

Deliver **HAPPINESS**

Define happiness for yourself and set your team free to define their own happiness.

Pleasure is the most short-lived type of happiness. Once the stimulus is gone, our happiness level quickly returns to where it was before, as with watching a funny YouTube video or having a glass of wine (or better yet, both). It's fun in the moment but fleeting. The next type - passion - is more desirable because it lasts longer than pleasure. We see it when athletes are "in the zone" or when we're engrossed in an activity we love so much, we lose sense of time. The last, most sustainable form of happiness is purpose. It's what grounds us and lights our North Star at the same time. Living purposefully is the most enduring form of happiness.

Sustainable happiness comes from:

1. being aware of how you were born (inherited disposition);
2. your hedonic (utilitarian) circumstances; and
3. your eudaemonistic (self-actualization) aspect.

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FOR ME, HAPPINESS IS WHEN I DON'T OVERTHINK, SO I CAN FEEL. IT CIRCULATES THROUGH MY BODY AS IT NATURALLY CALLS OUT FOR BOTH THE KID AND THE WISER SOUL IN ME TO COME OUT AND PLAY. BEYOND HAPPINESS IS BEING PRESENT WHILE I GROW AND LEARN IN THE HIGHS AND THE LOWS. IT'S WHEN I'M FULLY OPTIREALISTIC - AWARE OF ALL SIDES OF A SITUATION - WITH THE FREEDOM TO MAKE CHOICES WITH INTENTION, POSITIVITY, SOME GRACE, AND FUN, AND ULTIMATELY LOVE.

Put another way, happiness comes from being authentically true to yourself, feeling your pleasures, flow and passion, and living your purpose. Older studies told us that we were born at a "set point" of happiness that we inherited and couldn't change. Newer studies tell us we can improve our levels of sustainable happiness by "investing" in (or working on) ourselves and the community around us.

Across all the research that's been done on happiness and positive psychology, three consistent ways - or, as we say, levers - emerged to increase happiness levels within yourself and your organisation. These levels are our perceived sense of control, progress and connectedness. Company cultures that embed these levers systematically are better equipped to assess their current state, evaluate what levels can be used to improve, then adapt to thrive.

- Control means giving people autonomy and agency over their work, empowering people with trust, and allowing them to make their own decisions - because they know their roles and responsibilities the best. Control can come in many forms: from choosing when to work (scheduling) and where to work (remotely or in the office) to creating your own job title (like the receptionist who was the Director of First Impressions) and deciding on the functions you fill.
- Progress removes a common stress by taking you from working toward unachievable goals to setting achievable ones. Especially in demanding corporate, remote and start-up environments, one of the most common complaints is burnout, which is exacerbated by finish lines seeming so far in the distance. Now that more of us are working remotely and the lines between work and life are blurred, burnout rates are even higher. But if you celebrate milestones along the way and reward progress (not perfection), people feel more productive and engaged. The more progress we perceive and the greater the sense of accomplishment we feel in our work, the more sustainably happy we can be.
- Connectedness and meaningful



BY JENN LIM

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relationships are also sustainable levers of happiness. People work harder for their friends than for people who are just their coworkers. Especially with the spike in working remotely, we need to reframe how we build real relationships in the workplace, using practices like kicking off meetings with quick and personal pulse checks or ending meetings with a round of gratitude. Instead of relying on the usual happy hours or annual holiday party, relationships deepen when we launch programs to share personal goals, including the purposes and values we hope to live up to (even when they're unrelated to work) while incentivizing people to support each other in living up to them.

But putting the science aside for a moment, I believe there's an art to happiness too. That's where your own subjective definition of happiness gets defined by you, for you. It's defined by getting real with yourself, and realizing your happiness is interconnected with that of others. Mixing the art of your authentic self with science gives the most important definition of them all ... because it's yours and only yours.

For me, happiness is when I don't overthink,

so I can feel. It circulates through my body as it naturally calls out for both the kid and the wiser soul in me to come out and play. Beyond happiness is being present while I grow and learn in the highs and the lows. It's when I'm fully optirealistic - aware of all sides of a situation - with the freedom to make choices with intention, positivity, some grace, and fun, and ultimately love. It's waking up knowing that I surround myself with people I love and that I'm doing the work to make the day's moments count. I'm happiest when I can absorb the scene I'm in, whether it's one of endless stars and sky, lush greens and changing seas, or the tap of a raindrop or rays of sun on my skin, and feel the immensity of being one with it all.

In this moment, how would you define happiness for yourself? There's no right or wrong. The beauty of defining your own happiness, and what's beyond, is that it's as distinctive as your own fingerprint. Only you can imprint it, and no one can take it away. ■

JENN LIM leads Delivering Happiness, a consultancy she co-founded in 2010, and is the author of *Beyond Happiness: How Authentic Leaders Prioritize Purpose and People for Growth and Impact*, Grand Central Publishing, October 2021.