



Dr Bruce Wells
the happiness expert

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HAPPY FOR NO REASON

What the Book is about in a Nutshell

Transformational expert Marci Shimoff offers a breakthrough approach to being happy. Incorporating the latest findings in positive psychology, powerful tools and techniques, and moving real-life stories, this life-changing 7-step program will raise your “happiness set-point.” You don’t have to have happy genes, win the lottery, or lose twenty pounds.

The book is made up of 3 parts. In part 1 the reader learns about the Happy for No Reason (HNR) paradigm. In part 2 the reader learns about 7 steps for becoming HNR that correspond to the seven main life areas of personal power, mind, heart, soul, body, purpose, and people. Finally, in part 3, the reader discovers how to remain HNR permanently through practising the happiness habits.

PART 1: HAPPINESS THAT’S HERE TO STAY

When surveyed about what people want from life they rank happiness above all else. Less than 30% of people report being deeply happy. The WHO predicts that by 2020, depression will be second only to heart disease in terms of global burden of illness. Your happiness set-point is determined by 3 things: 50% is genetic, 10% is due to circumstances, and 40% is due to habitual thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. Your happiness set-point will remain the same unless you make a concerted effort to change it. Whatever the experience – positive or negative – people return to their set-point with 3 exceptions: losing a spouse, chronic unemployment, and extreme poverty. The Happiness Continuum: unhappy (depressed), happy for bad reason (high from unhealthy addictions), happy for good reason (satisfaction from healthy experiences), happy for no reason (inner state of peace and wellbeing). The habits of happy people: 90% of all behaviours is habitual. To raise your happiness set-point you have to change your habits by setting new neural pathways. Happiness blockers: the myth of more (the more you possess the happier you will feel), the myth of I’ll be happy when (I achieve a goal, lose 5 pounds, the kids leave home, etc). Guiding principles to live by: what expands you makes you happier; the universe is out to support you; what you appreciate, appreciates.

PART 2: BUILDING YOUR HOME FOR HAPPINESS

1. The Foundation – take ownership of your happiness

Accept that being happy is up to you and that you have the ability to be happier by changing your habits.

Respond to all events in your life in a way that supports your happiness.

Happiness Robbers: complaining (focusing on what you don't want draws more of that to you), blaming (gives our power away), feeling shame (turning blame onto ourselves).

Happiness habits for empowerment: focus on the solution, look for the lesson and the gift (instead of labelling events as good or bad look for a lesson), make peace with yourself (accept any feelings you've been avoiding and let go of the past).

2. The Pillar of the Mind – don't believe everything you think

We hear 60,000 thoughts a day and 90% of them are the same thoughts you had yesterday, and 80% of those habitual thoughts are negative.

To help us survive during prehistoric times we developed a negativity bias where we are attracted more to and respond more intensely to disturbing thoughts. Our brains are Velcro for negativity and Teflon for positivity. This impacts greatly on our happiness.

To create new neural pathways and override the negativity bias: question your thoughts (it's not events that make us suffer, it's our story about the events that does), go beyond the mind and let go (drop the excess baggage of not being enough), incline your mind toward joy (love yourself and register the positive things that happen in your life).

3. The Pillar of the Heart – let love lead

All our emotions can be divided into 2 basic categories – love and fear.

When people focus on love emotions they can create more coherence in their heart rhythms expanding their heart.

Habits for opening the heart: focus on gratitude (focus on what you have, not what is missing), practise forgiveness (a gift you give yourself), spread lovingkindness (look for ways to help others).

4. The Pillar of the Body – make your cells happy

90% of all diseases are stress-related – stressful thoughts, toxic friends, toxic foods.

Being healthy is good for your health – less likely to get a cold, reduced risk of CVD and hypertension, more humour leads to longevity.

Ways to make your cells happy: nourish your body, energise your body, tune into your body's wisdom (ask yourself is this what my body really wants or needs?)

5. The Pillar of the Soul – plug yourself into spirit

People who are HNR don't always need to figure everything out or be in control; they live in the flow of life, trusting the underlying benevolence and wisdom of that larger wholeness.

Most of the problems today stem from: the hectic pace of life and the emphasis on material achievement and accomplishment; the need to be doing something to be a worthy person; the strong aversion to being bored; an obsession with being available 24/7.

Habits to give you a time-out from busyness and to connect to your higher power: invite connection to your higher power (prayer, meditation, take pauses), listen to your inner voice and trust the answer, trust life's unfolding.

6. The Roof – live a life inspired by purpose

One of the vital ingredients for happiness is having a meaning in life and having goals embedded in your long-term values that you're working for, but also that you find enjoyable. When we live with a sense of purpose we live longer and healthier lives.

Only 20% Americans are passionate about their work and the largest number of heart attacks occur on Monday mornings.

Job, career, or calling: regardless of the job itself, those people who feel they're following a calling experience greater satisfaction from their work and more happiness in their lives.

Ways to live a life of purpose: find your passion/s (it will lead you to your purpose), follow the inspiration of the moment, contribute to something greater than yourself (make a difference with your life).

7. The Garden – cultivate nourishing relationships

The strongest predictor of happiness is having good social relationships.

Our brains contain mirror neurons that fire in or out of synch with the people around us.

Because of these neurons we yawn, laugh, or feel anger from others – emotions spread from one person to another much like a cold.

Ways to cultivate nourishing relationships: staying out of range of emotional bullies and happiness vampires (complainers, discouragers) is the easiest way to avoid emotional contagion; surround yourself with support; see the world as your family (happiest people extend compassion, empathy, and caring to everyone they meet)

PART 3: HAPPY FOR NO REASON EVER AFTER

Ways to practise being HNR: find a HNR buddy, form a support group, seek out mentors.



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