness during flow experiences at work and elsewhere. Happiness occurs in moments so that you should savour the good moment when it happens.

It would be naïve to think that money is irrelevant to happiness. It provides a means to get a good education and a decent standard of living, and gives many benefits like independence, security of mind, living in a good neighbourhood and freedom from financial worries. Celebrity and fame may bring misery and dissatisfaction to some rather than happiness. Happiness rises as people are lifted out of extreme poverty, and are able to afford the basic necessities of life.

Good positive relationships at home and at work are an important foundation for a successful and happy life. Relationships are nurtured by genuine friendship, kind acts, respect, love and displays of affection. They are undermined by contempt and constant criticism. Married people report more happiness than those who are unmarried, living together, divorced or separated. Similarly, successful managers are happy managers. Self-confidence and self-esteem will help you make friends easily and be happy in your own skin. Trust is a vital ingredient of friendship and once broken it is almost impossible to renew the friendship.

A happy homelife gives managers a strong support network to face the daily trials and tribulations of a busy competitive work life. Managers with a sense of vocation enjoy their work and are very happy because they find their job intrinsically rewarding and meaningful and feel they are making a valuable contribution to society. There are many ways to be happier at work, including doing work that you enjoy, and being comfortable with the organisation and people you work with. Managers need an appropriate work life balance to be happy.

Samuel A Malone

Aug 2019

1 HAPPINESS

- Where are people happy?
- What is the function of happiness?
- What is happiness?
- How does age affect happiness?
- What is adaptation?

1.1 Function of Happiness

The general principles of happiness can be applied to employees and managers just like anybody else. Numerous studies show that happy individuals are successful across multiple spheres of life, including marriage, friendship, income, work performance and health. It seems that no matter where you are you bring your positivity and happiness with you. In fact, just like increasing corporate profitability, managers have also a responsibility to increase stakeholder happiness. We seek job satisfaction at work which in turn increases our general level of life satisfaction. Job satisfaction affects life satisfaction which in turn affects job satisfaction. It is important that organisations address low job satisfaction because of its adverse effects on profits, but also because of the spill over causing low life satisfaction, depression, and negativity, which ultimately, affects health and productivity.

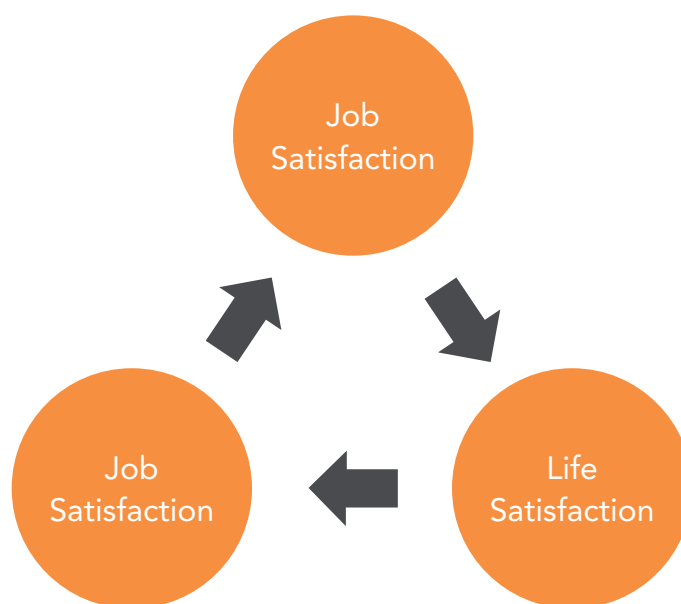


Fig. 1 Virtuous Circles of Job Satisfaction

Irrespective of where we are, we all strive to feel contented and avoid pain. This helps us to survive and stay alive. We are programmed by evolution to avoid activities that cause us pain, and that are dangerous to our well-being, contentment, safety and survival. A child instinctively withdraws its hand from something that is very hot because it does not want the pain of a burn. It is programmed to avoid pain, seek pleasure and stay alive. The fight or flight response tells us when we should face up to danger or run. We thus tend to be drawn to those things which make us happy, and tend to avoid things that make us unhappy. Basically, we are motivated to seek pleasure and avoid pain. What we perceive as pleasurable attracts us, and what we perceive as painful repels us. Some of us learn to deny ourselves today for future gratification as evidenced by our desire to save and plan for our future. Our ability to delay gratification is a good predictor of future happiness.

Pleasure is ephemeral and gives only a temporary lift. Happiness is a long-term inner feeling of contentment or peace of mind. Contentment is about accepting things as they are. As a well-known saying goes, change what you can, accept what you cannot, and have the wisdom to know the difference. Moderation in all things and self-discipline is the key to happiness. Thus, people who lack self-discipline and indulge in drugs, alcohol, food and sex to excess, will become very unhappy and often die prematurely. The philosophy of instant gratification - live now and pay later, is a recipe for unhappiness and tragedy. In modern society with trends such as instant texting and speed dating most people have difficulty postponing gratification. We have created a culture of having everything we want now! Thus, people no longer have the discipline of not snacking between meals and moderating their food and alcoholic intake.

"Pleasure is an important component of the quality of life, but by itself does not bring happiness. Pleasure helps to maintain order, but by itself cannot create a new order in consciousness."

– Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Controlling our desires

Currently the western world is undergoing an epidemic of obesity. Convenience and desirable food are everywhere and affordable. The consumerist society is fuelled by advertising encouraging people to spend more and more. Most advertising is manipulative and some tends to be totally misleading despite advertising watchdogs, standards, and legislation. One obvious example of this is the series of MasterCard commercials that stress the pricelessness of the experience one gets while buying things with a MasterCard. They fail to tell you that buying can become addictive, that loans have to be repaid, and that getting into debt and

living beyond your means can be bad for your mental, physical and financial well-being. The culture of spin has even been adopted by corporate bodies and government, so that it is hard for anybody to believe anything anymore.

Advertising feeds the spending addiction by encouraging us to feel that we need designer clothes, bigger cars, bigger televisions, and bigger houses. Advertising creates dissatisfaction by encouraging people to buy things they want but don't really need, and to make negative envious undermining comparisons between themselves and others, and between their lives now and what they could be like. We are bombarded with images of ideal body shapes, riches, and goods and gadgets we do not have and do not need but may aspire to. Shopping is advertised as the route to happiness. It seems that many people cannot control the need to spend, eat and drink moderately, and thus they become burdened with debt, overweight and obese. Children are very impressionable and Sweden being aware of this has banned advertising aimed at children under 12.

Life is imperfect, unpredictable and often difficult. We must be prepared to handle the ups and downs of life. A little discomfort, disgruntlement, dissatisfaction and anger with the way things are currently often drive us on to greater achievements. It ignites the urge for social change and the insight and creativity within us to solve problems. If the UK barons had been content with their lot, there would have been no Magna Carta. If the suffragettes had been happy about gender inequality, there would be no women's votes. If Dr. Martin Luther King had not fought against segregation and racism in the USA we would have had no Barack Obama as president of the USA. Where would we be today if Thomas Edison hadn't invented the electric light bulb, and brought light into our lives on dark winter nights? Similarly, the invention of the car and air flight has dramatically changed our lives for the better.

"A lifetime of happiness! No man alive could bear it: it would be hell on earth."

– George Bernard Shaw

1.2 HAPPINESS EXPLAINED

Happiness has been defined as feeling joyous or contented with one's lot, or living a meaningful life consistent with your values. Values give people confidence that what they do is right and will enjoy wide social support. In more down to earth terms, happiness is about feeling good and enjoying life. Pleasure and enjoyment, indulgence, hedonism, well-being, life satisfaction, and similar words are closely related to happiness and often used synonymously, although indulgence and hedonism may cause unhappiness.

The study of happiness has a long history. Aristippus, a Greek philosopher from the fourth century B.C., taught that the goal of life is to experience the maximum amount of pleasure, and that happiness is the totality of one's pleasurable moments. In Christian thought, most pleasure was seen as sinful and a distraction from the worthwhile pursuit of virtue. Happiness was not of this world (considered a vale of tears) but something to be aspired to in the next. Theologians believed happiness was achieved by being near to God. Strangely we have to experience pain, misery and discomfort before we can really appreciate happiness. For example, the discredited and disgraced Lance Armstrong has emphasised the pain and suffering he, and other Tour de France riders, have to go through to finish the race. In preparation cyclists go through a punishing and strenuous training schedule. Success in the race brings great happiness, but at the price of considerable suffering and pain.

"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Distinction between pleasure and enjoyment

Psychologists make a distinction between pleasure and enjoyment. Freud formulated the **Pleasure Principle** which stated that our basic and strongest motivation in life is the drive to experience pleasure and to avoid pain. Pleasure is the good feeling that comes from satisfying needs such as hunger, thirst, sex, and bodily comfort. Enjoyment, on the other hand, refers to the good feelings people experience when they do something that challenges them such as fulfilling some larger purpose, sporting performance, completing a worthwhile task, a good deed, or a stimulating conversation. Enjoyment, rather than pleasure, leads to personal growth and long-term happiness. Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman found that people's top four favourite parts of the day feature sex, socialising after work, dinner, and relaxing. The bottom four involved commuting, work, child care, and housework.

Obviously, happiness can vary from person to person and is of an ephemeral character, coming and going and often lasting for moments only. For one person, it may be the ability to feel satisfied with life. For another, it may be the opportunity to have fun and freedom. For others, it's the absence of anxiety, stress, illness, or money worries. Certainly, it means making wise choices in your life and being able to read situations accurately. Happiness is greatest when we combine frequent good experiences with a few intense ones. Good experiences include having an interesting and responsible job, a loving spouse, a supportive family, and an absorbing hobby. Intense experiences may include a romantic getaway, an exotic foreign holiday, birth of a new baby, a job promotion, or getting first place in an important professional examination.

Serving a purpose greater than oneself and one that serves society and is in harmony with your values and beliefs is a great source of satisfaction. People who set out to put right the wrongs and injustices in the world often achieve great purpose, contentment and happiness. Mother Teresa was moved by the great poverty she saw on the streets of Calcutta and dedicated her life to doing something about it. However, most people pursue pleasure rather than enjoyment. They prefer to watch television over reading an interesting challenging book. We know that television doesn't add to our happiness whereas a good book will create flow and enhance our education and understanding of life.

"Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be."

– Abraham Lincoln

1.3 THREE FORMS OF HAPPINESS

Martin Seligman, one of the pioneers of positive psychology, has identified three forms of happiness. Happy managers will be orientated towards the pleasant, engaged and meaningful life. This results in satisfaction with life and positive feelings. These will spill over to their professional and work lives and staff, and affect job satisfaction, corporate commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour. The acronym **PEM** will help you remember the three forms.

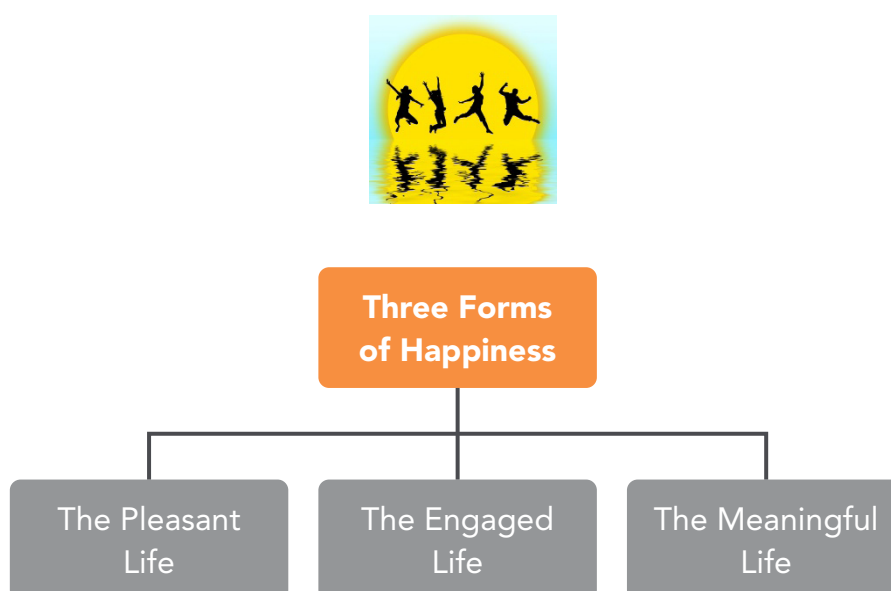


Fig. 1.2. Three Forms of Happiness by Martin Seligman

1. **The pleasant life.** This concerns positive emotions about the past, present and future. Positive emotions about the past include contentment, fulfilment, pride, satisfaction, and serenity. Positive emotions about the present include sensory delights derived from immediate pleasures, such as meaningful, interesting and absorbing work, music or other people. Positive emotions about the future include optimism about promotion prospects, confidence, trust, hope and faith. The pleasant life is about getting pleasure out of the basic things in life such as friendships, work, the natural environment, and bodily needs. This is what most people think of when considering whether or not they are happy moment to moment. Many people are friendly, optimistic and cheerful; others are not, a trait which studies show is mostly inherited. Identical twins usually have similar propensities to be happy. Some people take shortcuts to achieve the pleasant life by taking drugs, alcohol, over indulgence in food, masturbating frequently, or engaging in mindless entertainment. This will only keep you happy in the short-term, but the long-term consequences can be extremely damaging to your health, well-being and career prospects.
2. **The engaged life.** The engaged life is a life filled with engagement, absorption, interest, immersion, and flow. This comes through job satisfaction and deep engagement in work, family life, or other enjoyable activities. When we do some activity that absorbs us, we often get into a state of flow where there is no consciousness of time. Finding flow is about discovering your unique strengths such as kindness, integrity and wisdom, and employing them creatively to enhance your life. There seems to be no genetic constraints on the engaged life. All you have to do is identify your signature strengths (the strengths that define you as a person) and use them in worthwhile pursuits. For example, a person with the signature strength of creativity could be encouraged to take up pottery, photography, writing, poetry, sculpture or painting. A person with the signature strength of curiosity could be encouraged to undertake research on some topic that interests them. A person with a signature strength of leadership should take every opportunity within the company to lead and inspire others. Since most of us spend so much time working, having an interesting, meaningful, and satisfying job can make a significant contribution to your overall level of happiness. Thus, managers engaged at work will experience happiness, enjoyment and fulfilment when applying their unique skills to the tasks of the organisation.
3. **The meaningful life.** Meaning is an important component of psychological well-being and is regarded as a predictor of subjective well-being and being satisfied with one's life. It comes from dedication to an institution or a cause greater than oneself such as family, politics, a job, a career, a cause, a charity or

a religion, and is unlikely to be influenced by genes. Such managers experience higher subjective well-being, and get unselfishly involved in assisting others and their organisations. Institutions might include church, work, family and local community. It might include becoming an expert in something, or passing on your knowledge and skill by mentoring others. So instead of the sports car as an antidote to a midlife crisis, positive psychology recommends that you savour time with your wife and children, volunteer your time to a charity, get involved in community work such as helping the homeless, mentor the next generation, or contribute to a worthy cause. We become truly fulfilled and enhance our self-esteem if we employ our unique strengths and talents to make life easier for others. One large-scale study compared the psychology of elderly volunteers with non-volunteers. It found that retired people over 65 who volunteered rated significantly higher on life satisfaction and will to live, and had fewer symptoms of depression.

“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.”

– Albert Schweitzer

Happiness and success

The relationship between happiness and success is reciprocal – one feeds off the other. Successful people are happy provided they work at the right activities in the right organisation which they enjoy, while being dedicated to a purpose. They also like to feel that their work will be meaningful and leave a legacy for the benefit of others. They know that most of the happiness is achieved while enjoying the journey. In fact, there is often an anti-climax when the goal has been achieved – a feeling of a void in one’s life. There was so much time, effort and energy put into achieving the goal that one is now wondering what to do with all the spare time now available. Thus, there is a need to reinvent new goals in substitution of the previous ones to keep you interested, committed, absorbed, occupied, engaged, and challenged.

Happiness according to William James, the noted 19th century philosopher/psychologist, is reflected in the ratio of one’s accomplishments to one’s aspirations. We can thus increase our happiness by adding to our list of accomplishments or lowering our expectations. Positive psychologists have even devised a formula for happiness as follows:

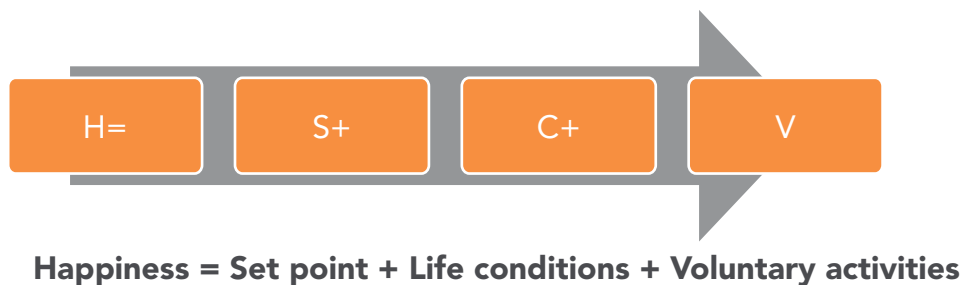


Fig. 1.3. Formula for Happiness

It is: $H = S + C + V$. Where H is your level of happiness, S is your set point, C is the conditions of your life, and V is the voluntary activities you partake in. In other words, your happiness consists of how naturally happy you are, plus whatever is going on in your life affecting your happiness, plus the voluntary work that you do. Set point theories suggest that individuals are predisposed to a certain level of predetermined happiness. They usually return to that set point relatively quickly following temporary setbacks caused by favourable or unfavourable external events. Meaningful satisfying voluntary work has been found to add greatly to peoples' level of happiness irrespective of what their full-time job is during the day because they feel that they are doing some good in the world.

1.4 HAPPINESS AND AGE

The relationship between happiness and age is counterintuitive. This is good news for managers who fear the prospect of retirement with so much time on their hands to fill. The common stereotype is that older people are grumpy, and so one expects people to be unhappy as they get older. However, surveys show the opposite is true. This is the paradox of ageing. Contrary to popular belief, getting older is a happy experience for most people, and older people feel little envy for the younger generation as they've been there and done that. The mid-life crisis is often feared, but scientists have found that people get more confident and agreeable as they grow older. They accumulate more experience as happiness follows a U-shaped curve – it peaks when we are 20 and 70 and slumps in the middle years leaving us most miserable between 40 and 50.

In fact, instead of a crisis many middle-aged people and especially managers are at the peak of their success in terms of their power and influence, abilities, job and finances. Some people have done well while others have not. A joint study by Warwick University in the UK and Dartmouth College in the US has concluded that on average our most depressed age is 44. This finding is useful to know because if you feel a bit down in your forties with your career stalling it is nice to know that it is quite normal and that you are likely to pull out of it. It is not coincidental that this age concurs with the male and female menopause.

Midlife is often a time for reflection and reassessment. We acknowledge what we have achieved, and look forward to what remains to be done. You are no longer burdened with fierce ambition and high expectations. Only one person in the company can become chief executive, and you begin to realise that it's not going to be you. You're unlikely to win the Nobel Prize too or become a best-selling author. We were told as children that we could achieve anything we set our minds to, but now we realise that for the vast majority this is not so. It may also be a time for "wake-up" calls. A serious accident, loss of job, disability, reduced mobility or illness in midlife, often leads to a major reassessment about the priorities in life. In addition, many people will have experienced friends or close relatives who have become seriously ill, become incapacitated, or died in middle age, after a prolonged battle with cancer, and this can trigger off a new appreciation for life. Furthermore, middle aged adults are more likely to experience the trauma and stress of the death of their own parents, siblings, close friends and colleagues.

"It is easy to believe that life is long and one's gifts are vast – easy at the beginning, that is. But the limits of life grow more evident; it becomes clear that great work can be done rarely, if at all."

– Alfred Adler

Specific stresses of midlife

Those who lose their jobs in midlife are often faced with additional stresses to cope with, as they are often confronted with redundancy, insurmountable obstacles and age discrimination for the first time. Finding a job in midlife may be difficult because of cultural perceptions about middle age, and your expectation of better pay than younger people. Middle aged people are erroneously perceived as being resistant to change, computer illiterate, and difficult to retrain. In addition, their wisdom and experience are undervalued, and technological advances such as information and communications technology may have made their skills outdated or obsolete.

Concerns about health, fitness, memory and being overweight become issues. Common health issues include back and joint pain, dental problems, arthritis, heart problems, and some loss in hearing and eyesight. Some poor health conditions are preventable as they are caused by poor lifestyle choices such as diet and lack of exercise, and thus are self-inflicted. The ability to positively influence health is significant because many of the risk factors for chronic illness can be modified or avoided, including cigarette smoking, alcohol use, poor diet, excess weight, and physical inactivity. Midlife is a period when the implementation of health promoting activities can reap benefits in later life. Suggestions include engaging

in physical and mental exercise to slow down the effects of physical and mental decline. In addition, exercise using weights can prevent or improve age-related muscle loss and strength. However, research does not support significant declines in memory until much later in life. In fact, verbal memory seems to peak in midlife, as does vocabulary, general knowledge, inductive reasoning, and spatial orientation.

There is no doubt that midlife is often the time when chronic illness or disease starts to surface. Some people begin to experience physical problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, rheumatism or arthritis. These physical ailments, although largely treatable with medication or diet, can cause distress because they signal the processes of inevitable ageing. Ageing is perceived as neither desirable nor valued in modern society. On the positive side increased wisdom, emotional and practical intelligence increases with age. People also experience more freedom and control with more time to develop their personal interests. Their children may have been reared and left the family nest, and couples experience the freedom and independence that comes with this as well as having financial security. When children leave the family home parents often experience newfound gains in marital satisfaction, and opportunities for developing and exploring new interests, growth and fulfilment.

Only in their 50s do most people emerge from the slump experienced in the middle years. According to Professor Francis Green professor of economics at the University of Kent, some managers in their thirties feel that they are stuck in a rut, their careers have plateaued and they feel thwarted in their ambition. However, by the time they reach their fifties, they will either have shifted priorities away from work, adopted a more balanced lifestyle, reconciled themselves to their jobs, or else dropped out of the workforce altogether. This makes men in their thirties the most disillusioned and dissatisfied in the workforce.

“Age puzzles me. I thought it was a quiet time. My seventies were interesting and fairly serene, but my eighties are passionate. I grow more intense as I age.”

– Florida Scott-Maxwell.

Embrace and enjoy old age

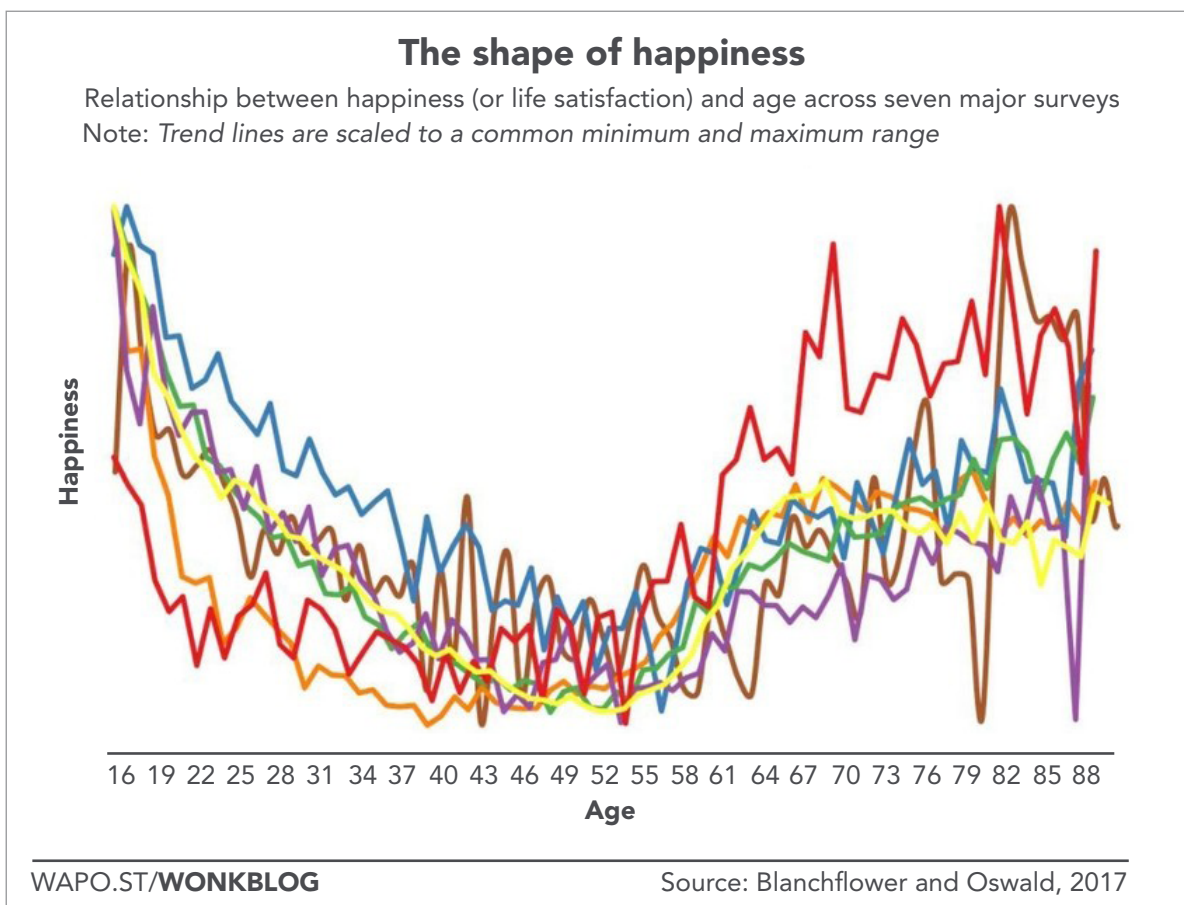


Fig. 1.4. The Shape of Happiness

The U-shaped curve suggests that instead of fearing old age we should embrace and enjoy it. Encouragingly, by the time you're 70, if you are still physically fit then on average you are as happy and mentally healthy as a 20-year-old. Many people who are in good physical shape in their seventies still consider themselves to be middle aged. Many middle-aged people typically report feeling about 10 years younger than they are. Feeling younger than one's age is associated with greater prosperity, health and happiness. Studies show that the incidence of major depression decreases with age. One study found that the 10 years after retirement appears to be the happiest and least stressful time in most people's lives. This finding is not surprising. This is the time when you begin to realise and accept that you're not going to achieve a lot of the things you thought you would when younger. Your level of happiness as you grow older also depends on your country's average income. In the poor developing countries older people are the least likely to give their lives a positive rating. However, in the richer developed countries, they are the most likely to do so.

People also become less extroverted and more patient as they become older with less need for excitement, diversion and stimulation. As you get older you accept yourself with all your limitations. Feelings of self-fulfilment and acceptance of one's own personality are more widespread than disillusionment. It seems that as people mature and come through adversity in their lives; they appreciate family and friends more, and get more involved in their local community. So, as people go beyond retirement age, they generally get happier. Older people experience less stress in their lives compared to younger and midlife people, who are more likely to have financial worries, and experience the considerable difficulties and challenges involved in starting a family home, taking on a mortgage and rearing young children.

While older people may not remember names as well as younger people, research by the Stanford Centre on Longevity into cognitive functioning, shows they have an uncanny ability to focus on the positive side of life. It seems that ageing helps us ignore the negative aspects of life and shift our focus toward the positive. Older people experience positive emotions for longer periods of time than younger people, and they are quicker discarding negative emotions. They realise that life is too short for holding grudges, disappointments and resentments. The philosopher Heidegger said the only way to really feel alive is to be constantly aware that you're going to die. If you think you have an infinite amount of time you won't learn to appreciate the here and now, and the urgency you need to feel to achieve the things you still want to achieve in life. Older people restructure their memories by thinking positively about the good times rather than the bad. In contrast, younger people are quicker to feel negative emotions. Noticing the bad may be a survival mechanism and a necessary part of growing up. Younger people are more interested in novelty, and acquiring additional knowledge and experience, while older people are more interested in depth of experiences, in appreciating what they have and in reminiscence.

Unfortunately, the U-shaped curve does not take the teenage years into account. These years can be particularly difficult, troublesome, emotional, disruptive, and problematic. It is an immature difficult time between childhood and adulthood where a lot of growing up is done in a short space of time. One has to leave the relatively carefree world of childhood behind and begin to take on the responsibilities of adulthood. Teenagers have little experience and no context in which to place the trials and tribulations of life. At this age, peer pressure is at its greatest and hormones in tandem with emotions are running high. There is parental and teacher pressure to do well in school or college. It is not surprising that these years are often caricatured as being difficult, confusing, anxious and unhappy.

Older people are more contented and grateful for what they have. As physical strength declines, they realise that life is short and fragile, their days are finite, and they change their goals in line with lesser expectations. With less time left older people are more concerned about now and enjoying themselves with the limited time they have left. They're more concerned about their short-term emotional well-being, and place more importance on relationships with family, close friends and colleagues. They tend to care less what other people think of them.

This is in contrast to younger people who put their emotional needs on hold to pursue long-term goals. Younger people who experience the happiness common to their elders are those who recover from life threatening illnesses or addiction. Just like their elders they have a different perspective on life after surviving a life-threatening serious illness. They have come face to face with the prospect of death, and experience the fragility of life that is a common experience of older people, and thus put more value on it. It has been also found that the rates of depression among older adults actually decline.

Older people are happier if they retain and make new friendships, pursue new learning experiences, take up new hobbies, and do things that challenge them and make them feel useful. Nevertheless, temperament is still the best predictor of happiness overall. A child with a pleasant personality is likely to be happy decades later. The grumpy 30-year-old is likely to turn into the grumpy 70-year-old even if slightly less so. Sometimes elderly people are computer illiterate and too trusting. Consequently, they are the most likely to be victims of confidence tricksters, financial scams, hacking and cybercrime.

"Happiness grows less from the passive experience of desirable circumstances than from involvement in valued activities and progress towards goals."

– David Myers & Ed Diener



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1.5 THE CHALLENGE OF RETIREMENT

Most people look forward to retirement. You want it to be a time of happiness rather than unhappiness. However, the transition from work to retirement can be difficult and sometimes traumatic, particularly if the process is haphazard rather than planned. You will need to be thinking about and planning your retirement for five years before you actually retire. It might even be a good idea to take night classes to update skills or develop new ones, which will help keep you employed at any age. The plan should take into account that you are likely to be living on a reduced income. Research confirms that financial security predicts better health and happiness in retirement. Planning for the social and psychological aspects of retirement is just as important as financial planning. In fact, most people do not plan for their retirement at all. Retirement should be viewed as a psychological journey, involving the need to restructure time, adopt a new role identity, redefine social and family relationships, and find new goals and purpose in life.

Our expectations about the freedom and happiness that being retired will bring often prove to be unrealistic. The reality can be quite different as having a lot of time on your hands can induce boredom and apathy. It is not easy to adjust to the fact of working one day and being idle the next. On average most people who retire at 65 can look forward to an average of another 15 years or more of life. For those who take early retirement, retirement may be almost as long a period as their former working careers. So, it's important that we plan for this time in a careful, sensible and purposeful way. Playing golf or socialising is fine as a recreational activity but is not a purposeful and meaningful way of spending all your spare time. The following are some of the things that you take for granted in your work, but that you need to compensate for when you retire.

"Age is only a number, a cipher for the records. A man can't retire his experience. He must use it. Experience achieves more with less energy and time."

– Bernard Baruch

How work helps us

Work provides us with companionship, goals, structure, routine, and a sense of power and influence. We work with colleagues in offices, work groups, teams, projects, committees or departments. We share a sense of camaraderie, purpose and belonging. We have tasks to do, phone calls to make and take, emails to send, reports to draft, meetings to attend, conflicts to resolve, targets to reach, budgets to spend, and problems to solve. We feel we are making an important contribution to our organisation, and ultimately to society. Our colleagues

serve as social support systems, giving us friendship, recognition, prestige, admiration, encouragement, advice, and feedback. All of this gives us a sense of identity, self-worth and accomplishment – an essential ingredient for psychological and physical health.

The structure and routine of work provides us with a timetable and framework to operate in. Daily incoming post, staff meetings, committees, daily agendas, training and development activities, business trips, planned business engagements, and prearranged social events, provides structure to our daily activities. The organisation gives us something to do and goals to achieve. To accomplish these, we must formulate and execute action programmes, meet deadlines, and live within budgets. Achieving goals brings us praise, recognition, admiration, affirmation, satisfaction, and self-esteem. Organisations provide us with roles, policies and procedures and the power and influence that go along with them. We feel important, valued and respected. In addition, some organisations run sporting, cultural, educational and social activities for their employees providing a structure and outlet for recreational and social pursuits.

“Stay busy (when you retire). If you are going to sit on the couch and watch TV, you are going to die.”

– Bill Chavanne

Voluntary retirement is best

Those who retire voluntarily are happier than those who are forced to retire. Similarly, those who retire when they choose are much happier than those who retire unexpectedly because of health problems, or if made redundant. Those who retire early to pursue interests close to their hearts report greater satisfaction with retirement than any other group. Obviously, these people view retirement as a new learning opportunity and a new lease of life, rather than as an escape from the stress and drudgery of their jobs. Those who continue to work full-time after their retirement are less satisfied than those who work part-time. Retirees who are married report greater happiness than those who are not. This applies to both men and women and is consistent across cultures. Married women are generally happier in retirement than unmarried women. Divorced and separated women experience the greatest financial instability in retirement, and are more likely to report low levels of happiness. Couples who had a good friendly relationship and easy relaxed communication before they retired are likely to be happy after retirement. In contrast, those with a difficult relationship before retirement are likely to be unhappy after retirement.

Retirement is particularly hard for those in senior management positions like chief executives of large companies who get accustomed to the pomp, ceremony, respect and prestige associated with these jobs. The change must be overwhelming and the process of adjustment traumatic when they retire. One day you have a private secretary, have advisors and are being chauffeured around. The next day you have to make your own appointments, get your own coffee, and drive your own car. Position and power are fickle. At the end of the day nobody is indispensable, and it is inevitable that we all will grow old. It must be hard to relearn to look after yourself like keeping your own diary, making your own calls, writing your own letters, advising yourself, and finding your own parking spot. One day you are important and pampered. The next day you are not.

"A lot of our friends complain about their retirement. We tell them to get a life."

– Larry Laser

Loss of identity

Since identity is bound up with work, the loss of that job must be a loss of who you are. This is why it's important not to derive your entire sense of self-worth from your job. People have multiple roles in life. They may be grandparents, partners, parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, colleagues and so on. You may be the chairperson of your local resident's association. The moral of the story is, don't depend on transient sources for self-worth. A true sense of self-worth, self-esteem and happiness is to be found within yourself, and the relationships you have with your family and friends as these are the people who really know and care about you.

When we retire, we initially feel a sense of alienation, disfranchisement, disengagement, disempowerment and estrangement. We have suddenly gone from a busy hectic work life to one of emptiness and boredom. Our sense of identify and belonging, which being part of a work group provided, is gone for ever. The job was not only a place to work, but also a place to converse, make friends and socialise. The support system at work provided us not only with friendship, but also gave us a sense of recognition, admiration and feedback for our unique talents, abilities and skills. When we retire, this support system is gone forever, and our lack of social contacts can be a source of loneliness. You will need to build up a new network of social contacts.

To be without goals is like living aimlessly without a purpose. We feel we have nothing to look forward to, with no longer a reason for getting out of bed in the morning. We feel rejected, and that we have been thrown on the scrap-heap. Some retired people even become depressed, morose, unsociable and lose the will to live. The systems, procedures and routines which provided a structure for the working day are gone. You now have to plan your own time and create your own routines. There is no longer a workplace to go to, work colleagues to see, tasks to do, meetings to attend, phone calls to make and take and emails to send. You no longer have the opportunities to socialise with work colleagues that you previously took for granted. Most of these routines stop when retirement comes. At first the freedom from all these chores seems a great release. However, after a few weeks you realise that the habits built up over a lifetime are not easy to give up and live without. Feelings of dejection, loneliness, loss of self-esteem and loss of identity begin to envelope you. You even miss all those phone calls which were an integral part of your life making you feel important and needed.

“Our greatest fear and insecurity for our later years should not be about the Social Security system or about being broke but rather about being without purpose and meaningful work.”

– Mitch Anthony

What to do after retirement

So, what should you do? Retiring from a job doesn't mean that you retire from life. As well as retiring from something, you need something to retire to. The American comedian George F. Burns who lived to be a 100 said that he was going to work in show business until he was the only one left. He continued working into ripe old age. If your company runs a pre-retirement programme then you should attend this as you will need all the contacts, help, information and ideas you can get. Research shows that retirees who were educated about what to expect, and how to prepare before they retired were happier with their retirement as time passed. However, those who were not educated reported a decrease in happiness one year after retiring. Although most people adapt to retirement and report being happy, up to one-third encounter difficulty. Women, in particular, because their career paths are generally interrupted because of child care issues, are less likely than men to plan for retirement, increasing their vulnerability to distress when they retire.



Fig. 1.5. SWOT analysis

Before you retire do a personal strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. Consider your experience, skills, unique training, special talent and abilities. Some of your skills that you built up over the years may be readily transferable, while others may be obsolete. The SWOT analysis will help you identify the activities to replace the routine that you had over many years before you retired – something that provides you with meaning, purpose, challenge, and sense of involvement and that will occupy a fair amount of your time. This could involve turning a hobby into an occupation, getting a part-time job, designing a reading programme, returning to education, or volunteering with some worthwhile organisation such as a charity. Ideally, a combination of these will bring you the best satisfaction. Research shows that women are more likely than men to become involved in volunteer, community and family work after retirement.

You need to put routine, structure and purpose back into your life. Adopt a positive psychological attitude by looking at retirement as a positive, productive, challenging and rewarding stage of your life, rather than something to dread. View retirement as an opportunity and a challenge to do the things you really wanted to do all your life, like foreign travel, reading, developing hidden talents, and socialising, but couldn't because of your occupational and family responsibilities. Whatever your motivation, the prospect of a paid part-time job, may improve your financial position during retirement, as well as occupying your time.

Surveys show that people who work part-time are more satisfied with their lives and marriages than people who retire permanently. Choose work that provides both income and meaningful engagement in a way that optimises work life balance, job satisfaction, and happiness. You will need money for a good lifestyle, to undertake special programmes of training and development, to access quality health care services, and for holiday and leisure activities. In the real world many companies are not prepared to employ experienced older people because they command high salaries, and are perceived as being more liable to become sick. So, you may have to become self-employed to achieve your goals.

Retired people can live very successful and fulfilling lives. The key seems to be to have something to do. Studies show that older people who stop working tend to die sooner than their peers who decide to continue to work on. Consider George Mitchell who in his late sixties helped to sort out the Northern Ireland problem, and at 74 was appointed as a Peace Envoy to the Middle East by the then new president of the USA, Barack Obama. Dali Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet, is in his eighties, and is world famous for his equanimity and message of peace. Rupert Murdoch is also in his eighties and is one of world's most successful newspaper moguls. Ian Paisley, who died in 2014, became first minister of Northern Ireland at 81 after a lifetime in politics

"Have a variety of interests ... These interests relax the mind and lessen tension on the nervous system. People with many interests live, not only longest, but happiest."

– George Matthew Allen

1.6 ADAPTATION

Happiness surveys show that poor countries are not as happy as more developed nations. Similarly, totalitarian, communist and repressed regimes are not as happy as democracies. Obviously, war-torn violent countries are not happy places to live in. It seems people value their personal freedom and control over their own lives. Wealthy people are only marginally happier than those who have sufficient for their needs. Money may not bring happiness

but it certainly helps. Obviously, we need sufficient money to live and lead a comfortable lifestyle and buy the things we desire. However, beyond a certain set-point more money does not guarantee further happiness.

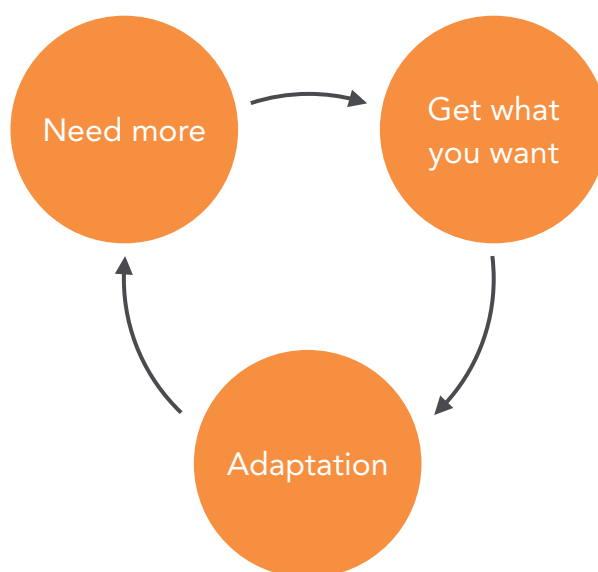


Fig. 1.6. Hedonic Treadmill

Psychologists have named this phenomenon the '*Hedonic Treadmill*'. The pursuit of happiness is like a person on a treadmill who has to keep working hard just to stay in the same place. The things we expect to bring lasting happiness rarely do. We just get used to the new comforts and take them for granted. We pursue greater happiness by setting new goals, and pursuing new interests and relationships. This process is known as adaptation or habituation. Over their evolutionary history human beings have been amazingly good at adapting to their environments. Losing 10 lbs in weight, getting promoted or winning a major prize will give a temporary peak in happiness and then we settle back into being just as happy as we've always been. Getting the latest car model or personal computer with all the extra technological gimmicks will keep you happy for a while until a more technological advanced model comes on the market and makes you feel relatively deprived. The happiness effects of a new Rolex watch will only last a few hours.

Yesterday's luxuries become today's necessities and tomorrow's relics. It seems more is never enough and thus increasing living standards haven't made us necessarily happier. We just live up to a higher standard of living so that we are relatively no better off. People think that a bigger house or car will make them happier. However, they've probably funded these

purchases with a bigger mortgage and borrowings. This in fact may put them under financial strain, get them into debt and make them less happy in the long-term. On the other hand, an argument with one’s spouse or failing an exam makes us unhappy but seldom for more than a few days.

Although adaptation to conditions occurs, the latest research revises the idea of the *‘Hedonic Treadmill’* in significant ways. Set points may vary significantly between individuals in the rate and extent of adaption. It now appears that certain life events can change a person’s set point and this occurs for many individuals over a 15-year period. Take the example of Imelda Marcos, the wife of the President of the Philippines, who gained notoriety for her extensive collection of shoes, gowns and jewellery – more than anybody could possibly need while the people of her country lived in extreme material poverty. Her set point for grandiosity was obviously not the same as the average person. This is a case of the adaptation level running wild. If we do not foresee how we get used to our material possessions, we will over invest in acquiring them at the expense of our leisure experiences. There is a lot of evidence that people underestimate the process of habituation.

“A house may be large or small, and as long as the surrounding houses are equally small, it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But, if a palace rises beside the little house, the little house shrinks into a hut.”

– Karl Marx

Instant gratification



Fig. 1.7. Instant gratification.

Marketing people know that the average person is inherently greedy. Our wants are much greater than our needs and are often compulsive and out of control. Our needs are simple. We need food, drink, shelter and companionship. Our wants for second homes, better cars, yachts, designer shoes, breast implants, patio furniture, mobile phones with all sorts of gimmicks and modern high definition televisions are insatiable and are exploited by consumerism, marketing and materialism. Marketing promotes the act of shopping as a way of finding happiness. We have become a throw-away society getting rid of clothes, that have been barely worn, and other goods after a short time, and replacing them with more fashionable items. In fact, our pursuit of more and more has made us unhappy, unhealthy, exhausted and often in debt. Marketing also exploits our need for status in providing branded goods priced at premium prices to meet this need. We have become a culture of instant gratification. Delayed gratification should be fostered from an early age by encouraging people to save and do without.

According to a survey in 2007 by Scottish Widows, having fun now is the biggest priority for most people in the UK. It takes priority ahead of saving for a child's future, getting on the property ladder, looking good, and studying for an extra qualification. The survey also found that instant gratification gives the most pleasure such as holidays, spending money and shopping rather than spending on capital goods. The greatest fear people had included the fear of getting sick, not having enough money to provide for old age, being lonely and being incapacitated and unable to work. Nevertheless, people are not saving regularly for their future despite having these fears.

"Affluenza" is the term that has been coined to describe this phenomenon. This condition is characterised by anxiety, overload, debt, distress, greed and profligacy. People buy things they don't really need and often get into debt to do so as evidenced by the use of self-storage companies in the developed world. People should avoid debt, as living beyond your means causes endless worry, stress and unhappiness. The tendency to ruminate and worry is linked to a high risk of heart disease. Living high on credit cards gets you used to a standard of living you can ill afford and will eventually get you into financial distress. Using one credit card to pay off another is a recipe for financial insolvency. Ideally, marketers should sell us relevant products that help us solve problems and live happier and more productive lives. Instead they convince us through advertising to buy things that we don't really need and don't help us live more successful lives. *"Affluenza"* is probably one of the major reasons behind the great recession of 2008.

"If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune; if you want happiness for a lifetime; help someone else."

– Chinese proverb

Getting things in perspective

We all assume that more income, comfort, possessions and goods will make us happier. We don't realise that adaptation will come into play and raise our expectations to a higher level so that we are never satisfied. Getting wealthier and acquiring more possessions will not make us happier as we continually try to keep up with our peers. Consequently, most people spend a disproportionate amount of their lives working to make money, and sacrifice family life, friendships, holidays, health and the attainment of personal goals; not realising that these have a more lasting effect on happiness.

Life is uncertain and you can't anticipate the problems and adverse circumstances that life will throw at you. If you think you have no control over what may happen you can control the way you respond and the way you perceive situations. New circumstances will present new challenges. Adversity may alter your life radically and affect relationships, but it may also present opportunities. Adaptation means that we have an in-built mechanism to get used to even the most difficult situations and rise to meet the most adverse and dire circumstances and challenges. It means that many people who lose their businesses and homes through bankruptcy are able to bounce back and start all over again.

Learning that you are HIV-positive is devastating but after five weeks of getting used to the news one is not as emotionally distraught as expected. However, there are always exceptions to rules. Adverse health changes have a lasting and negative effect on happiness, and some people affected never adapt totally to their worsening health condition. Other people who become disabled through accidents are able to adapt to their situations and come back to lead reasonably happy lives. However, they are unlikely to be as happy as they previously were. Initially one may be very angry and resentful in response to a traumatic event, but attempting to apportion blame or seek justice is often futile. Better to get rid of the anger and get on with your life. Obviously, the degree of adaptation will depend on the seriousness of the disability, the resources available to cope and the personality of the person affected. Some people emerging from adversity such as losing a job, a divorce or a serious illness are not just changed but stronger and more determined than before. However, unexpectedly losing a job may knock you back a few degrees permanently so that you never recover fully to your previous level of happiness. People tend to overestimate the long-term emotional impact of very bad news and underestimate our capacity to adapt.

On the other hand, people who win the lotto become used to their new-found wealth and eventually resort to their previous level of happiness before they won the lotto. This contradicts what economists believe. They assume that if income increases substantially, then happiness will also increase significantly. Nevertheless, recent studies suggest that with a few exceptions they are generally happier than previously. Even without winning the lotto we tend to take material possessions we own like a home or a car for granted until they are

taken away. Similarly, the feelings of elation on being promoted will only be a temporary phenomenon and will wear off with the passage of time. More important is family and friendships and having a satisfying job.

The process of adaptation when one loses a long-term spouse may take from five to eight years and some people may never return to their previous levels of happiness. Statistics show that people have a higher chance of dying after the death of a partner. A 1969 study found that one in twenty men died within six months of their wives' death. Losing a child can also dramatically affect our level of happiness. People don't expect to bury their children as it is not in the natural order of things. Furthermore, it is unlikely that you would ever adjust fully to miseries like caring for a close relative such as a parent with Alzheimer's or dementia.

"The mind of every man, in a longer or shorter time, returns to its natural and usual state of tranquillity. In prosperity, after a certain time, it falls back to that state; in adversity, after a certain time, it rises up to it."

– Adam Smith

Influencing your happiness

However, humans are very resilient and adaptable and even in such circumstances can return to reasonably happy lives. This is helped if we have a high genetic disposition to be happy. We can be up to 50 per cent predisposed to happiness because of the genes we inherit. We can influence up to 40 per cent of our happiness by taking control of our daily thoughts and actions. The remaining 10 per cent is related to our life circumstances, such as where we live, our income, our experiences, marital status and our appearance. This means that you can do a lot yourself to influence your level of happiness. People with a happy disposition seem to habitually view events differently from unhappy people. They avoid comparing themselves with others that would disadvantage them, and dwell on their successes rather than ruminating on their failures. They are persistently optimistic, and they use more effective coping strategies than their less happy peers.

Happiness is like our cholesterol level – partially genetically determined but also influenced by the things we do such as diet, lifestyle and exercise. This is why some people are naturally positive while others are naturally dour. In other words, some people are naturally programmed to be happier than others. Though genes play a part in our disposition there is much scope to influence our level of happiness by practising the art of happiness, getting involved in activities that make us happy and adopting a positive outlook. Remember what you focus your attention on grows. So, it pays to focus on the positive, and on the things,

that you enjoy doing. Adopt a sunnier disposition by changing your attitude. Nature can be influenced by nurture or the actions you take yourself to develop in the direction you want to go. Our thoughts influence our actions and our actions influence our thoughts. We can think ourselves into a new way of acting and act ourselves into a new way of thinking. Psychologists maintain that simply choosing to be and acting happy can be habit forming and life changing.

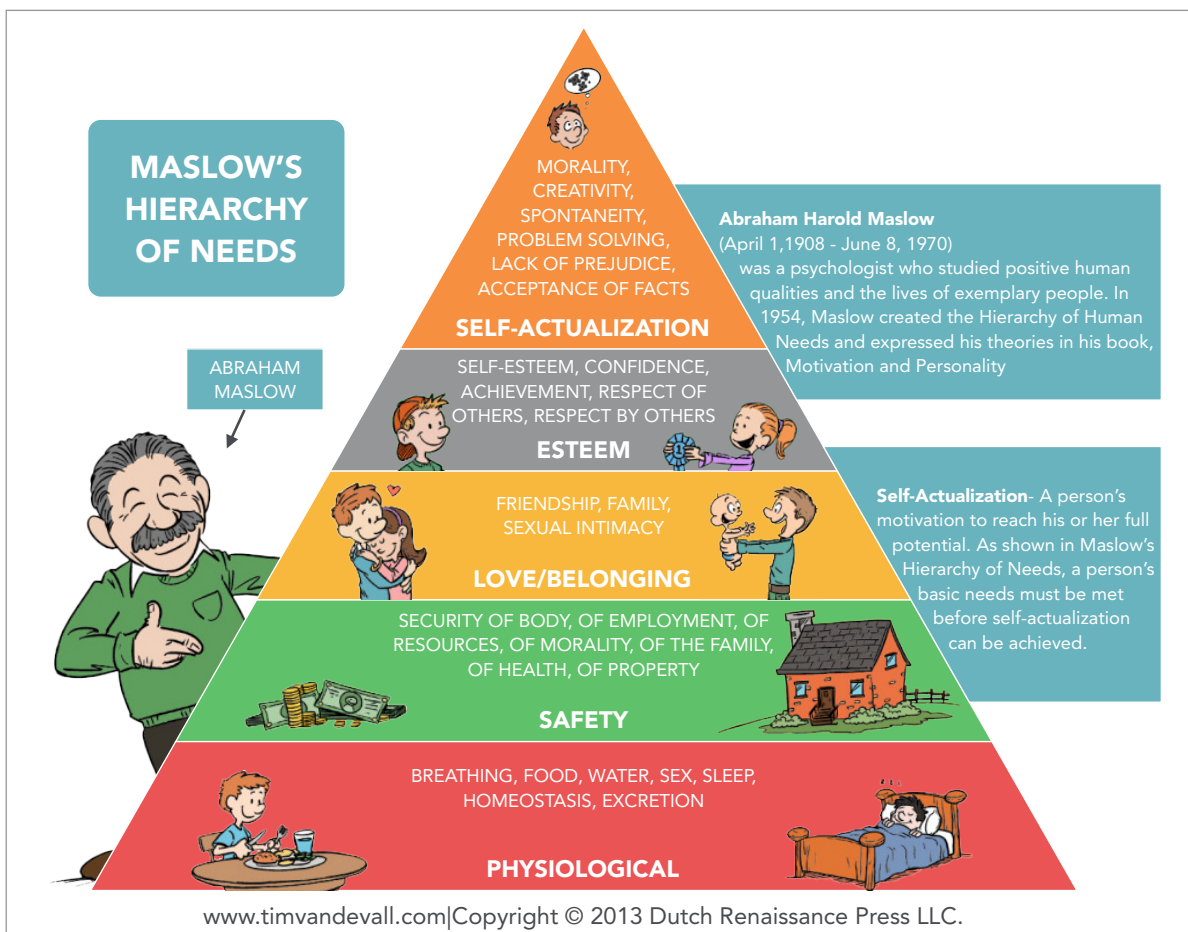


Fig. 1.8. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Happiness in the form of self-actualisation is the highest of the hierarchy of goals according to the famous psychologist, Maslow. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a well-known motivation model for managers. At the basic levels we need food, water, shelter and sufficient money for a comfortable lifestyle. At the next level we need to feel secure from external danger and need peace of mind in the form of a permanent secure job and a pension when we retire. We also need to feel connected with others and thus relationships are important. The average person craves praise and desires respect and status. Ultimately, we want to become truly happy by being self-actualised and achieving our purpose in life and becoming what we are capable of becoming, although Maslow felt very few people achieved this state.

Carl Rogers, one of the founders of the humanistic approach to psychology, expressed this as living in a way which truly expresses your individuality. We need to use our full capacities by being engaged and challenged by meaningful activities. Without a true purpose making money becomes meaningless. Thus, rich pop stars and business people sometimes get disillusioned with their materialistic lives and become altruistic by giving away millions to charitable causes. They begin to realise there is more to life than just making money. Achieving celebrity, fame and wealth doesn't bring happiness. There is greater satisfaction and happiness to be gained by being generous and helping others.

Seligman, one of the modern positive psychologists, suggests that authentic happiness is facilitated by developing and practicing character virtues such as kindness, gratitude, optimism, curiosity, playfulness, humour, open-mindedness, and hope. Happiness is thought to be increased by:

1. Pursuing intrinsic goals and values for their own sake, including personal growth, relationships, community, and health, rather than extrinsic ones such as wealth, fame, image, and power.
2. Behaving in autonomous, intentional or consensual ways, rather than controlled ways.
3. Being mindful and acting with a sense of awareness.
4. Behaving in ways that satisfy basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy.



Fig. 1.9. Happiness is increased by

Herzberg in 1959 famously asked employees to describe a time they felt especially bad or good about their job. They found that incidents causing good feelings were different from those associated with bad feelings. Good feelings were most often experienced in connection with events involving achievement, recognition, interesting and challenging work, responsibility, and advancement/growth. He concluded in his motivator-hygiene theory that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction were independent unipolar theories that had different causes. More recent studies of events that cause positive emotions at work confirm that those involving goal achievement, recognition, challenging and interesting work, and friendly interactions with others are associated with concurrent pleasant emotions. Events perceived as hassles causing negative feelings tend to be different from the mere absence of events perceived as uplifts.

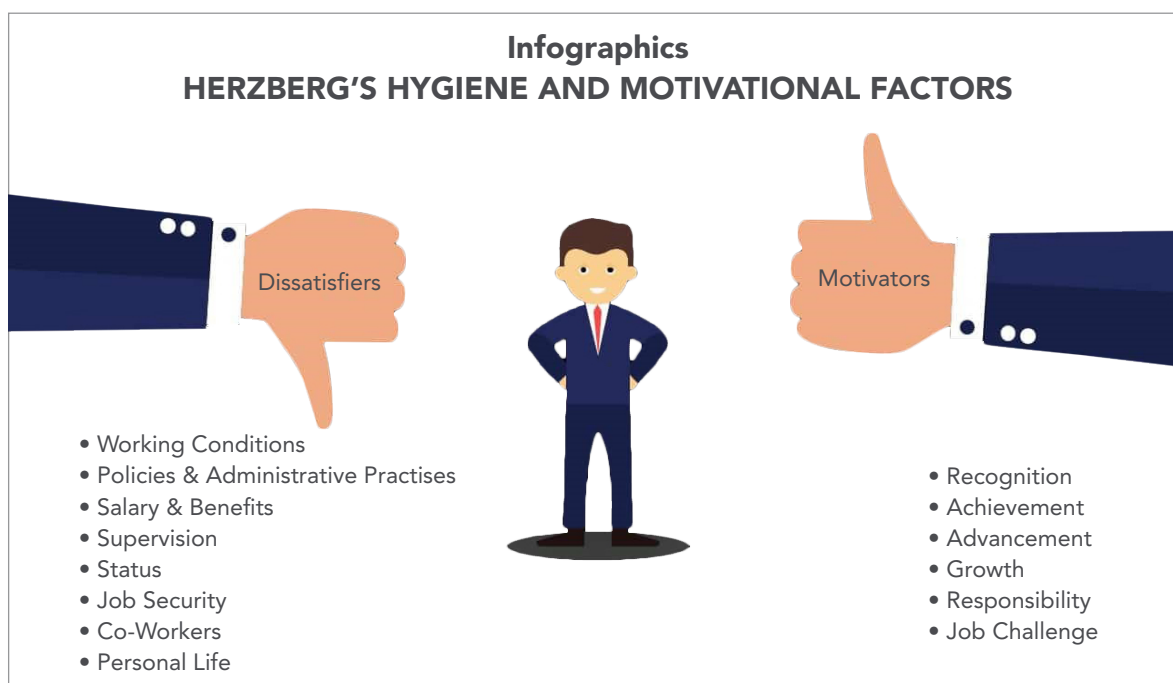


Fig. 1.10. Herzberg's Two Factor theory

"In order to achieve the good life people must work in good organisations."

– Gavin & Mason

The happy life

Like Maslow, the Greek philosopher Epicurus, taught that all a person needs in order to be happy are the basic necessities of life: food, water, shelter and warmth – plus friendship, freedom and thought. He advocated a simple life, arguing that although each of us has the

capacity to be happy; many people make themselves unhappy by poisoning their lives with needless desires, anxieties and fear. Another, Greek philosopher, Aristotle, pointed out that people pursue money, power, material possessions, beauty or fame because they believe these will bring happiness. However, he identified happiness not with the pursuit of wealth but with virtuous activity and in a life of intellectual contemplation. He identified four cardinal virtues for happiness: courage, temperance, practical wisdom and justice. He concluded that happiness was the ultimate goal in life.

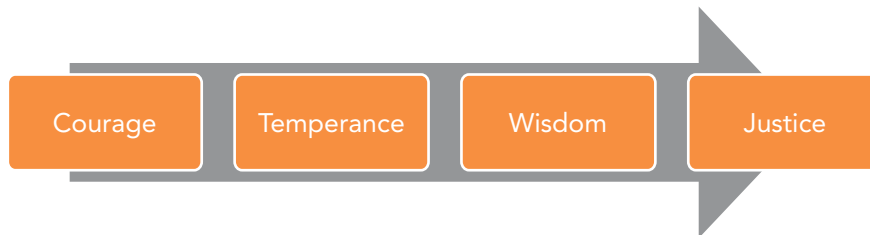


Fig. 1.11. Aristotle's four cardinal virtues for happiness

The British utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham identified happiness with pleasure and subjective satisfaction. He believed people had the right to pursue their own happiness as they saw fit and that society should strive for the greatest happiness for the greatest number. This idea has underpinned efforts by governments to raise gross national product (GNP) and individual wealth in order to make their citizens happier. Increased wealth seemed to be a good way to increase happiness. However, GNP is not an all-encompassing measure of happiness. Its primary purpose is to measure economic activity. It doesn't measure other things that contribute to our happiness. In fact, developing reliable measures of happiness is still a work in progress. Bentham's godson, John Stuart Mill, claimed intellectual pleasures were superior to physical ones and believed that the achievement of happiness was the purpose of life. However, he also believed that those who achieve happiness have their minds fixed on some other object such as the well-being of others or some art or pursuit.

"The great and glorious masterpiece of man is to live with purpose."

– Michel de Montaigne

1.7 FIVE ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE HAPPINESS

1. Reflect on the things in life to be grateful for. Identify the things that you feel will make you happy such as more time for yourself, more time with your family, more foreign holidays, more fun, and so on. Think about the happiest day in your life and recall this event over and over again.

2. Today and every day drink and eat moderately. Moderation in all things and self-discipline is the key to happiness.
3. Bad things happen to good people. Be prepared to take the rough with the smooth. Mentally prepare yourself for the ups and downs in life. Have contingency plans for the inevitable things that will go wrong in your life so that you are not caught off-guard.
4. Invest in interventions to increase happiness in the workplace. This will have a positive effect on job satisfaction, commitment and organisational citizenship of managers. Meaningful and engaging work should be promoted through workshops.
5. If you are five years from retirement age start the process of pre-retirement planning now. If you want to continue working after retirement think about the skills you will need and take up courses now to fill those needs.

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2 THINKING HAPPY

- How can we programme our brain to be happy?
- What do you need to do to avoid being miserable?
- How does personality affect happiness at work?
- How can you think yourself happy?

2.1 THE BRAIN AND HAPPINESS

The brain is flexible and loves to learn. Change your brain by changing your ideas and experiences. The brains of London taxi drivers are thicker in the regions that specialise in visual-spatial memories. The brains of pianists are thicker in the region that specialise in fine motor movements. Negative or positive attitudes begin in infancy where the connections in our brain are laid down and evolve in response to experience. This means that experience strengthens existing neurons and creates new ones. An experiment showed that the neurons in the hippocampus of rats in an enriched environment grew by 15 per cent. These findings highlight the fact that you can change your brain by undertaking new and challenging activities at work and elsewhere and life-long learning.

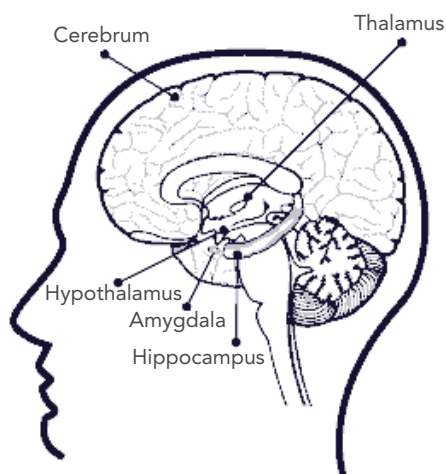


Fig. 2.1. Hippocampus

Severe traumatic experiences can damage your brain. Research indicates that 25 per cent of those who experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) suffer long-term effects. In addition, physical changes occur in the brain as a result of PTSD. The hippocampus,

which is a structure that lies deep in the brain, is responsible for storing new memories and is smaller in PTSD victims. Repeated episodes of depression create marked physical changes in the brain that make a person even more vulnerable to depression in the future. In extreme cases of trauma or depression, the hippocampus can shrink by 10-20 per cent, impairing the brain's ability to remember positive experiences. Enduring changes in the physical structure of the brain can be caused by negative and positive experiences. They can affect your physical and mental health in the short-term and long-term.

Our brain has been primed by evolution to naturally emphasise negative experiences. We remember failures and negative events more vividly than successes. We dwell on what went badly rather than what went well. The feelings associated with a negative job event such as a demotion, a reprimand or a cut in pay, linger on and tend to play on our minds and drag us down emotionally. Negative experiences were the greatest threat to our survival in the past so our ancestors passed on these genes to us. Sadness warns us to be cautious and save energy, while disgust urges us to avoid contaminated food. Anger helps us to defend ourselves from threats. In contrast, positive experiences are usually received through standard memory systems and thus need to be held in conscious awareness 10 to 20 seconds for them to be registered in long-term memory. The elation associated with a pay increase or a promotion is often short-lived. It seems that when life goes smoothly, we take things for granted unless we consciously want to remember a particularly important event.

"We've learned over the past few decades that there are strategies you can use that can actually change the brain, change behaviour and then mood and understanding follow."

– Alan Kazdin, professor of psychology at Yale University

Focus on the positive

You can counteract this natural tendency to emphasise negative experiences by consciously focusing on the positive. Pay attention to the good things in the world and the positive things that happen to you. Set yourself the daily goal of taking notice of the beauty of nature in the world and the kindness that is extended to you each day. Do this by making positive memories as vivid as possible and bringing them to mind frequently over an extended period of time. Savouring the positive has many psychological benefits such as increased resilience, improved mood, and optimism. These will act as a bulwark against depression and counteract trauma in your life.

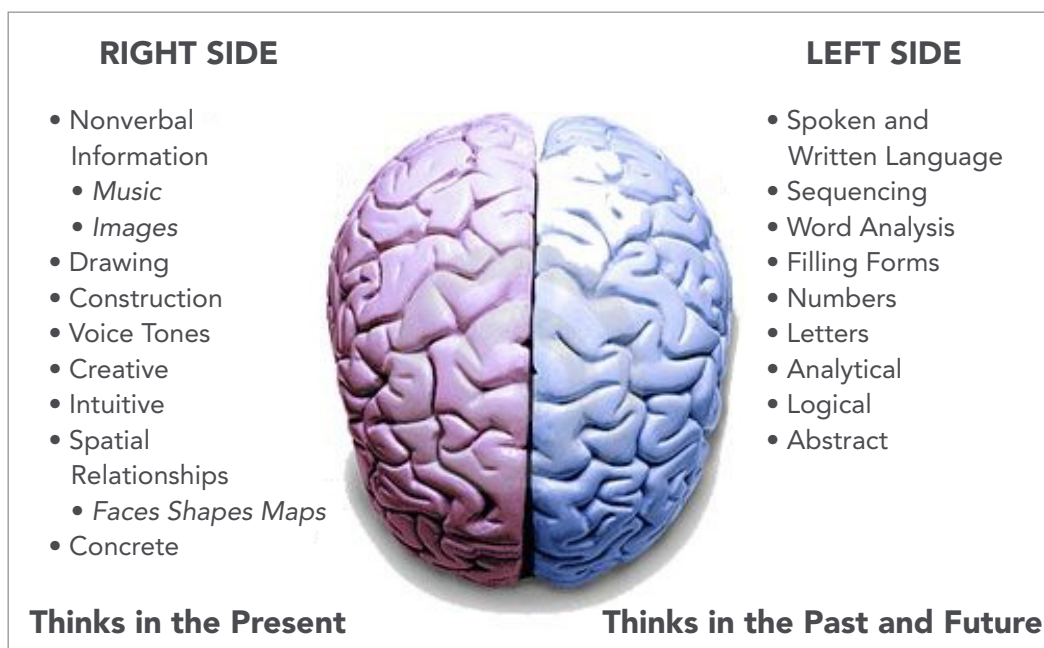


Fig. 2.2. Right side versus Left side of brain

People may have dominant right-hand brains or dominant left-hand brains. Those with right hand dominated brains are inclined to be negative thinkers and prone to pessimism, anxiety and depression. They smile less and are generally unhappy. On the other hand, those with left hand dominated brains are inclined to be optimistic, altruistic and enthusiastic. They smile more and are generally happier. Pay extra attention to the good things that are happening in your life right now – things that you mostly take for granted. Notice the things that are going well, the people who are kind to you, and the successes in your life. Intentionally create positive experiences such as generosity, compassion and recalling happy events.

Recent discoveries in neuroscience show that the ageing brain is more flexible and adaptable than previously thought. It seems that the brain's left and right hemispheres become better integrated during middle age, giving us greater creativity. Age also seems to dampen some negative emotions. In brain-imaging studies older adults show less evidence of fear, anger and hatred than younger adults. Psychological studies confirm that impression, indicating that older adults are less impulsive and less likely to dwell on their negative feeling. Common sense tells us that older brains have learned more than younger ones. The brain of a 50-year-old looks like a dense forest of interlocking branches, reflecting deeper knowledge, more extensive experience, and better judgement. That's why age is such an advantage in eminent fields like law, medicine, architecture, science and senior management.

"Happiness consists in activity. It is a running stream, not a stagnant pool."

– John Mason Good.

The weather can affect your mood

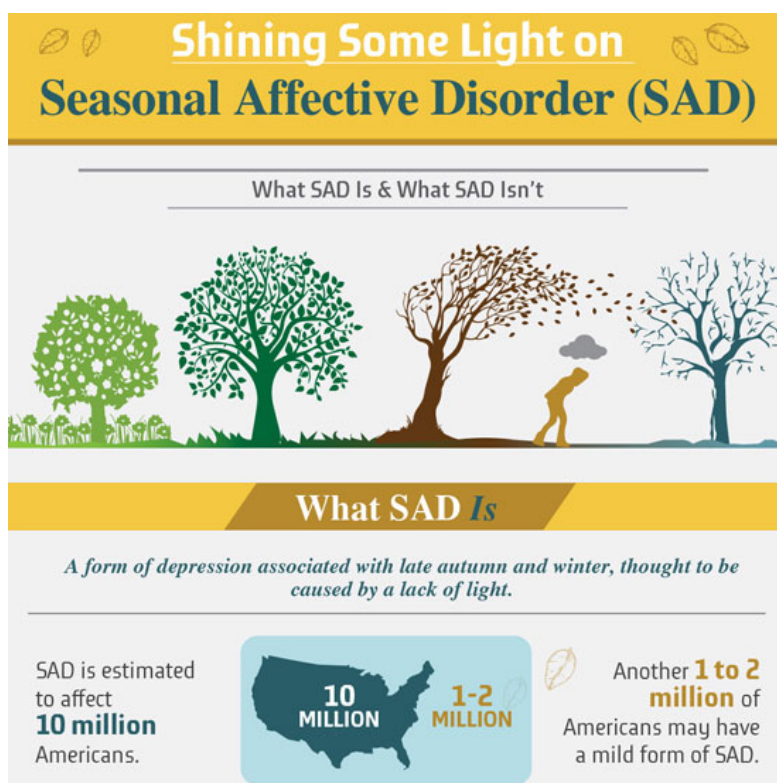


Fig. 2.3. SAD

Apparently, a lack of sunshine can affect our brain. Seasonal affective disorder (*SAD*) is a condition in which our moods change with the seasons. Sufferers tend to feel depressed in winter and feel better in spring. More people commit suicide in December, when the days are shortest and the nights are longest, than in any other month of the year. Bright sunny days cheer people up, while dark cloudy days make people gloomy. Lack of sufficient sunlight creates an imbalance of certain chemicals in the brain. Exposure to bright light for two to four hours a day can relieve depression and anxiety in some people. So, do yourself a favour and get out in the daylight for a few hours each day. The exercise and fresh air will also stimulate your brain, improve your concentration, and help you sleep better at night. Phototherapy involving the exposure to strong artificial light tubes that mimic daylight is also said to be effective. SAD affects more women than men and is less common among children, adolescents and the elderly. It is most common in those aged between 20 and 30 years.

Even the weather can affect our level of happiness. Light rain seems to have little effect but extreme weather conditions is detrimental. So, don't think you're unusual if you feel down in the dumps when it's stormy and pouring rain outside. The novelty of snow brings happiness to children, while posing problems for adults commuting to work in private or public transport. Despite what you think moving from a wet climate like Ireland or England to a sunny climate like Spain or Italy will only keep you happy for a short time, as you will eventually adapt to it and take it for granted. However, living in a polluted area has an adverse effect on our health as well as our level of happiness.

2.2 HAPPY VERSUS UNHAPPY PEOPLE

In surveys the majority of people say they are happy, while a minority claim they are very happy. Happiness tends to remain stable over a lifetime. Happy children usually become happy adults. Happy people are grateful for what they have such as fond memories and loving relationships, and do not constantly make unfavourable comparisons with others. A person's level of happiness is determined by comparisons we make with standards. These may be based on social comparisons or on personal expectations. If people exceed these standards, they will be happy; but if they fall short, they will be unhappy.

Young girls in particular are often unhappy with their weight and appearance, and want to be as thin as some of their role models like Posh Spice or Britney Spears. Happy people tend to have an exaggerated view of their talents and skills in relation to what other people think. They also tend to be happy with their looks and weight. People who are satisfied with their financial position are more likely to be happy, as financial worries are a great source of unhappiness.

Happy people think positive thoughts, replay happy memories in their minds and exude happiness to those around them. You can't have positive and negative thoughts at the same time so obviously it's better to think positively. Compared with the depressed, happy people are less self-focused, less hostile, and less prone to disease. Happy people are aware that they can create happy experiences in their lives and prevent many negative experiences from happening. One way of doing this is to avoid excessive drinking. Those who drink in moderation are happier than those who drink to excess. Another way of preventing unhappiness is to avoid the contagion of negative people. These people are emotional vampires who will suck you dry of positivity and fill you with negativity. Obviously, things happen over which you have no control. There are no guarantees in life. Life is unpredictable. Disappointments are a part of life; you've got to go with the flow and take them in your stride. In the meantime, enjoy life as worry serves no purpose. Worry is like blood pressure: you need a certain amount to live, but too much can kill you.

Most people like to be admired and valued, so happy people focus on the good points in people rather than the worst. They thus attract and retain friendships. They relate well to others and talk to people they care about. They tend to have strong ties and commitments to others. They are optimistic about their futures and begin each morning enthusiastic about the possibilities of the day ahead. They are in control of their lives, and are not afraid to move out of their comfort zones to experiment and do challenging things. They believe that the success they achieve is due to their own efforts, and that failure is caused by others and won't last. They are open to a variety of experiences and are lifelong learners.

“It isn’t what you have, or who you are, or where you are, or what you are doing that makes you happy or unhappy. It is what you think about.”

– Dale Carnegie

2.3 PERSONALITY AND HAPPINESS

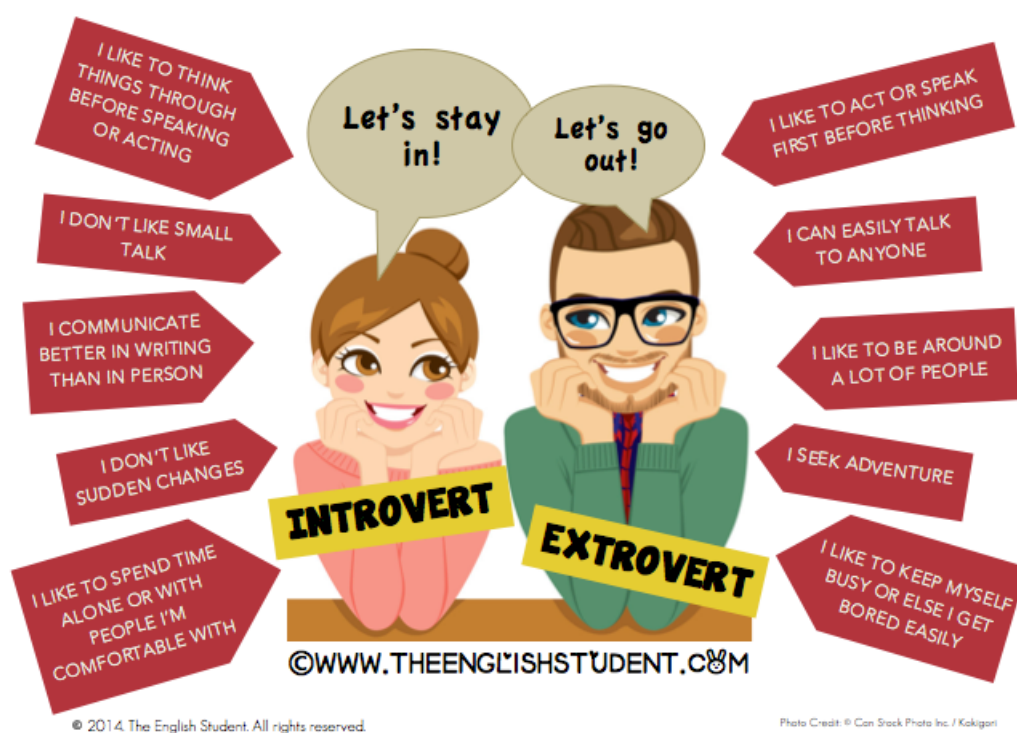


Fig. 2.4. Introverts versus Extroverts

Personality type may be a predictor of the level of happiness that you will achieve. Happy people are more likely to be extroverts rather than introverts. Studies show that extroverts are happier, even when on their own, and are happier than introverts whether they live alone, or with others, or work in social or non-social jobs. Extroverts are more outwardly focused and involved with people and usually have a wider circle of friends. They are more likely to be assertive, self-confident and possess superior social skills, engaging in rewarding social activities. They experience more affection and enjoy more social support. People enjoy being around extroverts because they are more positive, fun and pleasant to be with, accepting of others and themselves and more outgoing, talkative and confident.

Introverts are more likely to be shy and passive and thus unhappy. Introverts tend to be more internally focused – paying more attention to internal thoughts. They are often socially awkward and unskilled, and avoid social events that others enjoy. Introverts are not consigned to being unhappy but need to develop a more outgoing personality in order to make new friends and relate successfully to other people. Nevertheless, some introverts are happy because they have learned to enjoy their own company.

Happy people are likely to exercise, eat well, take vitamins and look after their wellbeing. Because of this their immune systems are fortified and enhanced and they consequently enjoy better health and recover quicker from operations. The real impact of unhappiness is shown by the finding that persistent unhappiness may shorten your life by up to 10 years. This is in comparison with smoking which knocks 5 years off a man's life and about 7 years off a women's life. Happy people live on average, seven and a half years longer. In terms of living longer and healthier, happiness is more important to your well-being than being the right weight, smoking and taking exercise.

Despite what you think having a gorgeous, beautiful, glamorous and desirable partner is only likely to make you marginally happier. More important is compatibility; someone you share common interests with and have absolute trust in and genuinely respect and love irrespective of their looks. Giving support to your family and friends is more conducive to happiness than receiving support.

An interesting finding is that people of average height and weight are generally happier than others. There is a well-known correlation between height and success. The majority of US presidents have been more than average height and the majority of chief executive officers and senior managers tend to be tall. It doesn't mean that if you're below average height you can't be successful in these spheres as this would defy logic and reality. Napoleon who was of small stature comes readily to mind. In fact, many people of below average height lead very successful lives and their lack of inches doesn't seem to bother or disadvantage them in any way.

Five Factor Personality Model

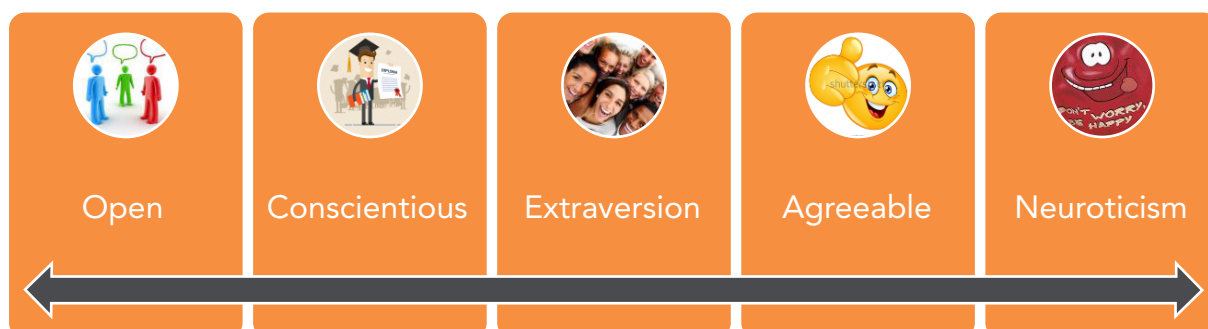


Fig. 2.5. Big Five Personality Model

“If you have anything really valuable to contribute to the world it will come through the expression of your personality, that single spark of divinity that sets you off and makes you different from every other living creature.”

– Bruce Barton

The big five personality model is one of the best-known personality assessment tools. It assesses the traits that make good employees. Various types of the assessment are available free and commercially on the internet. A person's score on the assessment is used to determine their suitability for a particular job. HR professionals in the construction industry indicate that over 90 per cent of large organisations, and over 70 per cent of small to medium organisations use some form of psychometric testing for selection.

Psychologists believe that the Big Five Personality Factors not only evolve over our life span but in some cases, can actually be changed if only we try hard enough. Carl Dweck is one of those psychologists who believe our brain is plastic and can change over our lifetimes. In any event self-belief is a powerful factor in whether we are capable of changing or not. Life changes such as education, experience, adulthood, marriage, parenthood, divorce, disability, networking, promotion and increased responsibility also bring with them personality changes mostly for the good. When we start work most of us become better at relationships, more conscientious, ambitious, organised, self-disciplined and goal directed – if we don't, we don't survive successfully in the workplace.

Studies indicate that for sales jobs extraversion and agreeableness are highly predictive of good performance. For blue-collar workers, conscientiousness and agreeableness show a positive relationship to job performance; extraversion and openness to experience are shown to be unrelated or, in some cases, negatively related to performance. Extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability are highly predictive of a leader's performance. People with the characteristics of extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness are more likely to advance in their careers than others. We all prefer those we can trust and rely on.

The Five Factor Personality Model can be recalled by the acronym **OCEAN** which stands for:

- *Openness to experience* (versus consistent/cautious). This is the degree to which a person is original, has broad interests, and is willing to take risks and be open to new experiences. They tend to be curious, imaginative, creative, original, insightful, artistic and broadminded. This person prefers variety over a strict routine. The more you experiment with positive outcomes the more confident you become. Psychologists have found that openness declines persistently over time for both men and women – it seems life teaches them to be more cautious, discreet and suspicious of others intentions. Our own experience of life suggests

that people do change over time. For example, shy people who are determined to develop their social skills can undertake public speaking courses to overcome their feelings of nervousness and anxiety, thus gaining the confidence and self-efficacy to speak in public and interact successfully with other people. People who were reckless and ran riot when they were teenagers often become staid and more sensible as they mature.

- *Conscientiousness* (versus easy-going/careless). A conscientious person is careful, controlling, scrupulous and persevering. They tend to be efficient, organised, successful, thorough, responsible and goal directed. They prefer planned rather than spontaneous behaviour. People identified as being conscientious tend to be competent, orderly, ambitious, trustworthy, self-disciplined and deliberate and thus make highly effective and efficient employees. We expect adults to be more conscientious and reliable than teenagers. We expect ambitious adults on a career path to be courteous, considerate, committed and conscientious. On the other hand, we are not surprised when teenagers are rude, thoughtless, overconfident, insensitive, insolent and forgetful.
- *Extraversion* (versus solitary/reserved). This is a person who experiences positive emotional states and feels good about themselves and the world around them. They tend to be outgoing, talkative, assertive, energetic, social, gregarious, active and lively. They enjoy interacting with others and tend to long for the company of others. These traits can be negative if over-done; employers must be aware of the level of extraversion and the position the person will occupy in the company. Psychologists have found that extraversion declines for women but not for men over the life span.
- *Agreeableness* (versus analytical/detached). This is a person who is good at getting along with others – friendly, helpful and agreeable. People with agreeableness tend to be generous, kind, affectionate, cooperative, considerate, forgiving, modest, tolerant, trustworthy, flexible, courteous, altruistic and sensitive, and slow to lose their temper when provoked. Because they are slow to anger, they get on well with other people, and so have good interpersonal relationship skills. They have an optimistic view of human nature. These traits tend to increase in our 30s. This trait can be a negative if a person is too afraid to disagree with others and may be ineffective at work afraid to challenge others even when they are right.
- *Neuroticism* (versus secure/confident). This person tends to experience negative emotional states and view the world around them in a negative way. They tend to be tense, touchy, insecure, moody, anxious, depressed, angry, worried, unstable and prone to stress. They are emotionally unstable and have little control over their impulses, often getting easily upset. They are more likely to interpret ordinary situations as threatening and minor frustrations as major catastrophes.

Consequently, they can have a negative effect on organisational culture and job satisfaction of others. Neuroticism has been linked to burnout. Psychologists believe that neuroticism declines with age but not so with men. In addition, they found that people who enjoy job satisfaction become more extroverted and less neurotic over time. Those with satisfying relationships become less neurotic but also less extroverted.

Conclusion about the Five Factor Personality Model

The big five personality model is one of the best-known personality assessment tools. It is easily understood and accessible on the internet. A person's score on the assessment is used to determine their suitability for a particular job. The model can be recalled easily by the memorable acronym **OCEAN**. This stands for openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. We can change our personalities throughout our life span, but not without hard work, persistence, dedication and determination. Although adult personality is more flexible than once thought, the change occurs in response to the changing roles and demands that come with our life span such as parenting, marriage and job requirements.

Studies indicate that for sales jobs extraversion and agreeableness are highly predictive of good performance. For blue-collar workers, conscientious and agreeableness show a positive relationship to job performance; extraversion and openness to experience are shown to be unrelated or, in some cases, negatively related to performance. However, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability are highly predictive of a leader's performance. People with the characteristics of extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness are more likely to advance in their careers than others.

Employers have used questionnaires for prospective employees for selection to determine the best person for the job and the organisation. A good match between employees and jobs will ensure that the right people are selected for the right jobs which in turn will ensure their suitability for their future roles and enhance their job satisfaction. Personality traits such as those highlighted by the **OCEAN** may be the best predictor of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction leads to happy workers which in turn is linked to higher productivity.

"Of all the means that wisdom provides to help one's entire life in happiness, the greatest by far is the possession of friendship."

– Epicurus

Distressed people are unhappy

You can't be happy until you know how it feels to be unhappy. Unhappy people are negative, miserable and tend to be moaners and groaners. They tend to be moody, nervous, easily stressed and sensitive. They have a greater chance of becoming agoraphobic and hypochondriac – two psychological conditions causing great distress and unhappiness. Agoraphobia is a fear of open spaces and can force people to stay indoors, avoid other people and live very sheltered antisocial lives. Hypochondriacs continually think they are unwell and visit doctors complaining of imaginary pains and illnesses. In fact, there is nothing wrong medically with most people who visit doctors. Most are attention seekers and only want a sympathetic ear to listen to their problems. Likewise, neurotics often persuade doctors to give them medicines they don't actually need. They feel insecure, anxious and bored all the time and continually complain. They fail to see the good in anything or anyone. Being prone to anger, sad and fearful moods reduces their tolerance to pain and increases their chances of becoming depressed.

The least happy people are those with a record of mental illness. So, anxiety and depression are one of the main components of unhappiness. Despite these many countries starve their mental health services of adequate funding. The good news is that being unhappy about certain things can propel some people on to achieve great things in order to rectify their situation and address issues which they feel need to change.

Depressed people have lower immune reactions. They tend to brood over seemingly trivial issues and generally focus on the gloomy side of life. Unhappy people are more likely to die from suicide, murder or accidents. They tend to smoke and drink excessively and thus are prone to cancer and alcoholism. They are more likely to become stressed and prematurely age. Unhappy hormones such as high levels of cortisol are a sign of stress. Stress is often a precursor of depression and cardiovascular problems, and is now a leading cause of death in developed countries. In addition, people recover more slowly from illness when under stress. So, it pays health wise to be happy.

"The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers."

– M. Scott Peck

2.4 HOW TO BE MISERABLE

There are certain things you can do to guarantee misery at work and elsewhere:



Fig. 2.6. How to be Miserable

- Brood continually on your weaknesses and problems and remind yourself of your inadequacies and shortcomings. The more you feed your mind with negativity the more depressed you become. Instead think about your unique abilities and strengths.
- Habitually tell lies and become totally untrustworthy in the eyes of others. Unreliable unethical people finish up with few friends but with many enemies. Work colleagues want to trust and have confidence in you that you will help them in their hour of need.
- Procrastinate and do nothing to solve problems and rectify situations. Consequently, your life will go from bad to worse. If you fail to address little issues, they have a habit of becoming major problems with the passage of time. Housekeeping and preventative maintenance is an important part of a well-run business and happy life. You ignore health warnings and only take the appropriate remedial action when it's too late.
- Humiliate people around you in front of others by continually finding fault with their actions. You offer casual insults during conversation and have nothing good to say about anybody. Showing contempt for others is the best way to make enemies rather than friends. Be quick to praise and slow to find fault and condemn.
- Live an unhealthy feckless lifestyle by taking no exercise, becoming obese, drinking too much and eating the wrong foods. Fail to live within your means by spending excessively and recklessly. You buy things that you want but don't really need and so waste money and clutter up your life and surroundings.

- Work in a meaningless job with a toxic boss and toxic co-workers. You spend a significant proportion of your life in the work environment so it's important that it is a fulfilling, challenging and happy one.

"Happiness is indeed the absence of misery."

– Arthur Schopenhauer

2.5 HOW TO THINK HAPPY

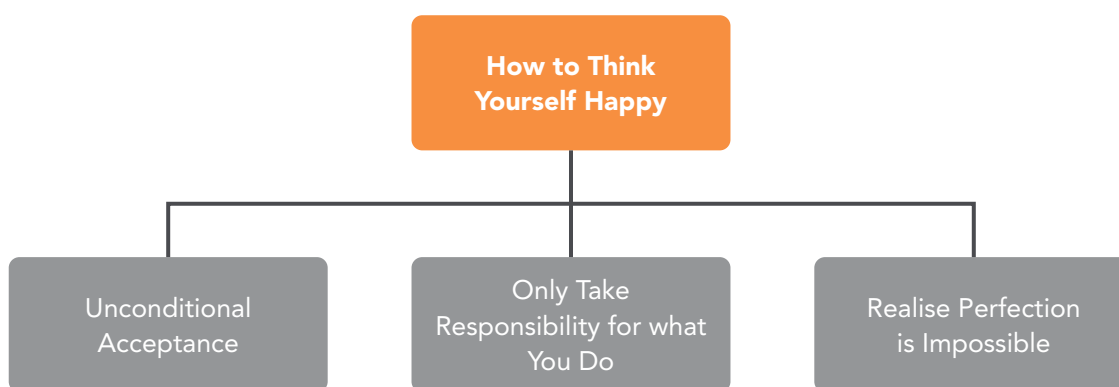


Fig. 2.7. How to Think Yourself Happy

Accept yourself unconditionally, warts and all. After all nobody is perfect! You are what you think about all day long. To become a happy person, think happy positive thoughts and get rid of negative thinking. People are prone to considerably exaggerate their problems. Nothing is as bad as you think and things are more likely to work out better than you anticipate. Predictions of disaster seldom come through. Nevertheless, adopt a realistic outlook. Very positive people sometimes ignore warning signals that everything is not right particularly where their health is concerned. While anticipating the best, prepare for the worst and have contingency plans ready to deal with the worst scenario. Preventive maintenance is particularly beneficial in health-related matters. This means you will never be taken by surprise.

Don't take responsibility for things that are not your responsibility. You may do your best for people but they are ultimately responsible for their own actions and lives. Perception is important. It's not how the world is that matters, but how you see the world and how resilient you are. Viktor Frankl in his book *'The Search for Meaning'* about his time spent in Nazi concentration camps showed that we each have the ability to choose our thoughts and control our minds. Nobody can influence your thoughts or make you feel bad unless you allow them to. Sometimes it's not what happened but how you think about it that matters. Focus on hope not tragedy. See the silver lining in every cloud. It's an ill wind that blows no good.

Perfection is impossible. It is the paradox of choice that the availability of too many options leaves us stressed, confused, mentally exhausted and inherently unsatisfied. Irrespective of what decision we make and how good the outcomes we still feel unfulfilled because of the unrealised possibilities. We cling to the notion that endless options make us happier, although they seldom do. In fact, limiting choice doesn't just reduce anxiety, it actually makes us happier. Happy people are satisfied with what is good enough and do not seek perfection.

Economists have a term for those who seek out the best options in life. They are called maximisers. Maximisers are a type of perfectionist and are far more miserable than people who are willing to make do, called satisficers. Satisficers are willing to settle for what is good enough. They spend less time fretting and agonising over decisions and thus are happier. Real life is shades of grey and not black and white. Enjoy what you have and don't envy others. Avoid stereotyping as it leads to prejudice and is never morally justified. When confronted with problems you always have a choice even if the choice is to do nothing.

"He who has health has hope, and he who has hope has everything."

– Arabian proverb

2.6 FIVE ACTIVITIES TO THINK HAPPY

1. Undertake new and challenging activities to change your brain in a positive way.
2. Pay particular attention to the positive things that happen to you each day – don't dwell on the negative!
3. To prevent SAD, get out in the daylight in the winter for a few hours each day. Walk midday while it is still bright. This will improve your mood for work and play.
4. Seek out happy positive people in the workplace who will cheer you up and avoid negative gloomy people who will dishearten you.
5. To become a happy person, think happy thoughts and engage in fun activities that will make you happy.

3 FLOW & HAPPINESS

- What is flow?
- Where does flow happen?
- What can you do to make flow happen?
- What is the role of memory in flow?
- How can I achieve flow at work?

3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF FLOW

Flow normally happens when you apply your skills to a challenging situation at work or elsewhere. The situation should be within your capabilities – not too difficult and not too easy. If the situation is too difficult it will create tension and frustration. If it is too easy it will create feelings of boredom and lack of challenge. When in flow, you can work to maximum intellectual capacity by reducing stress, counterproductive interruptions, and disillusionment. Flow requires focused concentration and complete immersion and involvement with the present moment. There is no sense of self, as you become completely absorbed and one with the action. This can be difficult to achieve in modern life with the ubiquitous use of email and social media that create a constant stream of chronic distraction.

Flow activities are enjoyable, creating a natural high. This encourages persistence and return to the flow activity. When the goal is achieved you can set more difficult tasks to create challenge and flow once more. During flow, time is distorted. It may seem to fly quickly or stand still and seem very long. These are the feelings of runners as they approach the last lap and see the winning post in sight. Athletes refer to flow as being in the zone, religious mystics describe the feeling as ecstasy, and artists and musicians get lost in the rhythm of the activity.

Flow is a four-step process:

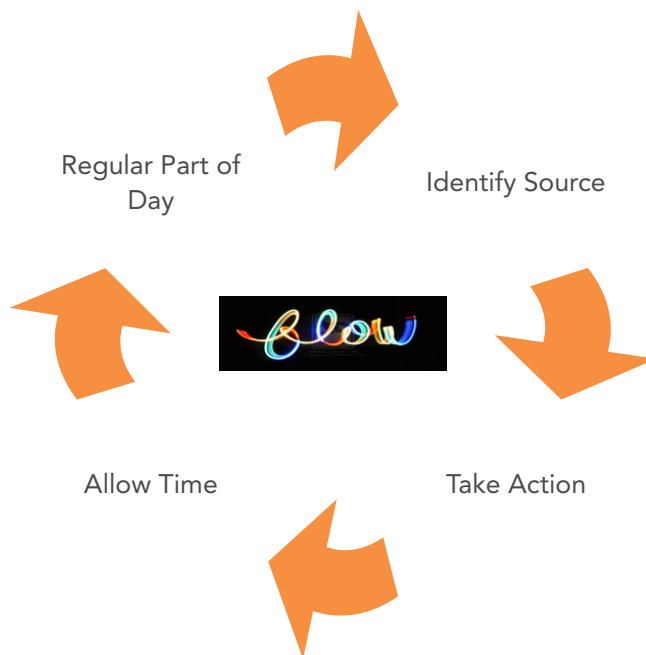


Fig. 3.1. The Four Steps of Flow

1. Identify sources of flow. Sources of flow can be found at work, in sport or recreation by applying a set of skills and getting absorbed in a challenging situation.
2. Take action. Flow is a process with a beginning, middle and an end. Measure the progress towards your goal. Break your goals into sub-goals. Enjoyment is in the process of getting there. Achieving your goal counts for less. Make sure you enjoy the journey and savour the excitement of achieving sub-goals on the way.
3. Allow yourself enough time. Flow is a timeless state and during the experience you will lose track of time. However, it does take time, effort, focus and concentration to get into a state of flow.
4. Make flow a regular part of your day. Consider the ways you can enrich your day and get into a flow experience. Even housewives can experience flow as they get immersed in mundane housekeeping tasks such as painting, cleaning; cooking and washing up and forget about the passage of time. It is not the task as much as the focused attention and interest that produces flow.

People who learn to control inner experiences will be able to determine the quality of their lives, which is as close as any of us can come to being happy."

– Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

3.2 WHERE DOES FLOW HAPPEN?

Flow activities are intrinsically motivational and can be everyday events like reading, writing, dancing, playing music, sailing, chess, playing sport or being deeply absorbed by a project at work. People often feel flow when they are on foreign holidays because of the novelty of the experience. They are activities that you find unusual, absorbing, interesting and creative. They create moments requiring your full attention. They provide an immediate sense of reward and feedback. They come from self-knowledge – knowing what makes you unique, what gives you a sense of purpose, and what makes you happy. Self-knowledge is about understanding your beliefs and values, and is the key to finding satisfaction in your career and in your relationships with family and friends. Flow activities do not always present themselves. Sometimes you have to seek them out. A meaningful conversation with a friend or listening to an absorbing lecture may become a flow experience.

3.3 THE ROLE OF MEMORY IN FLOW

The Greeks personified memory as Mnemosyne – the mother of the nine Muses. Mnemosyne represents the rote memorisation practised to preserve the stories of history and sagas of myth before the introduction of writing. This oral tradition ensured that knowledge was passed from generation to generation. Knowing your family tree and your ancestors will give you a sense of place and identity. The most prized mental gift is a well-stocked memory. With such a memory you are self-contained and autonomous. Be the historian of your own family, locality or traditions. Having knowledge of where you came from and past history is a great contributor to your quality of life. Photos are a record of past history and should be cherished. Create a photo album so that you can relive, relish and savour the past.

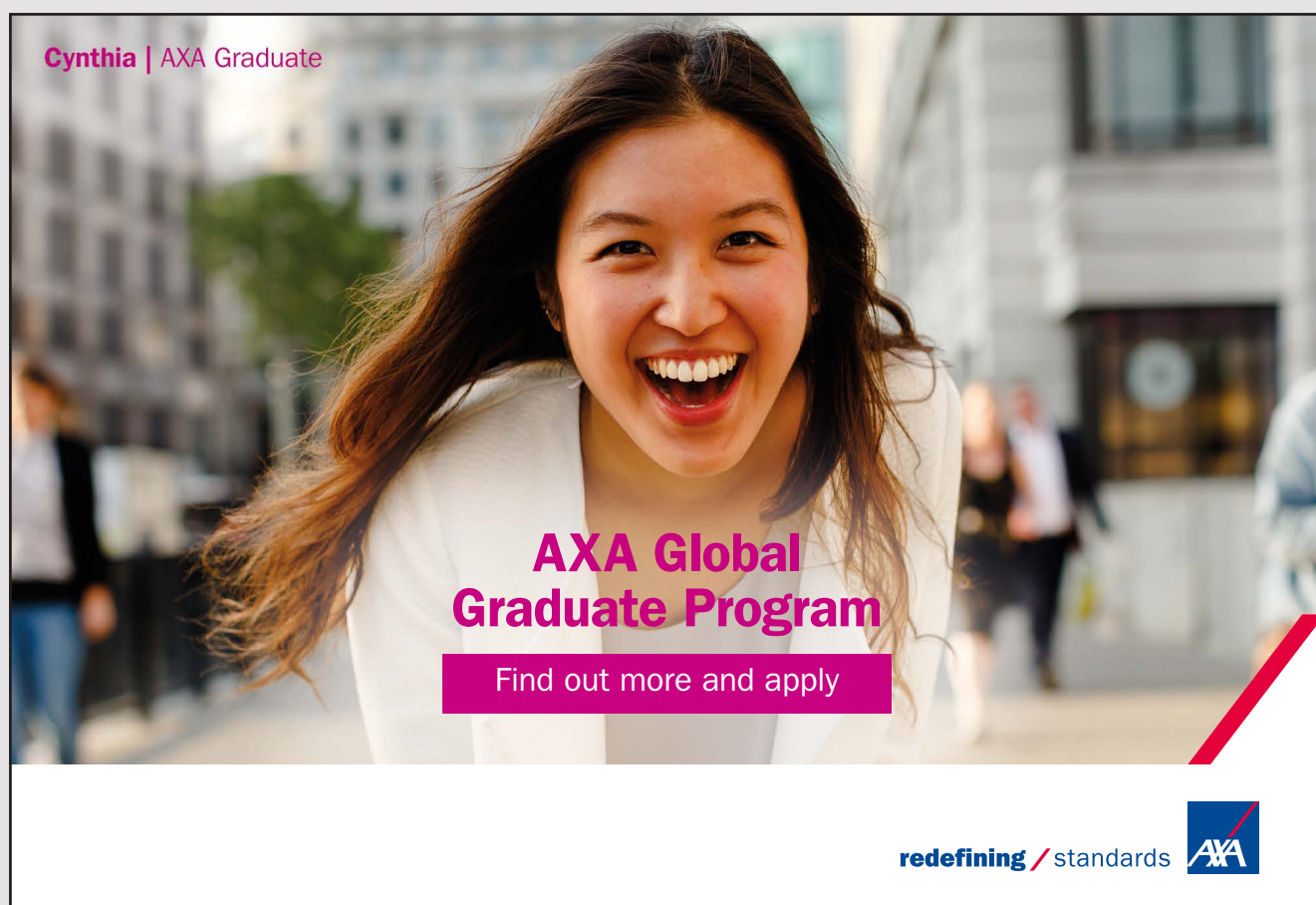
A well-stocked memory is a storehouse for mental flow possibilities and facilitates creativity and the solution of mental problems. Some of the best human experiences and inventions start as a thought in the mind. Reading is one of the most popular and accessible flow activities and is readily available to everybody and inexpensive. When absorbed in an interesting book you are likely to forget about the passage of time. Doing crossword puzzles is a mental challenge and also a great source of flow. Challenge yourself by trying to do something better than it has ever been done before. Routine work can be made challenging and interesting by trying to improve it. Strive to perfect your skill in the discipline that you find interesting, absorbing, challenging and rewarding. Be curious and passionate about what interests you. Explore, question and examine issues in depth. Passion for a subject doesn't just happen; it takes time and persistence to master any topic. Passion and interest grow out of practice and expertise. To discover what interests you, move out of your comfort zone by trying something unfamiliar and different from time to time.

“The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times. The best moments usually occur if a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.”

– Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

3.4 SAVOURING


Savouring is deliberate consciousness of a pleasurable experience. Savouring can be indulging in the moment such as marvelling at the beauty of a sunset or a natural landscape. It could be singing in a choir, enjoying wonderful music, indulging in the delights of enjoying a bottle of wine, delighting in a warm shower, enjoying a hot breakfast, tasting the flavours of your favourite dish, or of chocolate or ice cream. It could be expressing gratitude for all the good things in your life. It could be basking in the praise or congratulations of others. It could be admiring the magnificent architecture of historic buildings. Don’t postpone opportunities for savouring and happiness. Happiness comes in moments and taking the opportunities to relish the moment.



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Savour the present moment and appreciate every moment of your existence. Live each day to the fullest, since none of us know what tomorrow may bring. Don't spend too much time thinking about past or future events. Some people think their lives are really going to begin some day in the future when in fact they should be enjoying it right now. This doesn't mean we shouldn't remember and learn from the past. Neither does it mean that we shouldn't plan for the future. It does mean that we should be more mindful of the present as the present is the only reality we have. There is no guarantee that we will live to enjoy the future.

Happiness said Benjamin Franklin, "consists more in small conveniences and pleasures that occur every day, than in great pieces of good fortune that happen but seldom to a man in the course of his life." Future oriented people should consider Pascal's remark that we too often live as if the present were merely a preparation for the future. "So, we never live, but we hope to live and as we are always preparing to be happy, it is inevitable we should never do so." Relish ordinary experiences and reminisce with family, friends and work colleagues about activities and past events that you enjoyed doing together. Celebrate good news and important milestones in life such as birthdays and anniversaries.

Appreciate and use your senses such as sight, hearing, taste and touch. Be open to beauty and excellence in the world around you. Appreciate works of art and architecturally inspirational buildings. Visual art has a history and is imbued with the emotions, values, hopes and ideas of the painter. Train your sight to take a sensory delight in seeing. To appreciate more the wonderful faculty of sight just imagine what it would be like to be blind. The joy of movement can be experienced through dance. You don't need to be a professional dancer to enjoy yourself. Dance can be a great source of flow by allowing you to get totally involved in the rhythm and movement while at the same time keeping fit and healthy. The joys of movement can also be experienced through miming, role play and acting.

We are genetically programmed for sex. Nevertheless, some of us have been programmed by parents, religious and culture to have all sorts of reservations and inhibitions about sex. Relax and savour the joys of sex and love in a committed relationship as it can be a most compelling and rewarding experience.

3.5 FLOW DURING PLAY

The joys of hearing can be developed through an appreciation of music, while taste can be developed through culinary delights. There are great opportunities for flow during play provided you plan your recreational pursuits. Play differs from work because work has a structure and purpose. It requires planning and effort to turn free time into activities with

flow. Most of us spend our free time at activities such as watching television, reading, conversing with friends, hobbies, walking, going to restaurants, cinema, theatre or the more vigorous and physically fit get involved in sport.

It is estimated that many people spend four times more time watching television than doing sports or hobbies. This is despite the fact that watching television is the least likely to create happiness and flow in your life. You should identify those activities which you enjoy doing most as they are the ones likely to create flow.

Many people who developed interests outside work such as writing, art, music, poetry, gardening, cooking or invention have gone on to win renown in their chosen fields. Such people often make an invaluable contribution to their country's art, literature and culture. The only difference between these people and others who squander their time is the attention, energy, enthusiasm and time commitment they give to their interests. Even at the time of the Industrial Revolution when people worked more than 80 hours per week, some found time for cultural pursuits such as poetry and literature rather than waste their time socialising in pubs.

"People are at their most mindful when they are at play. If we find ways of enjoying our work blurring the lines between work and play the gains will be greater."

– Ellen Langer

3.6 FLOW AT WORK

Historically work has got a bad press. The industrial revolution and the scientific management approach with its measurement, standardisation, simplification and specialisation took the joy out of work. The bible teaches us that God punished Adam for his ambition by sentencing him to work the earth with the sweat of his brow. It's no wonder that the average person sees work as a punishing chore rather than a potential source of satisfaction, happiness and joy. Many people consider jobs as something they have to do – a burden imposed from outside and not contributing to their long-term goals. It's just seen as a way of earning money and putting bread on the table.

However, in the post-industrial world work is becoming more enjoyable again. Managers now realise the importance of job satisfaction and a happy workforce to increased productivity in the work place. We spend a large part of our time making a living so if we can find satisfaction and flow in work it will be worthwhile and make us happier. In the modern consumerist society, there is a tendency to work more and more to satisfy our escalating

materialistic needs rather than just meeting our basic needs. Balance between work and play is important to finding flow in all areas of life. In addition, many people identify closely with their work.

Doing work that you enjoy creates flow

Finding flow in work activities makes us happy. When people find flow, they lose track of time and are totally engaged and absorbed by what they are doing. Generally, there are more opportunities for flow at work than elsewhere even though most people think otherwise. Happiness is achieved when you accomplish something especially if it was difficult to do. To create flow, identify your natural or signature strengths such as persistence, logic, creativity, enthusiasm, appreciation of beauty and love of learning and choose work where you can use them preferably in the service of something greater than you are. You are more likely to value a job, relationship or hobby that aligns and uses your core signature strengths. People score higher on surveys of life satisfaction than others if their top five strengths are curiosity, zest, gratitude, hope, and the capacity to love and be loved. If your top signature strength is curiosity and love of learning then a visit to a museum or reading a favourite book is likely to create flow conditions for you.

In your job you may need to redesign work to accommodate your signature strengths. Flow is more likely if the work provides a challenge and you are trying to achieve targets and goals. It is important that your signature strengths are matched to the challenge. Jobs that offer little challenge are boring and those with too much challenge can be stressful. Ones in between that are challenging but not too demanding provide optimal flow. You may need to experiment with different jobs to find the one that suits you and provides flow. Generally, work that requires higher qualifications and higher levels of responsibility and skill are more satisfying.

Even routine work can provide opportunities for flow. Adopt a philosophy of continuous improvement by looking at operations that could be streamlined. Are there ways in which the work can be done more efficiently? Could operations be eliminated or combined to improve the flow of work. If people spent more time trying to improve the work and less time trying to avoid it, they would be happier and create more opportunities for flow.

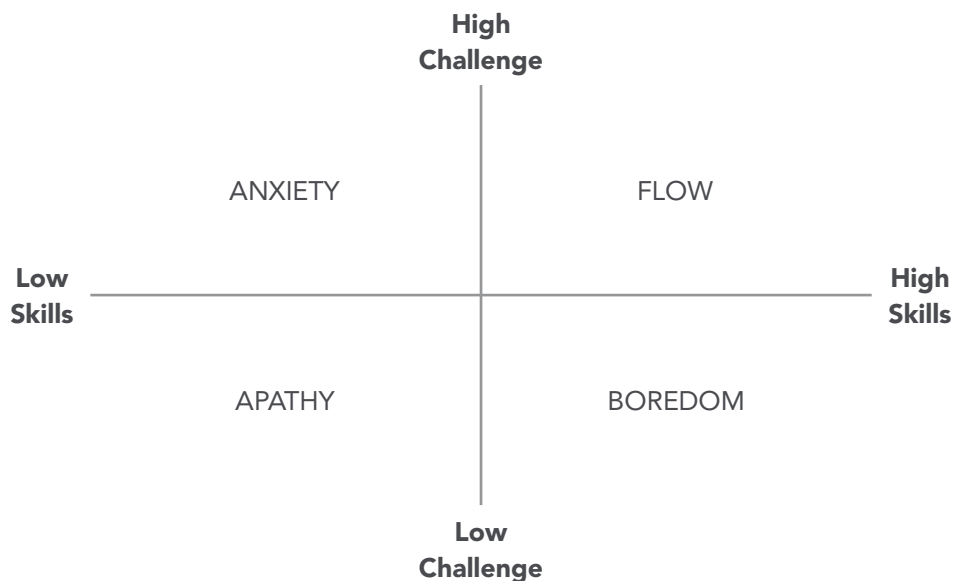


Fig. 3.2. Csikszentmihalyi Flow Model

As there are more opportunities for flow at work than elsewhere, it's important that you enjoy the work you do, and find it meaningful and worthwhile. Try different jobs until you find the one that you find satisfying. To create flow possibilities, a job should resemble a game with interest, variety, challenge, clear goals and immediate feedback. People who experience flow at work don't feel the work they do is really work because they enjoy it so much. It's the type of thing they would be doing anyway. They feel they are getting paid for doing what they love to do. They are often able to change constraints into opportunities and change the context of the job to make it more conducive to flow. Managers have more flow experiences than others because they have more control over their work. Those who don't experience flow at work are doing jobs they don't like or find meaningful. The reasons for dissatisfaction include lack of variety and challenge, conflict, boredom and burnout.

3.7 THE ROLES MANAGERS ENDURE

The roles managers endure at work can influence their level of stress and happiness. The roles include role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload and role underload. Put simply managers are at their least happy and productive when their roles are unclear; there is too much conflict over the tasks required, and there is too much or too little work to do. The manager's level of job happiness and satisfaction and ultimately their performance will be adversely affected. These in turn can affect the happiness and job satisfaction of those who report to them through the 'ripple effect.' Happy managers have happy teams that help create a positive work environment, and even promotes good overall health.

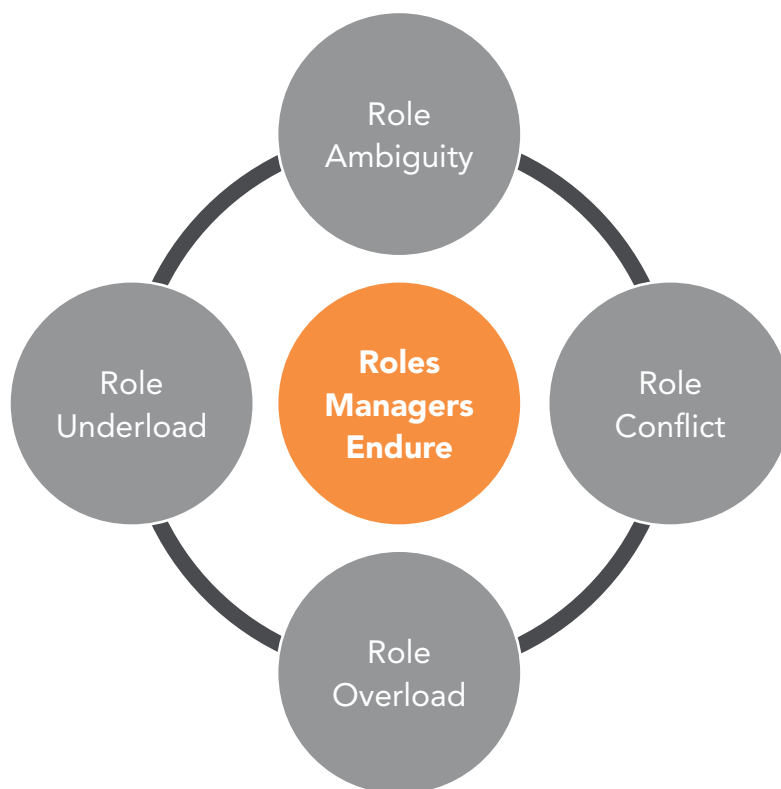


Fig. 3.3. The Roles Managers Endure

Role ambiguity

This refers to a lack of clarity about how to perform one's job. It may include uncertainty about goals, how best to achieve them and how performance is evaluated. It may be due to inadequate training, poor communication, or the deliberate withholding or distortion of information. For lower level jobs, a clear job description can often solve the problem or, alternatively, an explanation about the role or on-the-job training by the manager or supervisor about what the job entails. However, for managerial jobs, the removal of role ambiguity can be more difficult because of a lack of well-defined and specific routines to be carried out. This is particularly so in jobs requiring a lot of abstract thinking, initiative, discretion, and non-programmed decision-making.

Role ambiguity differs between different functions, with human resource and sales managers reporting the most ambiguity, and production and finance managers reporting the least. HRM managers do not know the consequences of their decisions because of delayed feedback, while production managers and finance managers operate within defined procedures, have measurable targets, and more immediate concrete feedback.

The level of stress caused by role ambiguity varies from one person to another. Some people demand a lot of structure in their lives, while others tolerate, or even thrive on ambiguity. Structure is found in the civil service, multinationals and bureaucracies, while lack of structure is experienced in start-up businesses. Generally, prolonged periods of ambiguity lead to feelings of futility, anxiety, poor job performance, low motivation, job dissatisfaction and an intention to leave the job.

Role conflict

Role conflict occurs when an employee experiences conflicting demands from different sources, where compliance with one makes it difficult to comply with the other. The person may also feel the demand is beyond the scope of their job specification. There may be conflict between an employer's values and sense of ethics and that of the company's culture. There may be conflict between the employer's expectation and those of the employee's family.

Most people perform several roles in their lives and, as a result, often find the demands of one role conflict with another. Professional women often experience conflict between their role as a mother and that of a company executive. A shop steward may experience conflict between his role as an employee and a union representative. A supervisor is often put in a 'no win' situation, having to deal with the conflicting expectations of managers and workers simultaneously. Studies show that anxious people are more likely to suffer from role conflict than people with a more calm and reflective approach to life.

Role overload

Having too much to do – work overload – may be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative are situations when managers or employees are asked to do more work in a specified period of time than they can reasonably handle and this can be quite stressful. Contributory factors include long hours, time pressures, deadlines, autocratic leadership, unreasonable quotas, travel, noise and frequent interruptions.

For many managers, work overload may be self-imposed. Lack of assertiveness skills such as the inability to say 'No,' poor time management, or failure to delegate can worsen the situation. Working women are particularly prone to overload. In a man's world, they often feel they have to work harder and longer than their male colleagues do in order to maintain visibility, get recognition, show their commitment, and improve their promotion chances. In addition, on the domestic front, they often do more than their fair share of the work, since the vast majority of men are still reluctant to do housework.

Qualitative overload is where work is perceived to be too difficult. The person involved may lack the requisite education, technical competencies or training to do the job satisfactorily causing great stress and unhappiness. For example, a person may be asked to perform tasks for which they have received no training, or may be promoted beyond their level of competence.

Role underload

Just as having too much to do may be stressful, counter-intuitively having too little to do may be equally stressful. Underload may also be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative underload means having insufficient work to do. Underload can lead to boredom and monotony that, in turn, can lead to stress. Doing nothing can be as stressful as doing too much. However, the degree of job dissatisfaction caused by work underload differs from one occupation to another. It seems to have little effect on the job dissatisfaction of assembly-line workers and policemen but increases job dissatisfaction for administrators.





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Qualitative underload is where the work is of an insufficient quality to hold one's interest and the lack of mental stimulation may become a source of stress. This is often a feature of routine and repetitive jobs, where the work may be devoid of variety, problem-solving, creativity, new challenges or social interaction. The outcome may be poor job satisfactions, high absenteeism, and high staff turnover.

"We must discard the idea that past routine, past ways of doing things, are probably the best ways. On the contrary, we must assume there is probably a better way to do almost anything. We must stop assuming that a thing which has never been done before probably cannot be done at all."

– Donald M. Nelson

3.8 FIVE ACTIVITIES TO CREATE FLOW

1. The next time you read try and focus your concentration on the text eliminating all mental and external distractions. Choose a book about a topic that will totally absorb and interest you.
2. Move out of your comfort zone by trying something challenging, unfamiliar and different such as learning a new skill or going on a foreign holiday.
3. Notice the way music is used to create atmosphere and experience the effects. Get lost in the flow. It can be used to create solemnity at a funeral and feelings of joy at a wedding. National anthems are used to create feelings of patriotism, energy, emotion and national pride.
4. The next time you are dancing get into the flow by losing yourself in the rhythm.
5. Try to create flow opportunities at work. Pretend the job is a challenging game with interest, variety, clear goals, constant feedback and possibilities for improvement and thus create a self-fulfilling prophecy. Feedback provided yearly, quarterly and monthly is stale, out of date and unactionable. It needs to be immediate to be effective.

4 MONEY & HAPPINESS

- Does money buy happiness?
- What are the effects of materialism?
- Why does money matter?
- What is reference anxiety?
- Has more wealth made countries happier?

4.1 DOES MONEY BUY HAPPINESS?

On a personal level money does not buy much more happiness beyond a relatively low threshold of wealth. Those who strongly desire and pursue wealth and money are unhappier than those who don't. Those on a high income are likely to spend more time at work, commuting, reflecting on work issues and spend less time at leisure or with family. It seems having more than you need is not a recipe for happiness. Accumulating income and possessions may only add to your worries, as the more you have the more reasons you have to worry about possible loss and the need to protect your property. Most of the happiness is provided by the anticipation of owning a house or a car rather than the actual acquisition. You get another boost of happiness when you buy them, but then you quickly get used to them. Successive increments of wealth will not necessarily make you happier but only increase your worries.

Once you're able to afford life's necessities, more and more money provides diminishing additional returns and less relative happiness. Money does produce happiness if the increased income lifts you from poverty into middle class. On the other hand, it does not necessarily guarantee happiness if it allows you to upgrade your lifestyle from one that is merely comfortable to one that is luxurious. Inheriting a fortune, winning the lottery or getting a substantial promotion doesn't necessarily bring long-term happiness. People who inherit wealth or win the lottery adapt and return to their previous level of happiness within five years. People who get promoted may spend a significant proportion of their time at work and neglect their families and recreational needs. While money may not bring happiness, it is unlikely to cause misery if managed wisely.

Research by two Wharton economists, Prof. Wolfers and Prof. Stevenson, suggests that richer countries are happier than poorer ones, and that as countries get richer their inhabitants become happier. Poverty is bad for your health as people in poor countries do not live as long as people in rich countries. They cannot afford a healthy lifestyle or access proper

medical health care when needed whereas rich people can. Economic gains bring better food, nutrition, clothing, housing, medical care and a longer life which result in substantial increases in happiness for poor societies. Their findings challenge the conventional wisdom of the past three decades, which held that higher national gross domestic product often doesn't translate into a greater overall sense of well-being and happiness. Although within countries happiness does increase with wealth it tends to slow down once a certain level of prosperity has been achieved. Once poverty, hunger, thirst and fear of violence have gone, rises in average prosperity have no effect on average levels of happiness. However, increased income is especially impactful for lower wage earners, as their lot in life could be significantly improved with greater financial resources. This is known as the Easterlin Paradox named after Richard Easterlin's findings as set out in his 1974 paper titled "Does Economic Growth Improve the Human Lot?"

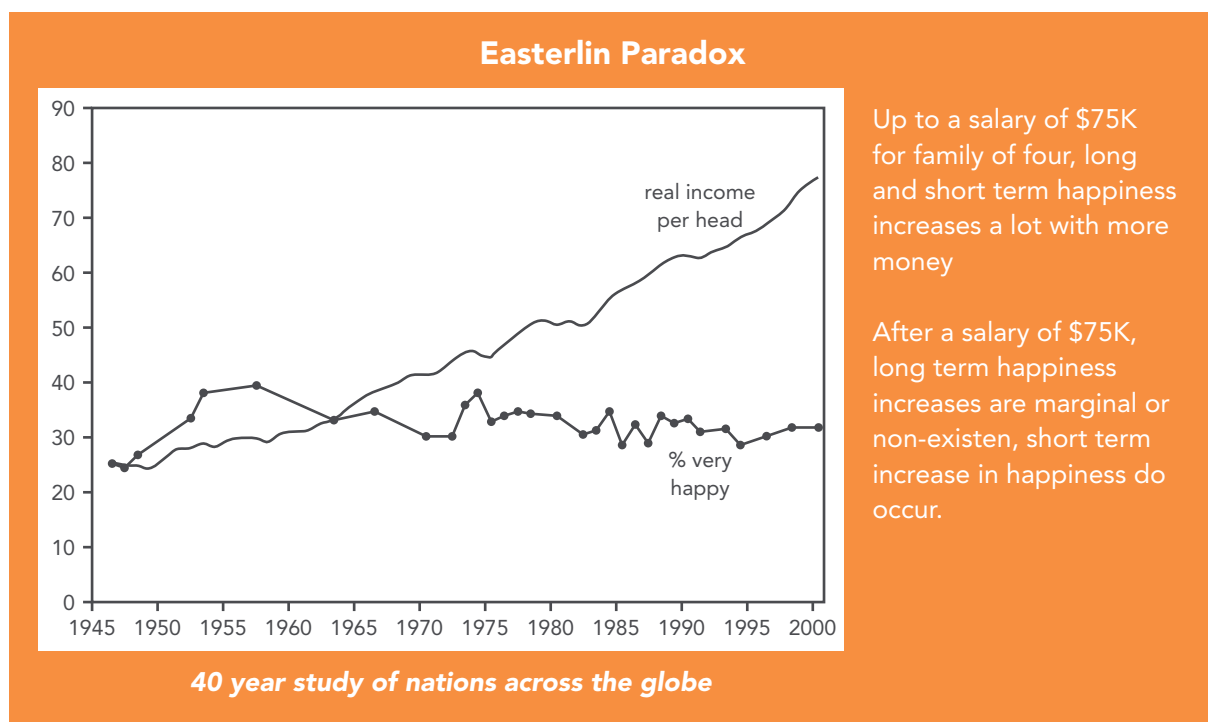


Fig. 4.1. Easterlin Paradox

"The gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages; the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile."

– Robert F. Kennedy

Sufficient is enough

Most people are happy if they have sufficient income to live a comfortable life. Surveys show that those living in upper income households are more likely to be satisfied with their lives and happier than those in middle-and lower-income households. However, having highly educated parents is a stronger predictor of happiness than income as they act as good inspirational role models. Wealth is like health – absence breeds misery, but having it doesn't necessarily guarantee happiness. To be happy it is important to live within your means. Being in debt brings anxiety, fear and stress. Dealing with debt collectors is no fun! Money matters more to some than to others as different people have different priorities. In fact, the more a person values money the less satisfied they are when they acquire it. Some people love their work irrespective of the money they earn. To them job satisfaction, providing a worthwhile service and enjoying good interpersonal relationships at work is more important than money.

In 1930 the famous economist John Maynard Keynes thought that affluence and technology would bring more leisure time. Riches would liberate people from toil to enjoy the finer things in life. In more recent times with the emergence of labour-saving devices and the information and communications revolution it was thought that people would not need to work the long hours they used to. Instead people are working harder and longer in order to afford the things that they think will make them happy – bigger houses, bigger cars, bigger televisions, more gadgets and foreign holidays. In fact, the mobile phone which makes people available 24 hours a day has proven to be an additional source of work and an invasion of privacy. People are upwardly mobile and yearn to have greater status and outward signs of wealth. They thus tend to buy designer clothes, eat in the best restaurants, and send their children to private schools.

Since 1949 real income has doubled in the USA while happiness has not risen proportionately. This is despite increased leisure time, a greater variety of entertainment sources, better health, longer life spans and a decline in racial and gender inequality. It seems higher income brings higher aspiration and expectation levels rather than higher happiness levels. Similarly, people in Western Europe enjoy a higher standard of living but yet are not happier. However, they are happier than poorer nations. Within a particular country the better off report themselves to be more satisfied than the poor, but it is relative rather than absolute incomes that seem to matter. It seems richer people are happier because they have more than other people. On the other hand, it makes those left behind more miserable.

In the West the rise in the standard of living has been accompanied by an increase in financial debt, depression, drug use, domestic abuse, alcoholism, obesity, suicide, crime and divorce. The Institute of Psychiatry in 2007 reported that the number of children with emotional and behavioural problems in the UK has doubled in the last 25 years. The

number of adolescent suicides has quadrupled and younger people account for more than their share of road deaths due to speeding and reckless driving. Many people in the West live alone and are lonely. According to Sigmund Freud, the price we pay for our advance in civilisation is a loss of sense of community and happiness.

"All I want is a chance to prove that money can't make me happy."

– Spike Milligan

Less community spirit

There has been a breakdown in community spirit and a decrease in trust. Most voluntary organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit volunteers as people become more isolated, selfish and affluent but time poor. People living in the same neighbourhoods and even living next door no longer know each other or speak to each other. We are turning into a selfish fragmented society with independent individual households. People are so obsessed with making a living they have little time for anything else except looking after themselves and their families. Commuting in cars to work means they don't see each other either. Whole housing estates are often empty during the day as both partners are at work.

Opportunities for socialising and meeting people in the street are few and far between as people drive and speed past each other rather than walk. Many people are isolated and lonely, especially the old and mentally and physically disabled. Growing numbers of elderly people in the Western world face death without immediate family members or friends to provide care, solace and comfort in their last days. On the other hand, new government, private and voluntary services are emerging such as the hospice foundation providing palliative care to fill the void and meet the needs of the elderly and terminally ill in creative, supportive and comforting ways.

Individualism, consumerism and materialism are the dominant philosophies in the modern developed society giving rise to selfishness and greed. People work more and more hours to meet their escalating and more expensive needs encouraged by consumerism, all pervasive advertising and marketing campaigns. Increased mobility, selfishness and incivility have brought crime and indifference to the needs of others. People no longer spend sufficient time in a locality to lay down roots, get to know each other and form long-term friendships. Getting involved in local community groups is a thing of the past as most people haven't the time or the energy to do so after putting in a long day at work. The spare time they have is used up watching television. Work is all time consuming while family life and friendships are neglected.

Margaret Thatcher, a former Prime Minister of the UK, was famously quoted as saying that people should move to where the work is. Mobility is favoured by economists who see it as a way of increasing incomes. However, they don't mention the disruptive effect it has on community, identity and family life. It can break up marriages and families; undermine local communities and contribute to an increase in crime. People continually on the move do not put down roots, lose their sense of identity, and have very little interest in the places they temporarily settle in. This means that neighbours do not know each other, crime goes up and the safety on our streets is compromised.

Those who value friendships and love more than money are happier. Ambitious people often sacrifice relationships and family life in the obsessive pursuit of wealth. Money can't buy you a permanent loving relationship and can't buy you true friendship and loyalty. People who lose their wealth often find their erstwhile friends abandon them too. As rich people realise, when their health is gone all the money in the world will not restore it. Money is not as important as a good reputation, true friends or peace of mind. These have got to be nurtured over time. Money should be seen as a means to an end and not an end in itself. In other words, money can be used wisely to make your life more rewarding, meaningful, enjoyable and comfortable but we shouldn't become obsessive about it. Anecdotally older people hark back to happier times when communities were friendlier, tight-knit, relationships were lasting, neighbours could be counted on for support, and work was permanent and lifelong. Maybe they have a point!

4.2 DOES MONEY BUY LOVE?

A 2004 survey by the National Bureau of Economic Research at Massachusetts has for the first time made a link between wealth, happiness and sex. It surveyed 16,000 Americans asking them personal questions about their bank balances and love lives. They concluded that greater income does not buy more sex, or sexual partners. In fact, they found that unemployed people tend to have more sex and more sexual partners than people who are gainfully employed. However, sex isn't everything as unemployed people have higher rates of depression, and are not as happy as the general population. The survey found that sex is the thing that makes us happiest, with the highly educated more likely to find ultimate pleasure from sex than those with fewer academic qualifications.

The survey found that the average American adult has sex two or three times a month. Those under 40 have sex an average of once a week, while those over 40 manage just once a month. The survey concluded that people who have sex more often are happiest, but found that people in monogamous relationships tended to be happier than the promiscuous. This would suggest that meaningless sex outside a loving relationship may result in misery. Destructive behaviour such as having casual affairs may bring more problems than they are worth such as sexually transmitted diseases, disharmony and unplanned pregnancies.

“An intellectual is someone who has found something more interesting than sex.”

– Edgar Wallace

4.3 WHEN MONEY MATTERS

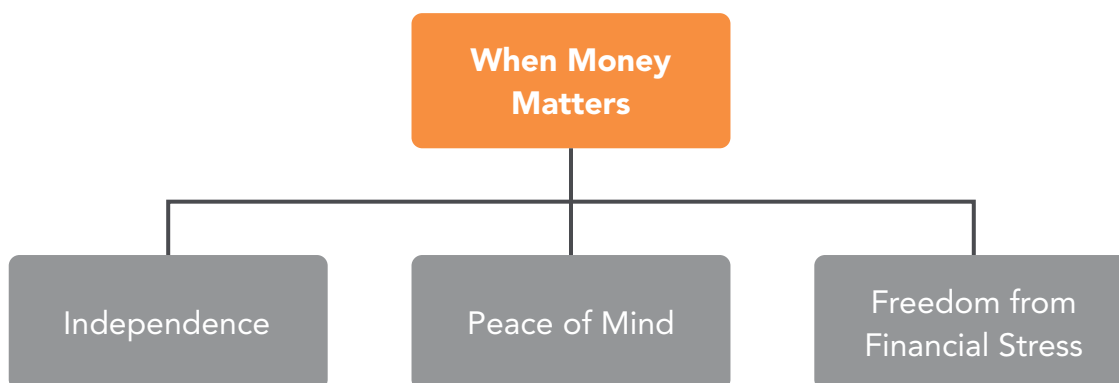


Fig. 4.2. When Money Matters

It would be foolish to think that money does not matter. It matters most when you haven't got it and you need it. And nobody will give you money when you need it most. Money gives you many benefits. It gives you independence, peace of mind and freedom from financial pressures and worries. If you possess significant financial resources you will never get into debt provided you have good money management skills. You have the freedom to travel anywhere in the world and can buy your own home. You can enjoy all the comforts and educational experiences that money can buy. You can send your children to the best schools and get the best possible education. You can help your family financially and give them a good start in life. You can pay skilled people to do DIY jobs around the house. When you are sick you can avail of the best medical services. If you feel you have more than enough money for your needs, you can off load some of it by becoming a philanthropist, and donating money to worthwhile causes.

Research shows that money spent on memorable experiences such as holidays, recreation, concerts and night outs bring more joy than money spent on physical goods. It seems the things that don't last create the most happiness. If the experience is a holiday, for instance, you will maximise level of happiness by savouring the planning and anticipation of the event. Read guidebooks and surf the web to find out all you need to know about your destination. Discuss alternative holiday destinations with your partner. You'll find that you can enjoy the whole process of planning the holiday as much as the holiday itself. In addition, the memories created by holidays last longer than the short-term happiness of physical goods, and can be recalled as often as you like and even mentally edited, embellished, enhanced

and elaborated to eliminate any bad experiences endured during the holiday. Memories of experiences shared are often the glue that keeps relationships and friendships intact, and we know that these make a huge contribution to our happiness. Also, we prefer people who share and enjoy experiences with us rather than those who just accumulate material possessions.

Wealth will generally bring you more power, prestige and status. Insurance cover or savings put aside will help you to weather any unforeseen potentially ruinous circumstances or serious illness or disaster. You will be able to afford to live in the best house, in the best locations. If you have sufficient wealth you can also decide not to work, or work at a career that you really enjoy, or work shorter hours, or do part-time work.

Some comparisons are invidious

Comparing ourselves with those who are better off may engender feelings of envy, inferiority dissatisfaction and resentment. The social-comparison idea that happiness is a function of the gap between what we have and what we think others have goes all the way back to Aristotle. However, no matter how rich you are wealth comparisons with others can make you unhappy. There are always people richer and better off than you. The trick is to compare yourself with the less wealthy and to be happy with what you have. If one's neighbour earns more than you do, then you may feel less happy than if the neighbour earned less. Living in a rich neighbourhood, and being surrounded by people who are wealthier than you, could be detrimental to your health. On the other hand, being a big fish in a small pond may be advantageous as it makes you feel comparatively important and well-off. Socially, if we feel compelled to compare we should do so relative to those who are less fortunate. Since people's happiness is affected by relative rather than actual income, governments could probably increase the happiness quotient of the population by simply using an increase in income taxes to redistribute wealth.

People on low incomes are happier when they get an increase. It has even greater impact if it is denied to our peers. Unemployed people are happier when they get a job. Permanently unemployed people often live lives of hopelessness, aimlessness, desolation, desperation and despair. Having enough money to meet your needs makes you happy. Worrying about where the next euro will come from is not a recipe for happiness. The poor, old and sick are happier when their money situation improves. People who earn more money relative to their immediate relatives, friends, work colleagues and neighbours are happier.

Despite conventional wisdom, even millionaires are happy. A survey of the Forbes super rich found that 47 out of 49 were happy. However, comfort does not always equal happiness. Rich people live very comfortable lives but some are not happy. One example that comes

readily to mind is multi-millionaire Howard Hughes who lived the life of a recluse and eccentric in his later days caused in part by an obsessive-compulsive disorder about hygiene. He died in 1976 of kidney failure, drug abuse, and severe malnutrition. Some rich people have unrealistic expectations for what money can do for them, and the level of happiness it can bring. They really don't understand the difference of what money can and cannot do for them.

"It's not having lots of money that makes you happy, but knowing that you have enough for what you need. The sense of being in control is central to happiness. Keeping in top of your finances is usually a much more important recipe for happiness than trying to make lots more money."

– Richard Stevens

4.4 CELEBRITY AND HAPPINESS

These days everybody wants to be famous. Years ago, there was very little thought of some occupations like chefs. Now we have celebrity chefs and even business people on the television who display a complete lack of manners, grace and civility when dealing with their employees. Being rude, ruthless, obnoxious, unkind and using bad language is put forward as acceptable behaviour by these so-called celebrity chefs even though it displays a lack of manners, respect, courtesy and consideration when dealing with others. It is hardly a suitable role model for youth to follow and be inspired by.

Many people seem to have a strong desire for fame and social recognition. They enter talent competitions and reality TV shows with the objective of becoming instant celebrities, but instead are often demeaned, ridiculed, and belittled in front of millions of viewers in the process. They think that fame can be achieved overnight. It's also surprising how many have an exaggerated and unrealistic view of their talents. They don't realise that people who win these competitions have spent many years perfecting their art. There is no such thing as an overnight success. What these shows do is to showcase the undiscovered talents of contestants to a wider audience. In previous times people worshipped royalty; now they worship celebrity and they crave to be like their favourite star. Our desire to emulate successful people has deep evolutionary roots. Reality TV shows can be damaging psychologically to people with low self-esteem. Being criticised in front of millions of television viewers is not easy to take. A fragile vulnerable personality could easily be crushed by such feedback and their sense of self-worth permanently damaged.

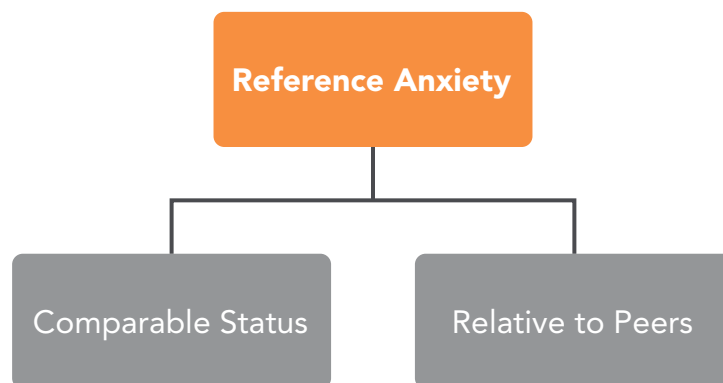


Fig. 4.3. Reference Anxiety

Many people suffer from what psychologists' call 'reference anxiety.' It's the modern form of 'keeping up with the Joneses.' People judge their status in comparison with others and are often prepared to get into debt to keep up with them. One study found the richer people were relative to their peers, the happier they tended to be. We have rising expectations constantly fed by advertisements and exposure to the rich and famous on television, celebrity magazines, tabloid newspapers and the internet. Impressionable people don't realise that for most of us this is fantasy land rather than reality.

Fame and wealth are not a recipe for good parenting skills. People are so engrossed in pursuing a career that they neglect their children. The rich and famous are faced with the same everyday challenges when raising children as the rest of us. Their children are open to the same temptations as our children such as alcohol, overindulgence, and drug abuse. Their children are just as susceptible to feelings of frustration and unhappiness as other children are. The children of rich people are often spoilt as if to make up for the lack of attention and personal time spent with them. However, more pocket money and modern technological gadgets is no substitute for loving time spent with them. Many of them spend their lives trying to live up to their parent's fame and achievements. They also may feel an entitlement to their inherited status. However, such children can be happy if their parents set good example and teach them proper values with respect for others.

"Money may be the husk of many things but not the kernel. It brings you food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; acquaintance, but not friends; servants, but not loyalty; days of joy, but not peace or happiness."

– Henrik Ibsen

The rich and famous

We know from the media that many rich and famous people are unhappy. Fame and wealth in itself do not bring happiness. Many famous stars have died from alcohol and drug abuse after years fighting addiction and leading troublesome lives. Psychologists believe that enormous success is healthy only for people who are mentally strong and with a high level of self-esteem. For those struggling with a poor self-image, coping with too much success can bring many additional problems. The average person is able to cope with success when it is more modest and gradual, and they have the maturity and wisdom to handle it. The children of Marlon Brando, one of the World's most famous film stars, had turbulent and troubled lives. His son Christian was found guilty of the manslaughter of his half-sister Cheyenne's lover and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. The tragedy was compounded when five years later, Cheyenne committed suicide. It was said that she was still depressed over her lover's death. You can only imagine the heart-ache this brought to Marlon Brando!

Modern celebrity brings fame and fortune beyond the wildest dreams of many of those who have experienced it, and consequently they find it hard to cope with the adulation, isolation and invasion of privacy that success can bring. For instance, Kate Moss, the famous model, was addicted to cocaine and treated in a rehab centre. She has earned notoriety for her high-profile relationships and party lifestyle. Marilyn Monroe, the movie icon and sex symbol, was desperately unhappy and severely depressed before she committed suicide in 1962. Towards the end of her career, she was under the constant care of a psychiatrist, and was prone to mixing prescription drugs with alcohol. The final years of her life were marked by illness, personal problems, broken marriages, superficial relationships, and a reputation for unreliability and being difficult to work with. At the age of 36, she was found dead, apparently from an overdose of barbiturates.

Phil Hartman, a famous American TV actor and voice over for the Simpsons, was shot dead by his wife, who shortly after killed herself in his home in California in 1998. George Best, reputed to be one of the best footballers of his day, threw away a lucrative career with Manchester United to become a full-time alcoholic. Even ill-health and a liver transplant could not save him from his addiction. Elvis Presley, the King of Rock and Roll, died from drug abuse and overindulgence. He was adored by millions throughout the world and still was unhappy despite being rich, famous, popular, handsome, talented, and kind-hearted.

Rock star Kurt Cobain committed suicide in 1994. During the last years of his life Cobain struggled with drug addiction and the media pressures surrounding him and his wife, Courtney Love, who has also struggled with drug abuse. Anna Nicole Smith sex symbol and television personality was found dead in a hotel room in 2007. She achieved a certain amount of notoriety when she married a geriatric millionaire. Many celebrities spend their lives going into and out of rehabilitation and hopping from one marriage to another in the

constant pursuit of happiness. Many live meaningless, feckless, reckless and disorganised lives, and literally wear themselves out in the constant pursuit of the next great pleasure and die prematurely. Constant media attention, sycophantic colleagues, a fawning public, and an artificial lifestyle do not help people live normal lives. Their happiness may be affected by reaching the pinnacle of success too quickly, and then realising it is not as fulfilling as they expected. It seems fame brings its own problems.

“Happiness, whether for us or for our children, is not the result of earthly riches, which must either be lost by us in our lifetime or else must pass after our death into the possession of those we do not know or, it may be, of those whom we do not wish to have them. It is God who gives happiness; for he is the true wealth of men’s souls.”

– Saint Augustine (354-430 AD)

4.5 COMPARING COUNTRIES

In affluent countries 85 to 90 per cent of people report, that they are either happy or very happy. Few people report being consistently elated, or extremely happy. The unhappy people are the unemployed and the mentally ill. Different happiness surveys give different results depending on the criteria used, and some have even placed Nigeria as the world’s happiest country with Mexico a strong second. Extra income makes more difference to happiness in poorer countries than in richer ones. An extra euro gives more happiness to poor people than to the rich. Happiness rises as people are lifted out of poverty, and achieve a reasonable sustainable standard of living. This would suggest that Government policies of income redistribution will improve the overall levels of happiness within a society.

Additional income beyond a certain level is not associated with additional happiness in developed countries. It seems extra happiness declines steadily as one gets richer. However, richer people are on average happier than poorer people in the same country, but this is largely because people compare their incomes with other people in their society. The former communist countries are the unhappiest of all. It seems democracy is not an instant solution to happiness for people used to an environment of spying, control, suspicion, secrecy, surveillance, fear of speaking out, and lack of respect for human rights. People must develop the faith and confidence to trust each other before they can become happy. People are no happier in the USA even though they are much better off. This is despite the fact that Americans consider happiness more important to them than money, moral goodness, and even going to Heaven. There is a similar story in Britain and Japan. The picture is slightly different in Europe. Happiness is slightly up in Italy whereas in Belgium it is sharply down.

The high taxed Nordic countries like Denmark, Norway and Sweden where there is a clearer vision of the common good and developed welfare systems are among the happiest. This is in line with the ideas of the late JK Galbraith as expressed in his book, *The Affluent Society*. He suggested that too many productive resources are devoted to goods which ultimately do not contribute to the quality of life, unlike public expenditure on education, social welfare and healthcare which do. In fact, surveys over 30 years show the Danes score higher than any other Western country on measures of life satisfaction even if they pay high levels of tax. It is a well-structured, well-ordered society with decent housing, a good health service and a cheap efficient public transport system. It spends more per capita on children and the elderly than any other country in the world. Ninety-two per cent of Danes belong to some sort of social club. Levels of trust in the Nordic countries are much higher than anywhere else in the World. Similarly, Canada with a good health system, comes out on top in ratings of happiness.

Surprisingly, Iceland which is extremely cold and shrouded in darkness for much of the year, was one of the world's happiest countries up to 2008. The recession of 2008 hit Iceland and Ireland very severely with reductions in standards of living, and a collapse of the housing and banking system. In Iceland they chose to let the banks go bust whereas in Ireland the Government bailed them out with taxpayers' money. Both economies have recovered since then, and are now becoming prosperous once more with concomitant rising happiness levels which dropped during the recession. Not surprisingly, Australia, on the other side of the globe, does well in happiness surveys and enjoys a prosperous staple economy. The result was a top score of 8.33 out of 10, beating Switzerland and Norway into second and third place. The UK came 29th.

In Britain and the USA, the number of people who believe that other people can be trusted has halved in the last 50 years. This reflects the rise of individualism and populism which makes personal success more important than anything else. Super-rich Qatar with its vast reserves of oil and gas is the equivalent of a country winning a huge lottery. Despite having the highest GDP per capita in the world, it is among the world's unhappiest places owing to their lack of an indigenous culture or history which proves money isn't everything. Similarly, Zimbabwe, racked by political instability, corrupt unethical politicians, systemic bribery, out of control inflation, an Aids rate in excess of 25 per cent, an average life expectancy of 39, hunger and food shortages, is rated one of the gloomiest countries in the world.

In 2004 and 2006, the Economist ranked Ireland's "quality of life" as the best in the world. The recession of 2008 made severe dents in this rating. However, Ireland since then has recovered its reputation as the location of happiness – an increasingly fashionable concept promoted by psychologists, economists and sociologists. After centuries of persecution, civil unrest, misfortune and even famine Ireland has at last an enviable life of peace, stability, style and earning power which is attracting immigrants and tourists alike. Even in sport, music and literature the Irish seem to be on a high.

The emergence of malpractice and corruption in the banking sector has diminished the reputation of Ireland in the eyes of the World's financial community. One major bank has been nationalised and the other two main banks have been recapitalised leaving the Irish taxpayer exposed to a high financial risk. The national budget is in deficit, and attempts by the Government to rectify the situation by introducing a pension levy on public sector employees have seen them taking to the streets in protest. Nevertheless, in the recent past (2016-2019) the country has made an incredible recovery and is now considered to be one of the richest countries in the world and one of the fastest growing economies in the EU.

Social psychologists who measured the three predictors of well-being – wealth, education and health – found that countries with large populations like China, Japan and India tend to have lower levels of happiness than smaller countries with greater social cohesion and a stronger sense of national identity like Denmark and Switzerland. Surveys consistently show that the unhappiest countries in the world are from the former communist countries of the Soviet Union and the East European bloc like Russia, Romania, Albania, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Belarus, Bulgaria and the Ukraine. Political instability, and a lack of democracy also lower happiness.

Rises in standards of living in the developed world has been accompanied by a rise in criminality and drug addiction. Depression, alcoholism and crime have risen since world war two. Depression has increased as income has risen. In the USA alcoholism has risen and in Europe it has risen with the exception of France. There is an epidemic in the west of people dying from the alcohol related cirrhosis of the liver. In Ireland the country is awash with drugs and drink. Binge drinking is a major problem particularly with young people from 15 years onwards. Youth suicides are up in almost every advanced economy, and they now exceed road deaths. Despite this there is more action by Governments to tackle drink-driving than suicides.

Employee happiness may differ in different cultural contexts. Western cultural values are mainly focused on the individual autonomous person with an emphasis on democracy, competition, and freedom of choice. Individuals place a high value on self-interest, personal choice and personal goals. Hence happiness is based on personal factors such as preferences, attitudes and beliefs. On the other hand, eastern cultural values emphasise collectivism. In collective societies group goals are more important than personal goals. They believe that an individual's personal goals should not threaten group harmony.

"I want chancellors of the exchequer and chief finance officers to buy into this research about happiness. I think it is our challenge to demonstrate that there is good science now to help us help people have better lives."

– Richard Reeves

Gross national happiness



Fig. 4.4. Gross National Happiness

Economists place little emphasis on how happy people are. They measure progress by rises in gross national product on the assumption that if people consume more they are better off. However, there have been some attempts at measurement. Erasmus University in Rotterdam runs a World Database of Happiness, and the tiny country of Bhutan has established a Gross National Happiness (GNH) index based on the sensible Buddhist idea that economic growth alone does not bring happiness. In Bhutan happiness is pursued as a conscious national goal. Bhutan’s GNH has four pillars generally in line with the emerging field of happiness studies. These are sustainable and equitable socio-economic development, conservation of the environment, preservation and promotion of culture and good governance.

According to a national census in 2005, nearly 97 per cent of their population said they were either “happy” or “very happy,” while the country’s GDP is now higher than most neighbouring countries. A 2015 study showed that 91.2 per cent of Bhutanese reported they were narrowly, extensively or deeply happy, with a 1.8 per cent increase in aggregate happiness between 2010 and 2018. Educated people who lived in urban areas reported higher levels of contentment than their rural counterparts. Men reported feeling happier than women. In many developed countries there is an underinvestment in the health system. It seems that governments do not realise the importance of health to the general well-being, longevity and happiness of their citizens. Countries with good public health systems tend to top the happiness charts.

“The accumulation of material goods is at an all-time high, but so is the number of people who feel emptiness in their lives.”

– Al Gore

4.6 FIVE ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE HAPPINESS WITH MONEY

1. Balance your budget each week. Ensure you live within your means. Being in debt brings anxiety, stress and unhappiness. It also means the stress of unwelcome persistent calls from debt collectors!
2. Volunteer to do work for a local community group or charity. As well as making you happy it will occupy your spare time productively and create friendships.
3. Smile and be happy, courteous, civil, kind, sincere and mannerly to all you meet.
4. Simplify your lifestyle. Remove the clutter from your life. Give away the things to charity that you don’t really need. These may make other people happy.
5. Visit an elderly person in your area. They will appreciate the gesture and it will make you and the person you visit happier.

5 RELATIONSHIPS & HAPPINESS

- Why are friendships important?
- What are the three types of adults?
- Why are married couples happier?
- Why is empathy so important?
- What can you do to nurture friendship?

5.1 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are the most important source of happiness in any situation including management. Interpersonal relationships play an absolutely central role in human happiness and well-being in the workplace, as in everyday social interactions. Tom Rath's 2006 popular book *Vital Friends* reports that individuals who said they had a best friend at work were seven times more likely to report being engaged in their job. Develop the skill of unconditional love by loving people for who they really are, and not for what you want them to be. Don't be judgemental as everybody is unique and we all have different ways of reacting and doing things. Accept their faults as none of us are perfect. On the dark side many life problems are caused by poor inept, selfish and insensitive social relationships. In every relationship there is bound to be some issues, conflict and differences of opinion. Insisting on your own way is not a recipe for good relationships.

Remain flexible by keeping talking. Communication is a two-way process and compromising is part of it. Be slow to take offence and quick to forgive and forget. Adopt the peacemaker role. Refuse to react to innuendo, provocation, caustic, insensitive and sarcastic remarks. Adding fuel to the fire only inflames things and makes them worse. Don't ever intentionally set out to stir up trouble and provoke people. Don't be governed by your ego, and get stuck in a particular point of view, even if you are convinced, you're right. Develop traits of humility and consideration rather than be full of your own importance. People should develop common interests and shared goals to help their relationships along.

Over a lifetime we may have hundreds of friendships but only a small fraction of these will last. People may have many friends but only a few are likely to be close and genuine. To cultivate friendships be cooperative, approachable, agreeable and smile. One study showed that the cooperativeness of an individual was a predictor of their likeability and happiness. Use tact and courtesy to nurture the friendship. Keep in regular contact with your friends.

Friendship over a lifetime requires maintenance and tender loving care to survive. If you don't take the time to do this you will inevitably find yourself friendless and alone.

Most adults claim that friendship is more important than career, money or family. This highlights the importance of having work colleagues as friends who support and understand your concerns which increases job satisfaction. We all love to work with and for people with happy pleasant dispositions. Even children put friendship in the number two position after family, highlighting that close personal relationships are still the most important elements in their young lives. One in three people meet their friends at work and some even meet their future marriage partners there. Some sociologists feel that work is becoming less likely as a place to find close friends because competition for promotion means that at work people are potential rivals. Men on average have fewer friends than women. They tend to have acquaintances rather than friends. Even women have less regular contact with friends because of the need to juggle family and work responsibilities. People who are fortunate to have friends or social support are healthier and visit their doctor less.

"Don't flatter yourself that friendship authorises you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. The nearer you come into relation with a person, the more necessary do tact and courtesy become. Except in cases of necessity, which are rare, leave your friend to learn unpleasant things from his enemies; they are ready enough to tell him."

– Oliver Wendell Holmes

5.2 THREE TYPES OF ADULTS

Psychologists suggest that there are three types of adults:

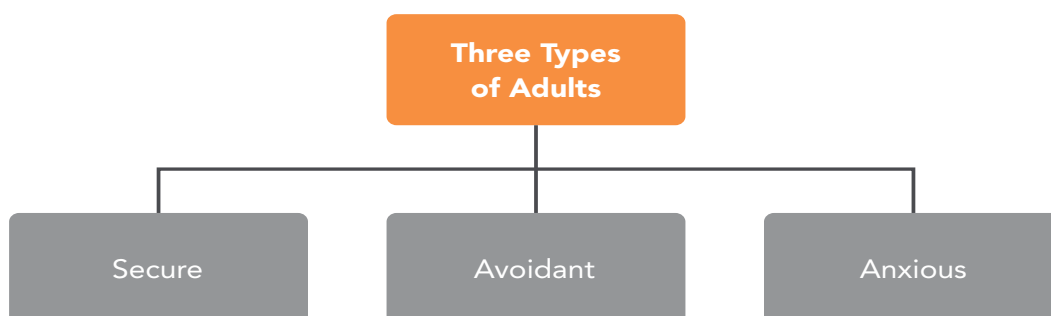


Fig. 5.1. Three Types of Adults

- *Secure.* Secure people have a high sense of confidence, self-worth, and self-belief instilled in them by their parents since childhood. They remember their parents as available, warm, loving, supportive and affectionate. They regard others as trustworthy, reliable, good hearted and helpful, unless they have reason to feel otherwise. They strive for intimate relationships and are not afraid to confide in those they trust and respect. They find the appropriate balance between dependence and independence. They admit when they are upset, but try to use their emotions constructively. Stable and secure attachments are likely to promote feelings of being confident, loved, and have a positive effect on our health and well-being as we mature into adults.
- *Avoidant.* Avoidant people grew up in families where displays of emotion were discouraged. Their father taught them that men are strong, dispassionate and do not cry. They remember their mother as cold, rejecting, remote, unpredictable and often unavailable. They regard other people with suspicion, and see them as dishonest and untrustworthy. They keep an emotional distance from those they love and find it difficult to express their affection. They put greater weight on achievement and physical possessions than intimacy. They don't disclose what they are feeling even when upset or angry. They do not trust others and are very reluctant to confide in other people.
- *Anxious.* Anxious people grew up in a family where they felt insecure and constantly under threat. They remember their father as unfair and a strict disciplinarian. They feel they have little control over their lives and find it hard to understand others. They are inclined to cling emotionally to others when given the opportunity to do so, and fear rejection continually. They worry constantly that their partner doesn't love them, experience jealousy for little reason and don't trust their partner when they are with members of the opposite sex. They discourage autonomy in others. They often show distress, anxiety and anger and may be prone to depression. When threatened by others they become too compliant.

Secure people find it easy to have a close relationship with others, and don't worry excessively about being abandoned. Take a few minutes to think about the worst possible situation. This can help you put things in perspective as it is highly unlikely that you will realise your worst fears. So even if your spouse were to leave you, you would probably manage okay, and survive better than you thought you could. Anxious people are less trusting and therefore likely to be more possessive, suspicious and jealous. Avoidant people fear closeness, are reluctant to get involved in close relationships and more likely to leave them. They are more likely to engage in promiscuous sex.

Avoidant and anxious adults have a greater vulnerability to behavioural and psychiatric problems as well as physical health problems. In addition, they are more likely to carry these predispositions into relationships later in life. Children who felt close to their parents growing up, in later life are likely to feel more healthy, secure, self-assured, loving, confident and interpersonally competent.

On the other hand, those children who felt misunderstood and disconnected from their parents are more likely in later life to experience feelings of anxiety, alienation, lack of confidence, and have difficulty relating to others. The past influences the present but we are not condemned to repeat it. We are capable of changing our behaviour provided we are aware of it and have the determination to do so. Change always involves specific action. You need to physically and mentally make an effort to change your behaviour if you want to have new habits in your life. This is not easy as it can take up to 30 days continuous practise to change a habit. Ultimately, we are responsible for our own behaviour.

“Anxiety is love’s greatest killer. It makes others feel as you might when a drowning man holds on to you. You want to save him, but you know he will strangle you with his panic.”

– Anais Nin

5.3 PARTNERS

Accept and appreciate your partner’s love. Realise that you and your partner are different and that you both have your own particular preferences, attitudes, beliefs and needs. Stay in touch with reality by not projecting unrealistic expectations or fantasies on your partner. Sometimes we project our own failings, shortcomings and inadequacies on to others. This can also happen in the workplace.

Have plenty of physical contact with your partner. Touch is the language of love including sex, caresses and cuddles. Every day do something together that you enjoy. This can be something as simple as going for a walk together. Break the routine by going away for a few days for a romantic break in a hotel, or go for an intimate meal in a nice restaurant. This will refresh and invigorate your relationship. To love others, you must love yourself. Loving yourself develops from self-confidence, self-knowledge and feelings of self-esteem and self-acceptance. This means accepting that you are not perfect, but behind the imperfections is a good person who wants to improve continuously and learn from their mistakes.

Happiness starts with love and displays of affection. Always communicate your love to your partner in both words, gestures and deeds. Give support and build up your partner's self-esteem by showing appreciation for what they do in your life. Don't make unfavourable comparisons with others as you may undermine your partner's self-image, self-worth and self-confidence.

Don't hold on to negative thoughts and emotions. Switch to positive thoughts instead. Focus more on your partner's needs than your own. Adjust your behaviour to your partner's interests, needs and lifestyle. Be aware that people change and develop differently as they mature and get older. Ageing and maturing brings change and different needs and challenges which you should take into consideration.

"If one is estranged from oneself, then one is estranged from others too. If one is out of touch with oneself, then one cannot touch others."

– Anne Morrow Lindbergh

5.4 MARRIAGE

A New Scientist magazine study in 2003 found that there is a clear boost to happiness from marriage. It lasts from about a year before a couple's wedding until a year afterwards. Although satisfaction levels tend to diminish in later years, a happy prolonged marriage has a permanent positive effect. The Irish Times/TNS Morbi 2006 poll found that the married over 50s enjoyed physical and psychological health. They enjoy a better quality of life and suffer less anxiety or depression, compared to single and divorced, separated or widowed people. The manner in which couples resolve emotionally charged conflicts predicts marital satisfaction throughout married life. Older couples appear to derive more pleasure than pain from their marriages, and also show more displays of affection during conflict than do younger couples. If you think that several sexual partners over time add to the spice of life, then you are mistaken. According to an exhaustive study published in the Social Organisation of Sexuality (University of Chicago Press, 1994), married people have more sex than singles and more orgasms.

Persistence may be one of the secrets of happy marriages. During the 1950s, demographer Paul Glick found that high school dropouts were more likely than graduates to be divorced, leading to speculation that people who give up on some difficult things, like finishing school, are also unlikely to persevere in marriage as well. This is now known as the *Glick Effect*.

Married couples are happier than single people, and this applies to both men and women. Remarriage has the same positive effect on happiness as a first marriage. Throughout the Western world, married people report more happiness than those who are unmarried,

divorced, or separated. They are also happier than cohabiting couples who have a greater desire to be autonomous, a lesser need for commitment and thus less sense of loyalty. The sense of permanence, promise to stay together, and security that marriage offers must make the difference. Even after 35 years of marriage, the happiness of those in their first marriage remains significantly greater than their unmarried counterparts. The role of spouse and parent is a source of self-esteem to many couples. Married couples in supportive happy relationships are less likely to be lonely, and their children are more likely to be happy than the children of divorced parents.

Married people are less likely to commit suicide. They enjoy safe and better sex and live longer. It's reputed to add 7 years to the life of a man and about 4 years to the life of a woman. Unmarried people are at greater risk of depression. The quality of the marriage is of prime importance. People who say their marriage is satisfying, who are still in love with their partner and consider them their best friend, spend quality time together, rarely report being unhappy, discontented with life or depressed.

Apart from the security, love and comfort of a happy marriage, married couples share accommodation, resources and expertise and thus reap substantial economies of scale. There is thus some truth in the adage that two people can live as cheaply as one. Also, married people generally have better and more secure jobs and higher standards of living. People are incentivised to stay together in a marriage when the advantages of doing so outweigh the trauma of separation and divorce.

"It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages."

– Friedrich Nietzsche

The key to a successful marriage and a successful manager

One marriage counsellor has put forward a magic ratio of 5 to 1 as the key to a successful marriage. This ratio is likely to apply also to building and maintaining harmonious relationships in the workplace between management and staff. This means that as long as there is five times as much positive feeling and interaction between husband and wife and between managers and staff as there is negative, relationships are likely to be harmonious. This would suggest that people should accentuate the positive rather than the negative as few appreciate a nagging undermining partner or manager. Concentrate on the good things in the relationship rather than highlighting the bad. Nobody likes their weaknesses and shortcomings to be highlighted all the time. People need to create a secure base from

which to face the world. This is a base in which they can be themselves and be accepted with all their imperfections and vulnerabilities. We all need comfort, contact, connection and caring and if these needs are not being met, we are likely to seek them elsewhere. In contrast, divorce and disengagements happens when our needs are not being met and the negative aspects of the relationship far outweigh the positive.

In marriage, couples should seek agreement, harmony and compromise rather than arguments and dispute. With two different personalities involved there will always be some scope for conflict, disharmony and disagreement. Couples need to adapt to the needs of their different personalities, and that's why it is necessary to work hard at reaching agreement, and when this is not possible to at least compromise. Sometimes it's not worth fighting over and it may be necessary for you to gracefully concede in order to maintain harmony. Numerous studies have shown that marital and workplace conflict is bad for your health, leading to cardiovascular problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and a poorly functioning immune system.

In fact, most people fight over nothing – trivial things like what television channels to watch, whose turn it is to put out the rubbish or who should have custody of the remote control. Trivial things have a habit of escalating into major issues if handled insensitively, particularly if one side always insists on getting their own way. Successful relationships are about timing, empathy, sensitivity and give and take. Know when it is right to take a stand, and when it is right to concede or compromise. Know when it's right to admit you're wrong, and when it's right to keep your mouth shut. Relationships are also about humour, fun, affection, tenderness, exploration and teamwork.

Marriage is an equal partnership with shared decision making, and should be operated as such with give and take on both sides. If a man or woman is not prepared to share power with his spouse there is a good chance that the marriage will self-destruct. Similarly, if a manager is not prepared to share power with staff by including them in decision making the result will be a discontented staff. Empowerment increases work happiness, improves attitudes, and improve overall organisational performance. Job involvement, development plans, and participation in implementation has the most impact. Job involvement is a state of engagement with one's job, identifying and viewing the job as central to one's identity and self-esteem, and is roughly opposite to the concept of alienation and meaningless.

The increased sense of self-worth and contribution to the overall benefit of the organisation improve the employee's attitude and increases job satisfaction. Employees with a positive attitude, high self-esteem, self-efficacy, emotional stability, and more locus of control are more satisfied at work. Such employees are better at interpersonal relationships, cope better with organisational change, are more committed to their organisation, as well as being more pleasant to be around.

Managers with high positivity display increased organisational citizenship behaviours which means a greater sense of altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, fair play, courtesy, willingness to help, and civic virtue. They maintain high standards of attendance, punctuality, resource conservation, and utilise their time more effectively. They exert extra effort on the job, protect the organisation and spread goodwill. They are more likely to volunteer, help co-workers and customers, give blood, and donate money to charities. They are less likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and burnout and usually enjoy robust good health. In addition, such managers have little intention to quit and eventually leave the organisation.

Happy people are less likely to experience periods of unemployment and more likely to succeed in searching for new jobs. Because of their cheerfulness they are able to positively influence interviewers and win social support from peers, thus enabling them to perform better. Because of their friendly dispositions their superiors have usually biased positive perceptions of their performance which helps their upward mobility in the corporate hierarchy.

Five kinds of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour



Fig. 5.2. Organisational citizenship behaviours

A downside of positivity is that if such peoples' aspirations are not met, they may seek opportunities elsewhere. Those who manage their expectations more realistically may experience higher job satisfaction. On the other hand, since happiness and positivity are contagious, it may be possible to project the happiness and positive organisational citizenship behaviours to managers to employees that they supervise.

However, marriage is not a guarantee of happiness as is testified by the high rate of divorce in the western world. The least happy people are those trapped in an unhappy marriage. It causes long-term resentment when people stay in an unhappy marriage from a sense of duty. Some couples may stay together until the children grow into adults. In the meantime, continuous sarcasm and bickering between the parents creates an unhappy and stressful atmosphere for the children to grow up in. Thus, separation may be the best option in circumstances like this. Divorced, separated and widowed people may be unhappy for many years after the event. In fact, divorced, separated, or widowed are significantly less happy than those who never married. It is more likely that people with compatible backgrounds and similar interests and personalities will be happier and stay together.

Reaching out to those you love comes easy for most women because of their biological make-up and more sensitive, caring and accommodating nature. Men generally find it more difficult to show tenderness, empathy and affection. Men are governed by the male chemical testosterone while women are governed by the female chemical oxytocin. These chemicals shape their behavioural responses, the 'fight or flight' responses in men and the 'tend and befriend' response in women.

Married people cultivate a successful relationship by knowing and anticipating each other's desires, wants and needs and catering for each other's interests. You should stop thinking that your partner should be perfect. Perfection is not a state that is found in the real world. It is insensitive and unacceptable to criticise or belittle your partner in front of other people. This shows a lack of respect and contempt for another. Instead don't be afraid to offer sincere compliments and praise about things you admire about your partner. People who stay together, play together, and this applies to married couples as well. It's important that married couples spend time together in common enjoyable recreational pursuits and pastimes.

It is more likely that positive, happy people more readily form stable, permanent, satisfying, and happy marriages. Happy people are more fun to be around and are more easy-going, outgoing, trusting, compassionate, and focused on others. Nobody wants to be with people who are grumpy, irritable, miserable, complaining and withdrawn all the time. A good marriage like a good friendship involves mutual self-disclosure on each side. As a relationship deepens, self-disclosure increases.

"The secret of a happy marriage is finding the right person. You know they're right if you love to be with them all the time."

– Julia Child

5.5 SIGNS OF A DETERIORATING RELATIONSHIP

Some of the signs of a deteriorating marriage relationship include criticism, contempt and sarcasm, defensiveness and stonewalling. Each of these is more progressively damaging than the previous one. In contrast, in the workplace, positive mood seems to reduce interpersonal conflict and enhance collaborative negotiation outcomes.



Fig. 5.3. Deteriorating Relationship

- Criticism.* There is a difference between criticism and complaining. Criticism involves attacking someone's habits, personality or character rather than complaining about a specific behaviour or action. Complaining can be healthy for a marriage provided the complaints are taken on board as constructive feedback, and something is done to rectify the offending behaviour. Expressing annoyance and disagreement can make a marriage stronger rather than suppressing the complaint. Criticism can become pervasive in a marriage and create a negative downward spiral as it demoralises without correcting the situation that it condemns. Learning how to react calmly and positively will help prevent unproductive fighting, and help to solve problems in a mutually satisfactory way.
- Contempt.* Contempt is a powerful feeling of dislike toward somebody so that you consider them worthless, inferior, untrustworthy or undeserving of respect. Contempt is probably one of the main reasons for marriage breakdown. People showing contempt for another make that person feel humiliated, embarrassed, rejected and demeaned. They show destructive criticism, feelings of disgust and lack of empathy and respect. They undermine other's confidence by insensitively highlighting faults, shortcomings or idiosyncrasies in front of other people. Contempt is a kind of psychological abuse and is expressed through words, deeds and body language. Verbal abuse includes insults and name-calling, teasing, hostile humour, sarcasm and mockery. Non-verbal abuse includes sneering, rolling your eyes and curling your upper lip. When people show contempt for each other they will respond defensively which only makes matters worse. It then becomes a competition to see who comes up with the most

hurtful insult. The result is a vicious downward cycle of recrimination and abuse with both sides feeling victimised by the other. Research shows that people in contemptuous relationships are more likely to suffer from viral infections such as flu and colds than other people. Contempt attacks the immune system while fondness and admiration are antidotes.

- *Defensiveness.* Defensiveness is a natural reaction to contempt. Defensiveness may include denying responsibility, refusing to see your partner's point of view, making excuses or meeting your partner's criticism with one of your own. Being defensive is only adding to your marital problems. To counteract criticism, contempt and defensiveness and prevent the negativity from spiralling out of control, show your partner that you understand their point of view. Learn to listen in a non-defensive way to defuse sources of difference. Instead of attacking or ignoring your partner's point of view try to see the problem from their perspective and admit that it may have some validity. Being open and receptive will disarm your partner and make it less likely that they will continue to criticise or react with contempt towards you. An affectionate hug or kiss may prove an effective safeguard against such poisonous ideas taking hold.
- *Stonewalling.* This is the process of replacing communication with a stony cold wall of silence. Stonewalling conveys disapproval, disinterest and distance. It is a type of sensory deprivation as most people are gregarious and love to touch and talk to each other. Being locked away in solitary confinement is considered one of the most severe punishments in the prison system. Lack of human contact is likely to bring on feelings of severe loneliness, isolation and even depression. We need the support of other people to comfort us in times of need, to confirm our humanity and identity, and help us process our emotions, and deal with the trials and tribulations of life. If you cannot share your feelings and concerns an important part of your being is excluded from the relationship. Stonewalling is likely to induce feelings of emptiness, embarrassment, alienation and loneliness. It freezes a person out of a relationship and if left go out of hand may be very difficult to reverse the situation and save the relationship from irredeemable damage. It is at this stage that the services of marriage counsellors are called upon, and even then, it may be too late to save the marriage.

"True humour springs not more from the head than from the heart. It is not contempt; its essence is love. It issues not in laughter, but in still smiles, which lie far deeper."

– Thomas Carlyle

5.6 WHY GOOD RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

Close relationships make us feel needed and good and happy about ourselves. Unconditional love allows us to love and be loved. We feel accepted, acknowledged, secure and safe in the relationship and this contributes to our emotional well-being. The diversity of other people can bring out the best in us, and make us more interesting and creative. Their empathy and emotional support in times of need can help us get through the inevitable trials and tribulations of life. Similarly, research on hassles and uplifts identifies the kind of minor daily events that result in negative and positive emotions, respectively.

You know who your friends really are when they come to your rescue with genuine offers of constructive assistance in times of tragedy like personal trauma or bereavement. A good indicator of friendship might be who visits you when you are sick in hospital, and you are feeling sorry for yourself and need somebody to cheer you up. It is in times of trouble that you really find out who your real friends are. Psychological wealth is more important to our well-being and mental health than material wealth. Psychological wealth is increased when we are the recipients of positive communication, consideration, appreciation and kindness.

It is a good idea to be on good terms with your next-door neighbour. It is a really nice feeling to know that your next-door neighbours are willing to help you if the need arises. You never know when you may need their help in an emergency, or to keep a friendly eye on your house during your absence. There is nothing worse than being on poor terms with your neighbour as it puts you in an invidious position. The close proximity means it is hard to avoid them and trying to avoid eye contact with them can become a bit of a chore. It is a sad reflection on modern life when people don't know the people next door. In many cases the sense of community where neighbours kept a concerned eye out for each other and their children is gone. A safe secure supportive community is a great source of comfort and happiness.

Empathy

Empathy is an important part of good relationships and may be emotional or rational. Emotional empathy is a form of personal validation. You get across the impression that you sincerely feel the other person's pain and know what it's like to be the other person. This takes great feeling, sensitivity, consideration and compassion. On the other hand, rational empathy is viewing the experience through the other person's eyes. Maslow said that self-actualisers had strong feelings of empathy and affection for all human beings. They had the capacity for greater love, deeper friendship, and more complete identification with others

than those who are not self-actualised. To derive happiness from being helpful to others, one must be able to take another's perspective, understand another's feelings, and influence them in a positive way. Empathy is considered one of the key abilities of a successful and happy manager.

Empathy Map

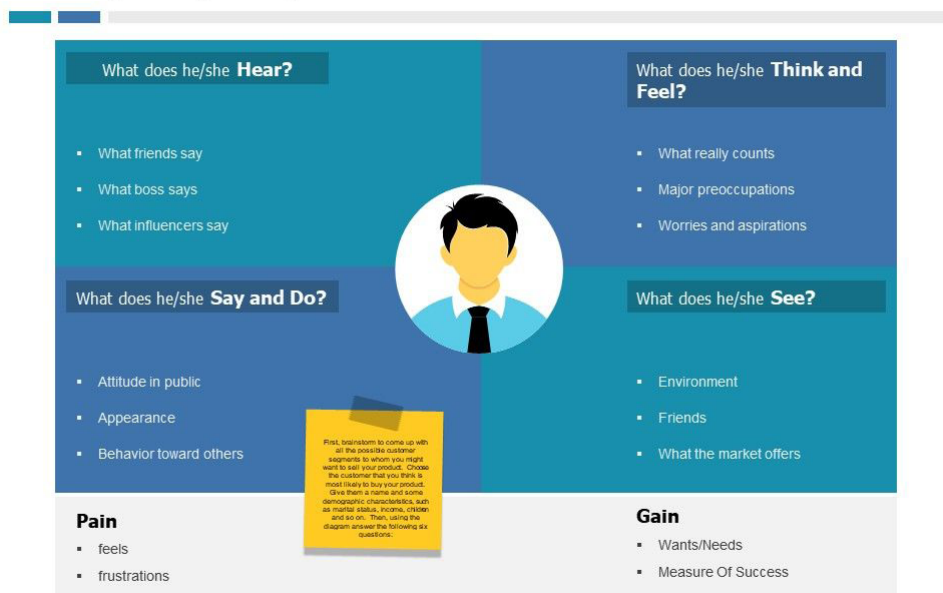


Fig. 5.4. Empathy Map

To practise empathy, managers must accept that other people see things differently. Their viewpoint is shaped by unique experiences, beliefs, values, attitudes, temperament and upbringing. Managers literally have to get inside their head and walk in their shoes to see how they perceive the world. To do this they must imagine what it is like to be the other person, to share their perspectives and to savour their feelings, emotions and concerns. To be on the same waveband as other people and your staff you must be open-minded, considerate, courteous, respectful, attentive and an active listener. Take turns to discuss and make sure you do most of the listening. The reason we have two ears and one mouth is because we should listen twice as much as we talk. A sympathetic ear is half the battle. Showing contempt for another's viewpoint discourages communication and is the opposite of practising empathy.

"There is nothing we like to see so much as the gleam of pleasure in a person's eye when he feels that we have sympathised with him, understood him. At these moments something fine and spiritual passes between two friends. These are the moments worth living."

– Don Marquis

5.7 HOW TO BE A BETTER FRIEND

Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher divided friendship into three types:

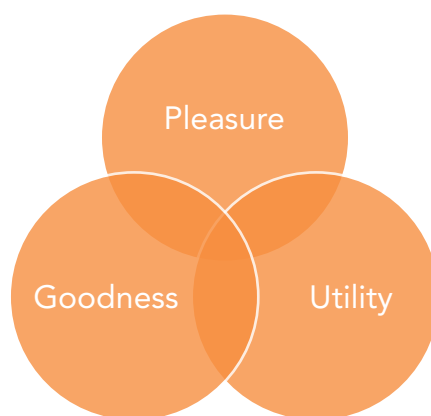


Fig. 5.5. Three Types of Friendship

1. The first is based on brief pleasure, favoured by the young. This can be superficial, fickle and fleeting. The young tend to live for the short-term rather than the long-term. They like to be around people they find momentarily funny and entertaining.
2. The second is based on utility, typically involving commercial transactions and often temporary. The emphasis is on making money, what people can do for you rather than creating effective relationships.
3. The third is perfect friendship which is based on goodness. This type of friendship is rare and needs time and intimacy to flourish. Once it does, though, it is permanent. To quote from Aristotle *“It is those who desire the good of their friends for the friends’ sake that are most truly friends, because each loves the other for what he is and not for any incidental quality.”*

In surveys when people are asked what gives meaning to their lives, friendships always comes out top of the list. We usually become friendly with those who cross our paths frequently – neighbours, workmates, colleagues, people we share an office with, and people we meet socially in the neighbourhood, pub, club, or elsewhere. It is not surprising that we form bonds with those we frequently interact with and with people that we have something in common. People like those who display loyalty, trust and acceptance. So, develop a

more trusting approach to others. We are in fact biologically predisposed to trust others as thousands of years ago we organised ourselves into close knit groups for protection, companionship and survival. Similarly, people who engage together in team sports or clubs often form lifetime friendships.

To trust others, we must be more open and practise a high level of self-disclosure and transparency. Generally, if you disclose personal things to a close and trusted friend, they are more likely to reciprocate. Self-disclosure is the basis for a good friendship as people like to feel that they are understood, appreciated and respected. It's time to move on if the other person doesn't reciprocate as they are not really your friend if they are not willing to share their innermost thoughts, feelings and concerns. Once trust is broken the friendship cannot be sustained.

Take a genuine interest in what your friend does for a living, their concerns and their pastimes. Frequently enquire about their family, and how they are getting along without being intrusive or insensitive, as most people value their independence and privacy. Make an effort and keep in touch with their lives. Even when people live in different towns or indeed different countries it is now possible to keep in touch by e-mail, Facebook, social media, mobile phone and telephone. Getting together occasionally and where this is not feasible, making regular contact by phone will keep the relationship alive. Try out new challenges with friends and celebrate their successes in life. Friends are available in times of need. Confidence breeds confidence, so act confidently. There is a virtuous confidence cycle. Study and model the behaviour of confident people. Confident people attract and retain friendships.

Communicate positively by expecting good things to happen in your life. Don't see issues in black and white. There are only right and wrong answers to mathematical problems unlike everyday issues that we constantly face. People like to be with others who are happy, positive and are fun and enjoyable to be with. Happiness is contagious, so spread it around. People like to be around people who support their sense of self-identity and self-esteem. Be agreeable as everybody likes to be told they're right rather than wrong. Doing this affirms other people's intelligence, self-worth and values and shows them that you like and respect them, which makes them feel good.

People who have been through difficult times together are more likely to understand each other. For example, breast cancer survivors often keep in touch with their former support groups long after they have been cured and gone their separate ways. These are people who understand what they've been through and can empathise with their perspective on life. In fact, most cancer survivors say the disease changed their lives and perspective on life in some positive way. They often experience a renewed sense of confidence, a greater appreciation of life, a new perspective on their priorities in life and an increase in their coping skills.

When conversing with others vary your pitch, rate, tone and volume to make your speech more interesting. Be aware of the impact and importance of non-verbal communication such as the need for eye contact and positive body language. To make a first good impression, maintain a relaxed posture and warm, engaging eye contact. By making eye contact you're showing that your mind is not somewhere else. To soften your gaze, move your eyes smoothly around the person's face as staring can be intimidating.

*"I've learned that all a person has in life is family and friends.
If you lose those you have nothing, so friends are to be
treasured more than anything else in the world."*

– Trey Parker & Matt Stone

Tips for good conversation

To start a conversation, say something connected to the social situation or about topical current affairs issues. This shows your eagerness and willingness to talk. During the conversation make comments that are connected to and follow-on from what is said. You don't have to be funny or clever; all you have to be is nice and friendly. Use open-ended questions to keep a conversation going or elaborate on what someone else has already said. Realise that the body language should harmonise with the verbal message, otherwise contradictory signals will be given, and the body language will override the verbal message. Good conversationalists are sensitive to the signals given off by other people's body language as to whether or not they find the topic interesting. Once the conversation gets going, back off and give others a chance to say their piece. Social bores dominate a conversation while socially competent people want to involve others and make it more interesting.

To help conversations flow, apply the two rules of brainstorming. Say things without trying to impress people, and don't judge ideas as they come up. Others will feel more relaxed and get more freely involved in the conversation if they don't think what they say will be judged, analysed and criticised. Realise that there are different perspectives and viewpoints to every issue. Don't take things personally and be quick to forgive and forget when people make remarks that are hurtful but not intentional. People have their own little idiosyncrasies that you must overlook and accommodate. Listen with empathy and seek feedback.

Everybody is rejected and ignored from time to time. It's how you respond to the rejection that's important. Socially competent people don't attribute rejection to internal causes, such as their lack of personality or inability to make friends. They assume it can result from many factors such as incompatibility, the other person's bad mood, or a misunderstanding. Be resilient enough to take rejections diplomatically in your stride and just move on to the next group.

Socially competent people and managers know how to control their emotions. They don't react to the negative emotions of others such as aggression but instead know how to be a calming influence in charged situations. They know the appropriate time to shift attention away from the negative emotions to the positive aspects of the situation. They are able to read and detect emotions on others' eyes and faces and to feel empathy. In addition, they know how to handle conflict. Instead of responding aggressively they stop the conflict from escalating by apologising, if appropriate, making a peace offering of some kind, or negotiating a compromise. Managing conflict means listening, communicating, problem-solving, and seeing things from the other's perspective or just changing the subject. It doesn't mean surrendering your point of view.

"There is no such thing as a worthless conversation, provided you know what to listen for. And questions are the breath of life for a conversation."

– James Nathan Miller

5.8 EXUDING SELF-CONFIDENCE

Self-confident people tend to make more friends. The more friends you have the happier you're likely to be. The following ten tips recalled by the acronym **NEWSLETTER** will help you easily remember the points:



Fig. 5.6. Confidence

1. **Nice posture.** Confident people stand up straight with shoulders trust back when they meet people. Imagine a hook in the sky is holding you up. Lean forward occasionally to show involvement, concern and interest. Sloppy posture creates a bad impression and may indicate lack of interest, unconcern or even pomposity.
2. **Eye contact.** Always make eye contact with people. However, avoid staring as this may be intimidating, embarrassing, uncomfortable and unsettling for other people. Shy people tend to look down or look away, and thus fail to make proper eye contact and make friends. Practise looking people in the eye. Direct your focus outwards, observing others and listening actively.
3. **Weaknesses.** Don't dwell on your weaknesses. Know your weaknesses and take corrective action to eliminate them. Make a list of your weaknesses and do something to improve or rectify them. Pay particular attention to your strengths and emphasise them when necessary to do so.
4. **Smile.** Smile when you meet people. A smile is disarming, breaks the ice, and implies that you like people, and are glad to be in their company. Smiles are contagious and you will find that many people will smile back in return. Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important. Emotional contagion theory explains that people automatically mimic the moods, attitudes, smiles, facial expressions, gestures, and speech of those around them. This means that individuals or groups can be instantly affected by the positive or negative moods of others.
5. **Look right.** People are judged by the way they dress and in their standard of personal grooming and hygiene. Put on nice clothes and keep your shoes polished as it will help you exude confidence. You'll feel good about yourself and this will show in the way you act.
6. **Experience.** Don't hold grudges. Holding grudges will do you no good and will only harm you psychologically, and make you a bitter and unpleasant person to be around. Learn from your experience and move on.
7. **Think positive.** Think positive thoughts. Turn "I can't" into "I can." People like being around positive capable people. Positive people find it easier to make and retain friendships. Positive people expect others will respond to them favourably. Thus, in a social situation they have no hesitation in casually joining a conversation in progress.
8. **Tactics.** Prepare mentally for events or meeting other people socially. Have a few current popular newsworthy topics rehearsed that you can bring into the conversation. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Visualise yourself at the gathering smiling and interacting confidently, comfortably and successfully. Remember popular people listen as well as talk. The best way to be liked and make friends is to become a good conversationalist and listener.

9. **Esteem.** Develop a sense of high self-esteem. Like yourself and others are likely to like you too. Treat people the way you would like to be treated. Observe the normal courtesies. “Please,” “Thank you,” “Nice to see you,” “Certainly” and “Well done” should be a normal part of your vocabulary. Demonstrating courtesy, concern, respect, acceptance, support, openness, and honesty is essential to successful interpersonal relationships.
10. **Role model.** Learn from someone you admire that is self-confident and engaging. Study how they talk, their demeanour and their body posture. Notice how they pronounce their words carefully. You are judged to a large extent by the way you speak. People may make judgements about your education, background and social class by the way you speak, your vocabulary and the way you enunciate words. Visualise your role model while adopting their style. The style adopted by Barack Obama, the former President of the United States (2009) seems to have been influenced by President John F. Kennedy and the civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King.

5.9 SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

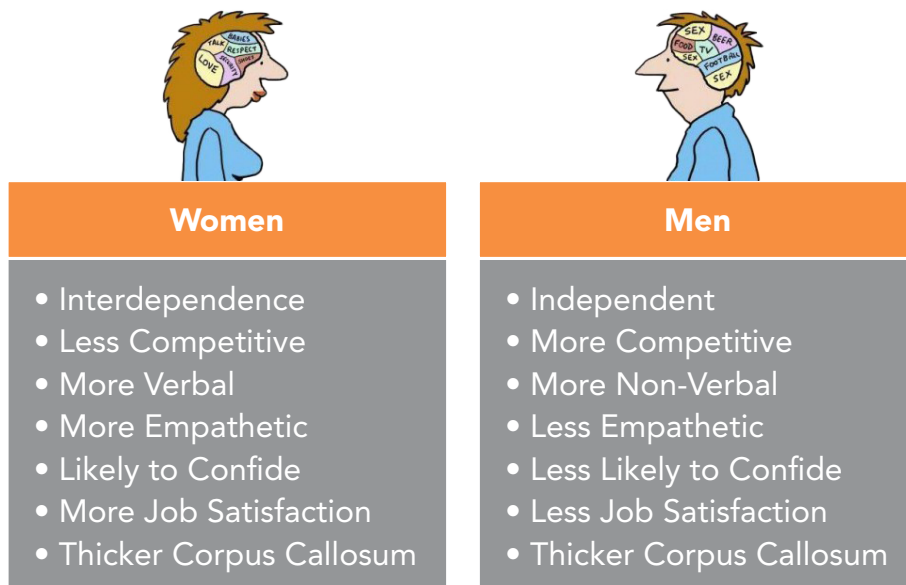


Fig. 5.7. Differences between Men and Women

Knowing generic differences between male and females will help make your interactions with them more successful. Differences between the sexes are noticed from childhood. Boys strive for independence from their mother, while girls value interdependence, and define their identity through their social connections. Boys’ play often involves competitive group activities while girls’ play happens in smaller groups, with less aggression, more sharing and

more intimate discussion. However, with equal opportunity women are now more involved in competitive sport. Women soccer, rugby and hockey teams and women boxers are not uncommon. The recent Women's World Soccer Championship in 2019, which was won by the USA has proved to be an astounding success. Women excel in field athletics, in tennis and swimming. Women spend more time caring for both young children and aged parents. They buy most birthday gifts and greeting cards. They outnumber men in most of the caring professions such as nursing, social work and teaching. The burden of looking after frail and elderly parents often falls on their daughters.

There is a difference between men and women and what they like to talk about. Men and women have different communication styles which affects their approach to management. Women tend to be more verbal using twice as many words as men. In contrast, men are more non-verbal, often preferring action to talking. Generally, men are programmed not to talk about or express their emotional needs with the exception of gays who seem to have more empathy and be more sensitive and in touch with their feminine side. It seems to be a macho thing with heterosexual males. Men prefer to concentrate on physical things like hobbies, travel, cars, sports, work and politics. Women are more expressive; men tend to conceal or control their emotions.

Men often complain about their wives' volatility and this has some truth in fact. Research confirms that women really are both happier and sadder than men. Women are perceived as having more empathy than men. Women experience more of all emotions except anger. They experience more positive emotions than men more frequently and more intensely. Women convey emotion through facial expression and communication; men express emotion through aggressive behaviour. In sad situations women are more prone to shed tears and express emotion than men.

Men are more likely to confide in women than other men when they are looking for empathy, sympathy and understanding. However, women are more likely to confide in other women when disclosing their joys and hurts. Male friendships tend to be less supportive and intimate than women's and they rarely share feelings or personal reflections. Women's ability to make more intimate and lasting ties with other women may account for their long lives which on average are 6 to 7 years longer than men.

On the other hand, women like to gossip, share personal information and are eager to talk about emotional issues and their concerns and feelings. In modern western society and with women now considered the equal of men in all areas of professional, occupational, social, sporting and political life there is more scope for cross gender friendships without the sexual connotations. In previous generations it was taboo for both sexes to have friendships with the opposite sex outside of marriage. In the modern world there are more opportunities for men and women to meet at work and socially than ever before. On the dark side men are much more likely to get involved in the sexual abuse of children than women.

Surveys show that women are more satisfied at work than men, in spite of earning less for the same jobs and doing most of the work at home too. The reason for this seems to be that women's expectations of working life are lower than men. Psychologically men still consider themselves to be the breadwinners even though this notion is probably outmoded with both partners working in most households and in some cases, women earning more than men. Women also occupy a variety of roles. A man out of work is seen as unemployed whereas a woman with a child who is out of work is not seen as unemployed but as a full-time mother.

The area joining the left side and the right side of the brain is called the corpus callosum. The corpus callosum is thicker in women than in men. This means it is easier for messages to pass from the left side to the right side of the brain. This may facilitate the supposed superiority of women in multitasking enabling them to think of more than one thing at a time. This would suggest that women are more suitable for managerial jobs requiring creativity.

"The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference."

– Audre Lorde

5.10 FIVE ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS

1. Take a genuine interest in what your friends and employees do. Keep in touch with your friends and employee by enquiring occasionally about what they are doing.
2. Don't undermine your partner's self-esteem by criticising or belittling them in front of others. Likewise, don't undermine your staff's self-esteem. Instead take every opportunity to boost their self-esteem and show them appreciation for the unique work contribution, friendship, support, love and happiness they bring into your life.
3. Anticipate and meet your partner's wants, needs and interests. They will appreciate your efforts.
4. Display emotional empathy to your partner by sincerely feeling their pain and expressing your concern. Do the same for your staff. Never show contempt as it may lead to an irretrievable break-down of relationships.
5. Invest in staff satisfaction and happiness. Encourage managers to communicate effectively based on individual traits and responsibilities.

6 WORK & HAPPINESS

- What are the three ways you can view work?
- What are the four approaches to cooperation at work?
- How do toxic workers behave?
- What are the ways you can be happier at work?

6.1 PERCEPTION OF WORK

Standard economic theory assumes that time spent in leisure gives us pleasure while time spent in work gives us pain. This suggests that we only work because we have to – we need money to survive and pay our way. In different circumstances, we would prefer leisure to work. However, in reality most people like and identify with their jobs, and would work even if they didn't have to. This is confirmed by people who inherit wealth or win significant amounts of money in the lotto and return to their work shortly afterwards. Some experts maintain that after the family, work is the second most important factor affecting people's overall happiness.

A person cannot be genuinely happy if they are unhappy at work. This is why it is important to design and manage relatively stress-free workplaces to create happiness and meaning for the workforce. Senior managers may need to intervene at an organisational level with improved managerial practices and human resource policies to help job performance, job satisfaction and goal achievement at the management and employee level. Having the right person assigned to jobs that fit the specific skills, abilities and personalities of the workforce is crucial to bottom line success. They are more satisfied if they are assigned different, varied or more responsibilities.

Bertrand Russell, the British philosopher, argued that work was essential to happiness. To Russell, even the dullest of work is better than being idle. Work occupies many hours of the day for employees; it provides a chance for success and an opportunity to socialise and excel. Work allows the exercise and development of skill and provides a sense of achievement when the job is completed. If people perceive themselves and their work is of a high value and respected by society, they will be motivated. Productivity, satisfaction, commitment, cooperation and customer service also increase when people hold a positive perception about their work. Commitment is the extent to which employees identify with and accept the organisation's goals, are willing to work hard to achieve them, and have a strong desire to remain part of the organisation.

The three perceptions of work



Fig. 6.1. Three perceptions of work

There are three ways in which you can view work: as a job, as a career or as a calling. The perception you have of work will determine the dedication and amount of job satisfaction that you will enjoy from your work and the amount of happiness you will derive from the experience. People with prestigious jobs like lawyers, architects and doctors are often unhappy while those with seemingly low-level jobs such as hairdressing, beauticians and shop assistants are often very contented and happy in their work. If you love to do your work it won't feel like work. Some experts have estimated that lawyers are 3.6 times more likely to be depressed than members of other professions and think this is because of the adversarial nature of their work. Work plays a central part to most of our lives, gives us a sense of identity and takes up the most significant part of our effort and time. So, it's important that we enjoy what we do.

A job is sometimes seen as something we have to do to earn a living – a chore or burden imposed from outside. A job is not usually seen as contributing to our long-term goals, aspirations and happiness. Many people if they had a free choice would not be doing the work that they are currently doing. They focus on the financial and social rewards rather than any personal fulfilment the job offers. They are purely motivated by the money and work hard for financial incentives because it pays the mortgage and supports the life style they currently enjoy. Doing the job often doesn't offer much psychological reward or sense of well-being and satisfaction. They look forward to the end of each work day and the end of each work week, and regard their hobbies and leisure time as more important than their work.

People with a career might enjoy their work. Money is a factor, though the status and possibilities for advancement and job satisfaction are often considered more important. Some research has suggested that our perception of our social standing, which is linked to our occupation within our local communities, determines our sense of well-being. Because people with a career seek promotion, they will take the initiative to impress the boss. People with a career are usually professionally qualified, and loyalty to the profession is often stronger than loyalty to a particular employer. Because their profession can be practised in different organisations their skills are transferable. They are thus very mobile and may seek

out companies offering them the best prospects for advancement. They have no hesitation to move on when the promotion stops and more attractive opportunities exist elsewhere. They place a high value on leisure activities and think a lot about their holidays.

People with a calling are paid to do work they would love to do anyway. Professions like teaching, the church, community welfare, and nursing attract people with a calling. A calling can take the form of a wish to become a teacher to help disadvantaged or handicapped children. Any type of job can be turned into a calling depending on the attitude of the job holder. Attitude is everything. If you change your attitude you can change your life. When a person changes their attitude, they become happier, more energised, can see new possibilities, and are able to achieve extraordinary results. They learn to react in a constructive positive manner to what life throws at them. People are able to set themselves and accomplish goals they previously felt were beyond them. One way of doing this is through reframing. For instance, nurses may redefine their work as helping patients heal as opposed to performing menial tasks at the behest of doctors. Such changes in attitudes should be quite effective in creating new positive perspectives, and would be expected to improve happiness at work.

All you need is scope to personalise and make the job better. People who really enjoy their work feel it isn't work. They work hard because they find the work intrinsically rewarding and feel that they are making a significant contribution to society. They have a passionate interest in the work which maximises job satisfaction. They see the work as an end in itself and are likely to stay with the company longer.

"Happiness is made up of three factors: positive emotion; being completely engaged; and feeling you are part of something meaningful. If you have engagement, energy and meaning at work, it leads to higher productivity."

– Martin Seligman

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction rather than money is the prime motivator in such jobs. They find their work challenging, stimulating, meaningful, purposeful and engaging. They see their work as making a difference to mankind. The work they do is consistent with their values and beliefs. People with a calling take pride in what they do and are caring, efficient, productive and creative. People who are self-actualised and proud to work for their company are more than ten times as likely to be very satisfied with their jobs as those who are indifferent. Work is not a calling if you would prefer to be doing something else. People with a calling are likely to be professionally qualified, but being so is no guarantee that you see your work in that light. People with callings are consistently happier than those with mere jobs or careers.

Work gives structure, purpose and meaning to life. It provides us with opportunities to meet other people and socialise and do interesting and worthwhile jobs. On the other hand, unemployment brings lack of confidence, isolation, boredom, misery, depression, disillusionment and unhappiness. People who receive unemployment benefit are more than twice as likely as those not receiving welfare to feel hopeless or worthless. The loss of a job affects a person for many years even if they eventually get back to work. Happy workers seek win-win solutions. They prefer accommodation and collaboration to competition.

6.2 WORK LIFE BALANCE



Fig. 6.2. Work Life Balance

Surveys show that workers in the USA work longer hours than workers in Europe. GDP per head is higher but productivity is the same. Happiness has stood still in the US since 1975 while it has risen in Europe. In addition, employers are putting more emphasis on efficiency, key performance indicators, productivity, achieving targets, quality and cost effectiveness, and so there is more pressure on workers to work hard. In addition, there are more rules and less trust so that people feel they have no discretion and less control over their work. All work and no play will make Jack a dull boy and it is likely to make him a sick boy too. So, it's important that people spend sufficient time in recreational activities away from the demands and pressures of work.

Having balance in your life is a vital part of psychological, emotional and mental well-being. If you're dissatisfied with the quality of your life, take some time to reflect on your physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Flexible working may be suitable for some people in terms of where and when they work and the sense of control over their lives that they get back. Flexible working arrangements include part-time work, job sharing, term-time hours, annualised hours, childcare facilities onsite, unpaid leave and an increase in working from home. When people are free to work at times suited to them, they will be happier and more productive overall.

Employers should respect employee needs to balance work and home life. Research in ten European countries in 2006 suggests that we get more satisfaction from activities outside of work. The most common examples would be a sport, which provides plenty of challenges and also, creative leisure activities such as art, amateur dramatics and chess. In fact, anything that demands some level of skill unlike excessively watching television which is purely a passive and a mind-numbing activity. In another study, volunteering came second, after dancing, as the greatest source of joy. Research also shows that making trade-offs for promotion or a higher salary, such as accepting a longer more stressful commute to work or sacrificing time with family and friends, is rarely worth it. You may enjoy the new status, power and higher salary but feel stressed by the longer hours and extra responsibility and the changed attitudes of your former work colleagues.

“Those who are caught up in the busy life have neither the time nor quiet to come to understand themselves and their goals. Since the opportunity for inward attention hardly ever comes, many people have not heard from themselves for a long time. Those who are always ‘on the run’ never meet anybody any more, not even themselves.”

– Robert Banks

Stress at work

Job-specific stressors include long working hours, high workloads, conflicting or ambiguous requests to perform work, and the demands of work versus family commitments. Organisational stressors include job insecurity, interpersonal conflicts, major changes in working conditions and perceived injustices in the workplace. Stress causes heart disease and premature death. So, working long hours is bad for your health and will wreck family relationships. In addition, tired employees are irritable with co-workers and customers and so bad for business. Customers who are treated badly are likely to take their business elsewhere. An excessive workload may cause stress that may in turn lead to burnout and sick leave and

high staff turnover. Burnout is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged involvement in work that is too intellectually and emotionally demanding.

People suffering from burnout may be anxious, agitated, apathetic, bored and confused. They may abuse alcohol or drugs and be distressed at times. They often suffer from sleep deprivation because they are so irritable after work that they are unable to unwind and become so exhausted and fatigued that they can't sleep. People who are burned out have two to three times the risk of heart problems, including recurrent myocardial infarction, stroke, coronary-bypass surgery, atherosclerosis and cardiac arrest. Burnout results in unhappiness for the individual and may cause substantial costs for an organisation due to higher staff turnover, absenteeism and reduced productivity. To counteract feelings of burnout, take frequent breaks, relax and get involved in work activities that create flow.

6.3 WORK-LIFE SURVEYS OF DIFFERENT JOBS

In surveys hairdressers, beauticians, plumbers and chefs say they are happy at work. In contrast some of the best paid jobs and professions like civil servants, estate agents, architects, bankers, accountants, pharmacists, media personnel, lawyers and social workers say that they are unhappy. Generally, the people who rank high on general happiness are those who work in professions involving helping others, using technical and scientific expertise or involving creativity. The jobs with the least happy people are mostly routine jobs and unskilled manual and service positions.

Surveys show that models despite leading a glamorous life are unhappy. The factors affecting happiness are said to be loving relationships and feelings of being competent and in control. Models surveyed lacked all three. Models are explicitly valued for materialistic superficial reasons such as a beautiful appearance and a good figure and not for their intrinsic personal human qualities such as personality, intelligence, wit and talent. The working lifetime of a model is short as beauty fades, and thus there is a lot of insecurity in the profession as a continuous supply of younger and more beautiful models become available. Some resort to alcohol and drugs to compensate for their insecurity and unhappy lifestyle. The study concluded that despite their beauty, models were no happier than anyone else and considerably less satisfied.

It seems it pays to be happy at your job. People who are happy in their work are healthier and live longer. A study by a team from University College London tested the happiness levels of 216 middle-aged civil servants for coronary disease risk factors. They found that people who had the happiest moments per day had the lowest rates of cortisol, a hormone that can be harmful to the heart if produced excessively. On the other hand, the Whitehall

Study shows that people with low status jobs with little say and control over what they do, have a higher risk of cardiovascular disease. Since the 1960s, Professor Sir Michael Marmot and colleagues at University College London have been studying thousands of civil servants for an ongoing research project. Their findings are contrary to the conventional wisdom where you would expect lower level jobs to be less stressful and therefore more congenial to health.

Happy people are less likely to lose their jobs and, if they do, are more likely to be re-employed quickly. According to research published by City and Guilds, beauticians are the happiest workers in the UK, followed by hairdressers, chefs and soldiers. People who work with their hands tend to be far happier at work than those who don't, particularly when their jobs combine an intellectual challenge with practical skills and immediate feedback. Journalists are more than midway down the list of job satisfaction, while right at the bottom are bankers and other financial services workers. Beauticians and hairdressers make people feel a lot happier and they can converse and interact with their customers in a most satisfying way. Their jobs also involve a lot of creativity and personal satisfaction. Some women even maintain that visits to the hairdresser, beautician and gossiping with their friends are among the things that make them happy. Obviously, beauticians and hairdressers meet these needs.

The discipline of army life, the sense of doing your patriotic duty and the camaraderie involved probably is the source of job satisfaction for soldiers. Catering including chefs and retail staff also figured high on the happiness index. Chefs see themselves as culinary artists and some even achieve celebrity status. Journalists, mechanics, HR managers, call centre staff, IT specialists and nurses did badly regarding happiness at work. The survey finding for nurses are surprising as you would imagine that their involvement in the patient's world makes their job intrinsically rewarding, interesting and meaningful. On the other hand, it is not surprising that bankers and accountants came out badly as they get very bad press and peoples' trust in them is very low. The Enron collapse in 2001 and the global banking crisis in 2008 will have worsened the situation. Bankers in particular are now known for their greed, self-interest, dishonesty and reckless lending to secure bonuses.

Temperamentally many people may not be suited for the job in the legal profession, as pessimism is seen as a strength rather than weakness. Lawyers are trained to anticipate problems. The legal system by its nature is adversarial with a win-lose outcome. Lawyers are thus trained to be aggressive, judgemental, formal, analytical and emotionally detached. This doesn't make for a happy job. In their personal lives, lawyers can counteract this by thinking optimistic thoughts, involving themselves in artistic pursuits and seeking win-win solutions.

One would expect that medical doctors would have a high level of job satisfaction. In one 2006 survey in the USA physicians reported that on the whole they were satisfied with their careers. They felt that caring for patients, autonomy, and a sense of accomplishment were some of the most important factors for their personal job satisfaction. A different picture

emerges when we look at individual specialities within the medical field. A survey in 2002 showed that the highest paying physician specialities such as Ophthalmology and Gynaecology have some of the worst job satisfaction ratings. This would suggest that money can't buy happiness. On the dark side, it is well known that medical doctors and psychiatrists have the highest suicide, drug addiction, and divorce rate of any profession. Physicians are with people during their most vulnerable periods of lives, when they are born, sick, giving birth, and dying. This would suggest that they are exposed to very sad and stressful situations during their work lives and this inevitably takes a heavy toll.

"My definition of work is 'transforming the world around us.' That's why gardening and child-rearing are also work. But if you do a job that doesn't lead you to see the transformation your efforts are leading to, it's not work – it's just a job. And that's bad news."

– Richard Reeves

6.4 HAPPY WORKERS NEED SUPPORTIVE MANAGERS

Work gives structure and meaning to life and is an antidote to boredom. Work provides a sense of community, companionship, job satisfaction and gives opportunities for using initiative and getting things done. Jobs with challenge and variety and opportunities for training and development give scope for growth and for learning new things. Enjoyment is more important than money as money only makes you happy up to a certain point and then loses its attractiveness. Even the amount of leisure time has no significant effect on job satisfaction. People want to be mentally stimulated by challenging and meaningful work.

They like supportive managers who take a personal interest, offer praise, thanks, recognition, encouragement and feedback and stand by their workers when needed. They prefer to report to managers with a democratic style of leadership rather than an authoritarian or directive style. One of the most important ingredients to happiness in the workplace is the relationship between the first line manager and the employee, and the relationship between employees and other employees. The foundation for every great workplace is trust between management and staff. In a high trust company people cooperate and collaborate leading to good interpersonal relationships, higher profits, and greater productivity.

In their quest for personal excellence people are influenced by the expectations of others and by their own high expectations. People respond according to the way they are treated. The *Pygmalion Effect* suggests that in addition to our own expectations we live up to the expectations of others. In experiments, students and workers were found to live up to the

high expectations set by their teachers and managers. If they were treated with respect and as being clever, they did better in their examinations. Similarly, if our managers set high standards, we are often motivated to achieve them even if we are pushed beyond our comfort zone, provided we are treated with dignity and respect.

Managers can draw out the best in their staff by leading by example, treating them as intelligent, resourceful, creative and empowered human beings. On the other hand, they can draw out the worst in staff by setting a bad example, by having low expectations and by treating them as lacking in intelligence, ideas and initiative. Gandhi said that you should be the change you want to see in the world. It is illogical, arrogant and hypocritical for chief executive to expect employees to accept pay cuts when they earn more in a year than employees earn in a lifetime.

"The difference between a lady and a flower girl is not how she behaves but how she's treated. I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins because he always treats me as a flower girl."

– Eliza Dolittle, in George Bernard Shaw's play, Pygmalion

The manager's role in happiness

It is a manager's job to create a listening culture, and that they are accessible when employees need them. Managers should spend more time in exploring individual needs, listening to people's likes and dislikes and career aspirations. If they did this, they would win over employee loyalty, commitment and engagement. When employees are committed to their organisation, they accept its goals and values, and will do everything possible to achieve company effectiveness and efficiency. When managers create a two-way dialogue, they find out what is going on in the company, what problems employees are experiencing, the potential problems on the horizon, and what they can do to resolve the situation. If they do this, they will increase performance, productivity and profitability.

When managers compliment employees that their performance meets or exceeds desired standards it enhances morale and motivation through the positive feelings and pride generated by the feedback. Managers sometimes forget that the easiest and cheapest way of lifting the spirit of demotivated workers is to praise them appropriately and tell them they are doing a good job. Generally, people prefer praise to criticism but attempts to come up with a precise praise/criticism ratio such as the Losada 3 to 1 ratio have not stood up to scrutiny. Nevertheless, it seems appropriate that we should praise staff more than we criticise them. Employees like managers to listen to their concerns, accommodate their needs and appreciate and recognise their efforts.

In practice effective two-way communication with appropriate feedback is a problem in most companies and not enough time and money is invested to rectify the problem. Staff like their suggestions, opinions, and thoughts listened to and acted on and to feel valued at work. Feeling valued and that one is contributing to the overall goals of the organisation are important in maintaining positivity and high job satisfaction. People are often promoted into management positions without the necessary commitment, communication and interpersonal relationship skills needed for such a role.

Good communication is part of the support that employees need, and creates the conditions for job satisfaction and superior performance. In addition, it improves commitment, motivation and stimulates employees to achieve organisational goals and adds to an employee's sense of self-esteem, well-being and happiness. It also aligns the goals of the workplace to the goals of the organisation. Employees love to work for managers and supervisors who are not secretive, request inputs from their staff, and share information especially information directly affecting their jobs.

It pays an organisation to treat its employees with respect, kindness and consideration. A happy satisfied, cooperative and empowered workforce will relate well to customers and they in turn will reciprocate when dealing with each other. In other words, satisfying the needs of internal customers such as employees improves the ability of the company to satisfy the needs of external customers. The idea is if the management treat their employees well, they will in turn treat the company's customers and fellow employees with courtesy, dignity and respect. This creates a courteous cycle of goodwill towards colleagues and customers. The company atmosphere will be relaxed and happy. Ideally employees should look forward and enjoy going to work.

People prefer jobs offering prestige and standing in the community. They like to feel that their talents are being used and that their contribution to the company is valued. They like jobs with clear expectations and directions on how to meet them and with feedback on how they are doing, and looking for suggestions on how to improve processes and procedures. Specific goals facilitate the development of clear feedback mechanisms in line with the dictum 'What gets measured gets done.' Clear expectations should be set out in job descriptions, and the policies and procedures of the company will tell you about the company's history, operations, hours of operation and standard operating procedures.

One of the most important managerial behaviours is the setting of clear goals and action plans to achieve them. People make progress when managers clarify where the work is taking them to and why it matters. There is nothing worse than working in a vacuum and not knowing exactly the purpose of what you are doing. In addition, managers should provide people with the time, help, resources and support to get the work done successfully. The

manager's job is to facilitate progress towards the achievement of goals. Achieving a goal, accomplishing a task, or solving a problem is a great source of pride, pleasure and happiness. Even making good progress towards such goals will elicit the same emotions. Managers should praise success and accept that occasional failures and learning from mistakes is a path to learning.

Good interpersonal relationships are a very important ingredient to happiness at work. Courtesy, consideration and good manners should be encouraged between managers and workers and between workers. Good manners cost nothing and simple things like saying 'good morning,' thank you,' and 'well done' and so on help create the right atmosphere in the company. People like making friends at work and like working with people they like and can call on for help when needed. They want their voice to be heard and want respect and a feeling that their contribution at work is appreciated and valued.

Happy people are more likely than unhappy people to interact socially with co-workers and supervisors to find information, which may help them build better relationships with fellow workers by interacting with them more frequently. Also, common sense suggests that it is more pleasant to interact with happy people. Indeed, happy CEOs and managerial teams experience greater cooperation and less conflict than their less happy peers. The members of such teams are also more satisfied with group relationships and perceive themselves as having greater personal influence over the team. It is well known that people with positive dispositions are better liked and respected by their friends and acquaintances. Simply smiling – a behavioural outcome often used to objectively assess happiness – is considered socially desirable. Those who smile are judged to be more attractive, competent, trustworthy, and likeable. Overall happy people are more popular and have higher status among their peers than unhappy individuals.

The Great Place to Work Institute suggests that employees are happy when they 'trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do, and enjoy the people they work with.' Trust in the employer, built on credibility, respect, and fairness, is seen as the cornerstone. Some management experts believe that there are three factors in producing a happy and enthusiastic workforce. The acronym ACE will help you recall them.

1. Achievement (pride in the company, pride in the job, empowerment, feedback and job challenge).
2. Camaraderie with team mates.
3. Equity (respectful and dignified treatment, fairness and security).

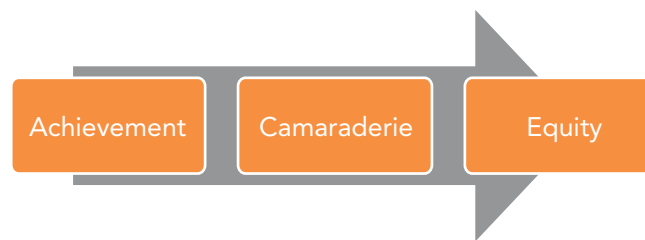


Fig. 6.3. ACE - Three factors in producing a happy workforce

Happy workers are busy

People are happier when they are challenged and productive rather than underemployed. Having time on your hands is demoralising as time seems to drag and even stand still. One survey found that people who think their work allows them to be productive are about five times more likely to be very satisfied with their jobs than people who do not feel this. Help people be productive by fostering a culture of continuous improvement, lifelong learning, training and development, getting the workforce involved in business issues and empowering employees to find their own solutions to problems. People who are dissatisfied with their jobs are about seven times more likely to quit within a year than those who are very satisfied.

Happy workers are more efficient, productive, energetic, creative, sociable, trustworthy and have a greater sense of self-worth. Consequently, they produce higher quality work, improve overall organisation performance and earn more money. They are more sociable, get better appraisals and are more likely to be promoted. They are better able to cope with stress. Because they are happy where they work, they tend to be more loyal and stay with the company longer. They feel they have control over their work and a say over how it should be done.

Everybody in the company should be encouraged to be creative and use their initiative. Happy people are more creative than unhappy people. In addition, they are more creative when they are motivated primarily by the inherent interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, and challenge of the work itself rather than external pressures or rewards. They like their managers to be open to new ideas and supportive of their efforts. Creativity leads to innovation and provides a company with a competitive edge as intellectual capital is becoming the principal competitive asset of many companies. People are very creative about their immediate jobs if given the opportunity to do so. They can often spot potential areas for improvement on the shop floor and with outdated processes and procedures. Creativity within a company should not be confined to marketing and research and development but instead should be encouraged and rewarded throughout the company.

In the modern workplace the opposite is happening with a trend towards more management control over workers and lack of empowerment and job security which makes for an unhappy workforce. Those who experience job insecurity have lower commitment to their organisations and intend to leave their jobs. This is evidenced by the setting of more demanding targets, incentive-based payments, performance appraisal, performance related pay, constantly changing work practices, increased monitoring and surveillance by first line managers and supervisors. This has been matched by a culture of long hours and contractual and financial insecurity, even for middle class professionals. This has put workers under additional pressure – workers who are already crippled by debt and high mortgage repayments and living in constant fear that they will lose their jobs.

“Research indicates that workers have three prime needs: interesting work, recognition for doing a good job, and being left in on things that are going on in the company.”

– Zig Zigler

Pay and security

People are happy as long as the pay they receive is the same or greater than those they work with. They are less concerned about what people earn in other organisations. This means making sure that people are recognised and rewarded appropriately for the effort they put in and for their unique talents. Pay rivalry within organisations is a well-known fact because our comparators and reference group tend to be within the organisation rather than outside. This is why organisations try to maintain peace in the workplace by keeping people’s wages secret. The more your co-worker earns relative to you the more dissatisfied you will become. We get very upset when others get a raise or a bonus and we do not. You are more concerned about the relative income rather than its absolute value. If people change their reference group it can seriously affect their level of happiness. Over the years the pay and opportunities for women has improved considerably relative to men, but their level of happiness has not. This is because they compare themselves more specifically to men than they used to, and are therefore more aware of the gaps that still exist relative to the pay of men for similar work.

People who have secure jobs are happier as they need to be confident of a regular cash flow in order to meet everyday living expenses and mortgage repayments. One survey showed that people who say their job security is bad are six times more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs than those who say their security is good. Japanese employers realise this and are extremely reluctant to make their workers redundant even in recessionary times. There is strong case for retaining a skilled workforce in an economic downturn because it is very

time-consuming and expensive to train people to previous standards when the economy picks up again.

Boeing, once the largest single source of exports in the US, cut its workforce by more than one third and production by more than 40 per cent in 1993 in response to a cyclical downturn in the aircraft industry. A protest strike by their employees only increased costs and losses. Three years later when orders began to increase again, Boeing found it had too few experienced managers and skilled workers to take advantage of the economic upswing. It recruited 32,000 workers in just 18 months but was still forced to call a temporary halt to production of 747 and 737 aircraft. Their competitor, Airbus meanwhile, who had retained its skilled workforce, began to win orders, increasing their market share in 2004.

Happy workers seek win-win solutions

There are four approaches to cooperation at work:

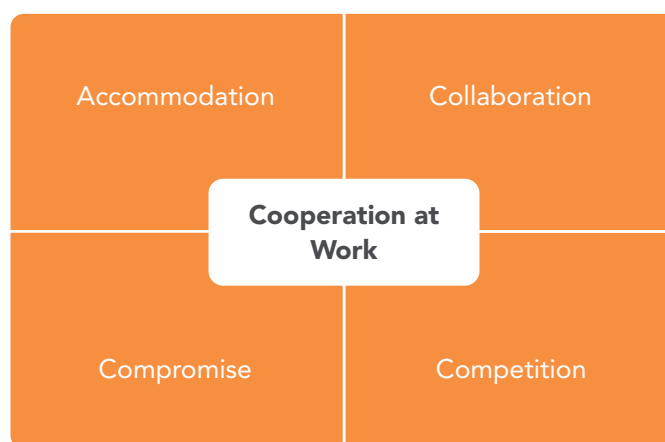


Fig. 6.4. Cooperation at Work

1. *Accommodation.* This is where you want to accommodate the other person's wishes and viewpoints and go along with what they want. You feel their way is fine or not worth disagreeing about.

2. *Collaboration*. The emphasis is on mutual respect and the generation of new ideas acceptable to the group. This wins the support and commitment of the group because they are driven to achieve common goals.
3. *Compromise*. This is where there is a certain amount of give-and-take. It is often the middle ground between your wants and the other person's wants. This is the usual outcome of negotiation.
4. *Competition*. This is where one party wins and the other party loses. The loser is unhappy with the outcome but looks forward to being more successful on another occasion.

People are more likely to be happy when using an accommodation or collaboration approach. They are less likely to be happy using a compromise or competition approach.

6.5 TOXIC WORKERS

A toxic workplace is the opposite of a happy workplace. Toxic workers create unhappy workplaces. They love to be disruptive and destructive and take a delight in upsetting others and going on strike. They engage in office politics, image building, game playing, manipulation, bullying and harassment. They treat their work colleagues as pawns rather than partners. They are negative people, continually dissatisfied and never agree to anything. They never see the merits in any proposal and are opposed to any change in the workplace. When dealing with them you can counter the negativity with positive suggestions. They are stress carriers – creating stress for those they come in contact without creating stress for themselves. They tend to be aggressive, use obscenities and be sarcastic and opinionated. They can make you ill with anxiety, depression and stress as likely outcomes. A toxic workplace with high pressure deadlines can increase the risk of heart attack.

6.6 WAYS TO BE HAPPIER AT WORK

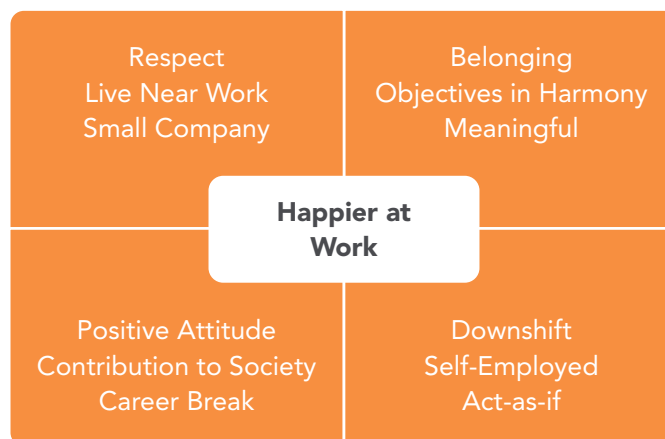


Fig. 6.5. Ways to be Happier at Work

- Create a healthy, respectful and supporting corporate culture. Treat co-workers with fairness, courtesy, consideration and respect and they in turn will treat you likewise. Management should provide competent leadership at all levels of the organisation. A happy workplace is one where people get along with each other, accommodate each other's needs and collaborate to get the job done. People in a happy workplace feel they have been included within the business vision, are consulted about major changes affecting their jobs and have a strong sense of belonging. A warm, friendly, caring, stress free, nurturing culture within the company brings out the best in people and makes them feel they want to come to work and give of their best. The work environment should be designed to reduce minor hassles and increase daily uplifts. In addition, a good workplace will adopt high performance work practices. Some companies even provide relaxing rooms and gyms to create stress free working environments. When morale is high, energy levels will be high and people will be less prone to illness and taking days off.
- Live close to the workplace. People who commute long distances to and from work are unhappy. Commuting in heavy traffic is stressful and not conducive to a sense of well-being. It is also a waste of valuable time that you could productively use elsewhere such as spending more time with your family. Sometimes it's a question of making a trade-off between a larger and a smaller house closer to work in order to reduce commute time. In other cases, it is often a case of economics as the nearer you get to a city the more expensive scarce

accommodation becomes. Ideally, people should have a fifteen- or twenty-minute walk to work. In reality, this is only rarely feasible because of accommodation scarcity in major towns and cities.

- Work for a small company where you can readily see the contribution you make to the objectives of the organisation. In a small company you can have a varied rather than a routine job and you can readily see the contribution and importance of your work. In a small organisation it is easier to design jobs that are interesting, challenging, autonomous, and rich in feedback – all the ingredients for a happy workplace. In a large company because of specialisation and scale it can be difficult to see exactly how you fit in to the overall scheme of things. Small companies also facilitate more intimate and less formal relationships with other employees and management. Research suggests that ideal human communities consist of not more than 150 people. It is likely that happiness is easier to achieve in smaller organisations where members are more acquainted with each other. In such organisations altruism is more likely, reciprocity is more easily monitored and there is a greater possibility that individual actions will have a direct impact on outcomes. On the other hand, you are more likely to get training and development opportunities in a large organisation to facilitate your skill development, improved competence and personal growth. In addition, you could reframe a less than ideal work environment making it interesting and challenging by trying to implement continuous improvement changes.
- Find an organisation where you feel a sense of connection, belonging and stability. There is compelling evidence that being made redundant has a profound negative effect on people's happiness. Reflect on what you expect from work and what truly motivates you. Ask yourself the following searching questions: Does your work make you feel satisfied, fulfilled and appreciated? Do you feel committed and proud of your job? Would you like to be doing what you're doing in five years' time?
- Work in a company whose objectives and way of doing business is in harmony with your personal beliefs, ethics and values. You will never be happy in a company where you feel uncomfortable with the way it conducts its business and treats its employees, customers and other stakeholders. Customers like when you exceed their expectations, meet their needs, treat them equitably and sell them reliable products that do not require repair.
- Work in a job that uses your unique signature skills. There should be a good fit between you and the organisation and the job. Make sure that you are meaningfully socialised into the job. You want a job that is worthwhile and making a unique contribution to the world. As Franklin D Roosevelt said, happiness lies in the joy of achievement and in the thrill of creative effort.

- If you feel a negative spiral coming on, counteract it with positive self-talk. When you are in a positive mood, you are more creative, more motivated to perform better, more energetic and more helpful towards colleagues. In addition, by transmitting positive emotions to customers, it elevates their mood and makes it more likely that you will get repeat business from your customers.
- Turn a stalled career into a calling by thinking about the elements of the job that you like and the contribution you are making to society. Seeing the job as a calling will maximise your satisfaction. Otherwise explore opportunities for different job placements within the company or projects that might bring fresh experiences, challenges and stimulation.
- Take a career break when you find that the job is not offering the satisfaction it once did. Taking a break to do something that you really want to do will give you the zest that you need when returning to your job.
- Downshift if you think you are working too hard and need more time for family, friends, other interests or recreational pursuits.
- Although the risks are high most people find that being self-employed provides the greatest source of satisfaction and outlet for initiative as you have more control over your destiny and how you spend your time.
- Act as if you enjoy what you do even if you don't and eventually it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. You must love what you do if you want to be consistently positive, successful and happy. Break your job down into parts that you enjoy and don't enjoy. Do the parts that you don't like first. The expectation of enjoyable work to follow will keep you going.

In summary, people are happier at work when:

1. They have close, authentic, and mutually satisfying relationships.
2. They have stable permanent employment.
3. They have interesting jobs over which they have a say and control.

In conclusion, all the evidence suggests that happiness at work does matter, not just to employees but also to the success, profitability and productivity of the organisation. Happy people are more motivated, committed, display increased organisational citizenship behaviour, earn more, are more productive, more satisfied with their jobs, and have greater self-efficacy. In addition, they are more confident and successful, and obtain more favourable managerial evaluations, higher incomes, and better social support than their less happy peers. Numerous studies also suggest that happiness boosts creativity, playfulness, originality, and flexibility; the kind of qualities that most modern organisations value highly to cope with rapid environmental and technological change, globalisation and competition.

Positive people negotiate more cooperatively, set higher goals, persist longer, perform better, evaluate themselves and others more favourably, and are more prosocial in a variety of situations. All of these resources help happy employees to perform better at their daily jobs. The ‘happy-productive worker hypothesis’ may be truer than we previously thought. Happiness at work is likely to be the glue that retains and motivates the high-quality employees of the future. Happy people tend to find new work more quickly when they do become unemployed.

It would be wrong to give the impression that happiness is the only factor that determines organisational and career success. On the contrary, there have been many famous people in all walks of life that have been successful despite suffering various types of mental ill-health. For example, aviator, entrepreneur and multi-millionaire Howard Hughes reportedly suffered from OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder). The writer Virginia Woolf battled bipolar disorder, while political leaders Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill were clinically depressed. So unhappy people can achieve great things. We also know that pessimism rather than happiness is a trait normally associated with accountants and economists and many of these have thriving careers.

“In order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it. They must not do too much of it. And they must have a sense of success in it.”

– John Ruskin

6.7 FIVE ACTIVITIES FOR HAPPINESS AT WORK

1. Even if there is a lot of routine in your job challenge yourself by seeing how various tasks and methods could be improved. There are always different ways of doing anything – some more efficient than others. Continuous improvement should be your aim.
2. Treat your co-workers with courtesy, consideration, trust and respect. They are likely to do likewise so that everybody benefits especially customers.
3. Help others at work if they need your assistance. Become known as someone who is unselfish and willing to help and cooperate if called on to do so. Self-aggrandisement is not the aim of the game.
4. Take a career break if you find you are going stale on the job. This will invigorate your attitude when you return to the job. Downshift if you are spending too much time at work. This will give you more time to spend with family and friends and pursue recreational interests that you are keen on and really enjoy.

5. Reward and give workers the option of engaging in positive activities designed to enhance well-being such as expressing gratitude to co-workers or performing acts of kindness for customers. This will attract few costs while improving company culture and boosting revenue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The artwork in this text was produced by the author with the aid of Microsoft's 'SmartArt' creatively combined with the clipart facility in the word package. Some of the artwork was accessed through Google. Known copyright material accessed through Google has been acknowledged. I will gladly acknowledge any other copyright material brought to my attention in future editions.

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