



**Dr Bruce Wells**  
the happiness expert

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**Happiness Challenge**

featured in:   Herald Sun    

## CHOOSE THE LIFE YOU WANT

### What the Book is about in a Nutshell

Drawing on the latest positive psychology research, Ben-Shahar shows how making the right choices—not the big, once-in-a-lifetime choices, but the countless small choices we make every day almost without noticing—has a direct, long-lasting impact on our happiness. Research in psychology illustrates that about 40 percent of our happiness is determined by the choices that we make— what we choose to do and how we choose to think directly impact the way we feel.

Every moment of our waking life we face choices whose cumulative effect on us is just as great, if not greater, than the effect of the big decisions. I can choose whether to sit up straight or stooped; whether to say a warm word to my partner or give her a sour look; whether to appreciate my health, my friend, and my lunch, or to take them all for granted; whether to choose to choose or to remain oblivious to the choices that are there for the making. Individually, these choices may not seem important, but together they are the very bricks that make up the road we create for ourselves. Not to be aware of the choices we make moment by moment, is to relinquish control over our ability to improve our life.

All of us, regardless of the circumstances we find ourselves in, can make a conscious effort to search for possibilities around and within ourselves. And when we look beyond our habitual ways of seeing things, we will discover that we are creators of our reality.

### How the Book is Designed

The book is structured as a series of choices, most of them rhetorical choices. Following each choice is a quote, a brief explanation of the choice, and a story that illustrates the choice. The stories include personal anecdotes, hypothetical situations, descriptions of psychological experiments, accounts of historical figures, and experiences of fictional figures from film or literature. The purpose of the story following each choice is to bring the ideas to life and make them more accessible and relatable. It is up to the reader to generalize the particular examples and apply them to other situations in their own life. For example, if the story has to do with the workplace, you may want to consider how that particular choice is relevant to your home life; if it describes a relationship with your partner, think about a similar situation relating to your boss or child.

As you read through the book, Ben-Shahar encourages you to try out the different choices. If, after some experimentation, a particular choice does not speak to you at all, skip to the next one, or repeat a choice that you have already dealt with. Return to the choice that you skipped at a later date, to see whether something is there for you after all.

## THE CHOICES

1. Just live your life OR Choose to choose
2. Overlook life's treasures OR Be mindful of the wonder
3. React in anger OR Take a step back
4. Obsessively replay a scenario OR Think and act purposefully
5. Neglect your posture OR Carry yourself with confidence and pride
6. Resign yourself to the status quo OR Make a difference
7. Procrastinate OR Just do it!
8. Hold a grudge OR Forgive
9. Treat the work you do as a job OR Experience your work as a calling
10. Avoid learning from hardship OR Actively learn the lessons of hardship
11. Allow others to upset you OR Appreciate and learn from those around you
12. Impress and cancel OR Express and reveal
13. Focus on defeating the other OR seek the win-win
14. Rush through life OR Savor life
15. Eat mindlessly OR Treat your body with respect
16. Overlook chance opportunities OR Create your own luck
17. Engage in negative self-talk OR Remind yourself of your true self
18. Overlook the good in others OR Commend and compliment
19. Go through life as a fault-finder OR Be a benefit-finder
20. Rush to give advice OR Listen with empathy and openness
21. Chase the next material acquisition OR Invest in experiences
22. Be defensive OR Be open to suggestions
23. Refrain from saying no OR Say yes only when your vision is served
24. Refuse to accept reality OR Accept reality and act upon it
25. Treat life with gravity OR Bring humor and lightness
26. Be part of the rat race OR Focus on what truly matters
27. Avoid the effort of thinking OR Focus and think
28. Worry OR Move on

29. Be a pessimist OR Be hopeful and optimistic
30. Establish your superiority OR Make others feel good
31. Dwell on weaknesses and deficiencies OR Focus on strengths and abilities
32. Tighten up OR Let go
33. Focus on outcome OR Focus on process
34. Perceive hardship as permanent OR Perceive hardship as temporary
35. Remain inactive OR Move
36. Act like a know-it-all OR Open your heart and mind to learning
37. Lose sight of what truly matters OR Connect to your values
38. Fly through life on autopilot OR Choose deliberately
39. Frown OR Smile
40. See the glass as half empty OR See the glass as half full
41. Live in the past or the future OR Be present
42. Delay gratification OR Seize the moment
43. Do what you feel you have to do OR Do what you want to do
44. Avoid making mistakes by not trying OR Learn from failure
45. Remain indifferent OR Help and contribute
46. Take short, shallow breaths OR Breathe deeply and slowly
47. Lash out at those close to you OR Respect those close to you
48. Sway with the winds of approval OR Maintain the strength of independence
49. Be driven by guilt and duty OR Pursue your passion
50. Take the good for granted OR Appreciate the good
51. Seek constant stimulation OR Embrace silence
52. Surrender your beliefs and values OR Be true to yourself
53. Ignore others OR See the other
54. Insist on perfection OR Recognise when good enough will do
55. Act on your emotion OR Actively accept your emotion
56. Experience the dullness in the routine OR Experience excitement
57. Fight the storm OR Observe the storm

58. Be unforgiving and harsh toward yourself OR Treat yourself with kindness and generosity
59. Run on empty OR Fill up
60. Succumb to feeling overwhelmed OR Think global, act local
61. Surrender to negativity OR Bring positive energy wherever you go
62. Suppress OR Express
63. Tie yourself to your past OR Create your future
64. Be cynical OR Be open and sincere
65. Act hastily OR Slow down
66. Remain in your comfort zone OR Stretch yourself
67. Resign to the image you have of yourself OR Become who you want to be
68. Avoid challenges OR Commit to overcoming hurdles
69. Ignore the music OR Sing, dance, listen
70. Perceive difficulty as a threat OR Perceive difficulty as a challenge
71. Avoid confrontation at all costs OR Be a beautiful enemy
72. Succumb to fear and insecurity OR Be afraid and go ahead anyway
73. Act insensitively towards others OR Be nice
74. Be somber and grave OR Be playful and light
75. Focus only on the immediate OR Take the larger context into consideration
76. Follow the prescribed path OR Be the scribe of your own journey
77. Focus on the negative OR Focus on the positive
78. Rely on words OR Lead with deeds
79. Seek validation OR Seek to be known
80. Surrender to boredom OR Find the new in the familiar
81. Live only in the mind OR Experience heartfelt positivity
82. Give up when the going gets tough OR Work toward your dreams
83. Compromise on your best self OR Act from the best within
84. Overlook human potential OR See the seed of greatness in each person
85. Utter empty words and promises OR Live with integrity
86. Flaunt your feathers OR Be humble

87. Take on more and more OR Simplify your life
88. Experience your mistakes as catastrophes OR Treat your mistakes as valuable feedback
89. Engage in self-analysis OR Focus outward
90. Take your nears and dears for granted OR Appreciate your family and friends
91. Experience insignificance OR Lead a spiritual existence
92. Blindly follow OR Lead!
93. Be hard on the person OR Be hard on the problem
94. Be a passive victim OR Be an active agent
95. Remain stuck OR Change your perspective
96. Dwell on failures OR Focus on successes
97. Suppress your tears and fears OR Give yourself permission to be human
98. Be ungenerous OR Act generously
99. Look for the quick fix OR Have patience
100. Succumb to the tedium OR Find the extraordinary in the ordinary
101. Dismiss dreams OR Take dreams seriously



Dr Bruce Wells is a happiness expert and professional speaker with a PhD in psychology and degrees in health promotion and physical education.

He has over 20 years' experience in the health and wellness industry in Australia, Asia, and the Middle East. He is a former school teacher, university professor, international tour guide, personal fitness trainer, and is the author of *Happiness Anywhere Anytime*.

Bruce regularly appears on Channel 9's Today show, various radio programs and regularly contributes articles to syndicated papers across the country. He is also a professional speaker delivering presentations to corporate and community health groups. For further details of his programs go to [www.brucewells.com.au](http://www.brucewells.com.au)