



*“Turning Possibilities into Realities”*

2011 “WINNING FOR SEYCHELLES”

**A Healthy Nation is a Wealthy Nation (part 5)**

## **The Quest for Happiness**



True happiness is based on intrinsic values, or internal factors. These values are the attitudes of accepting the challenge of meeting your own needs and adapting to the challenges of life.

Underneath the external things we normally associate with happiness is an emotional need. If this need is satisfied, happiness follows.

And with emotional satisfaction, not only do your opportunities for happiness increase, but the likelihood of finding happiness also increase.

**REAL HAPPINESS COMES FROM INSIDE, NOBODY CAN GIVE IT TO YOU.**

SHARON STONE ACTOR

## What Makes Us Happy?

By Lisa Farino for MSN Health & Fitness (USA)

In recent years, researchers have attempted to use a variety of statistics and surveys to answer a question that's occupied countless generations of philosophers: **What makes us truly happy?**

While some evidence suggests that happiness may be linked, in part, to relative wealth - how we're doing compared to those around us - **overall the old adage that money doesn't buy happiness seems to hold true.**

"We are materially so much better off than we were 50 years ago, but we're not one iota happier," says Chris Peterson, a psychology professor at the University of Michigan.

That's no surprise to happiness expert David Myers, who sees happiness as more closely correlated with people rather than things. "We humans have a deep need to belong - to connect with others in close, supportive, intimate, caring relationships," he says. "People who have such close relationships are more likely to report themselves 'very happy.'"

*Eight Factors That Influence Rates Of Happiness And Depression.*

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**Grow a family as you would cook a small fish... very gently.** (Old Chinese Proverb)

## Happily Married



**Is getting married one of the keys to a happy life?** A 2006 report from the Pew Research Center suggests so - 43 percent of married women and men reported being "very happy," while only 24 percent of unmarried men and women said the same.

Interestingly enough, the happy halo that shines over married couples isn't the result of having kids - those with children were just as likely to be happy as those without.

Rather, there seems to be something about marriage itself that boosts both men's and women's feelings of well-being in life.

"Recent research suggests that people become less depressed and less lonely after they get married," says Linda Waite, a sociology professor at the University of Chicago and author of *The Case for Marriage*.

*After all, it's harder to be lonely when you've got a loved one to come home to every night.*

*According to Waite, men benefit even more than women from having a life-long companion. "Women will talk to everyone," says Waite, "But most men tend to rely on their wives as their main confidant."*

*In addition, women - typically the social planners in a relationship - ensure that the men stay connected to family and friends, another source of happiness.*

**And what about all that nagging that wives are so famous for?**

*Turns out it pays off. Men who are married drink less, smoke less, eat better, get more sleep, and engage in less risky behavior than their unmarried peers. The end result: Married men are healthier, and since health is linked to happiness, they're happier too.*

## A Reason to Believe

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**Americans are one of the most religious people in the western world.** And with good reason. In the United States, attending religious services at least once a week is a strong predictor of happiness.

A 2006 report by the Pew Research Center found that 43 percent of people who attend church at least once a week reported being "very happy" while only 26 percent of those who attend "seldom or never" said the same. It doesn't matter which faith you profess. The key is regular attendance.

**Why should being religious bring us so much happiness?**

"Religious communities provide people with opportunities to support others in need," says Harold G. Koenig, M.D. professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University. "Contributing to the lives of others provides a deep sense of happiness and joy. If you can relieve someone's pain or provide for some of their basic needs, it fills you with a feeling that's hard to replicate."

In addition, just about every major religion encourages us to take good care of our bodies. For instance, religious people are less likely to drink heavily or smoke, say Koenig.

As a result, religious people are healthier, and health is one of the biggest predictors of happiness.

## Let the Sunshine In

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**The region of the country you live in can impact your risk of suffering from depression—at least from November through April.**

That's because those living in the northern part of the country are more at risk of suffering from seasonal affective disorder, a form of

clinical depression brought on in the winter months by the shortening of the days and the later sunrise.

"In the United States, SAD is about five times more prevalent in the northern tier of states than in the far south," says Dr. Michael Terman, Director of the Center for Light Treatment

and Biological Rhythms at the Columbia University Medical Center.

But SAD is just the tip of the iceberg, explains Terman. "Less severe 'winter doldrums' occur at least three times more frequently than winter depression. Even more people experience one or more symptoms of winter

depression - such as overeating or oversleeping - even though their mood stays under control.

"Whatever the degree of impairment, symptoms tend to resolve in the spring. "Certainly there is no lack of happiness up north for the six months from May to October," Terman says.

## He Works Hard for His Happiness

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**Does working make you unhappy or happy?** The answer: It depends. Toiling away at a job you hate may eat away at your happiness over time. But overall, being unemployed is worse for your state of mind than being employed - at least, that is, if you're a guy.

The Pew Research Center found that the percentage of men who said they were "very happy" was significantly lower for unemployed men (16 percent) than for employed men (37 percent). Unemployment had little impact on women's happiness.

The Pew researchers speculate that this is because more women than men are unemployed by choice, although the study didn't attempt to tease apart that difference.

Chris Peterson, a happiness researcher at the University of Michigan, suspects there are other factors at play as well. "Other studies have found that if a man loses his job, it can have both short-term and long-term psychological effects, even if he finds another job with equal salary," he says. "For women it's not unemployment that leads to unhappiness, but divorce."

In addition, Peterson stresses that money matters less than you'd think. "The engaged custodian is more likely to be happy than the independently wealthy, unengaged millionaire," he says. "We didn't evolve to be retired and sit on the couch."

## As Long As You Have Your Health

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Perhaps it comes as no surprise to find that healthier people are happier than those who aren't as healthy. In fact, a 2006 report published by the Pew Research Center found that 48 percent of people who rated their health as "excellent" described themselves as "very happy," while only 15 percent of those who rated their health as "poor" said the same.

After all, it's harder to be happy when living with chronic pain or illness or when faced with a potentially life-threatening condition.

While health is strongly tied to happiness, lack of health is even more strongly correlated with lack of happiness. Of those who rated their health as "poor," a whopping 55 percent described themselves as "not too happy," while only 6 percent of those in "excellent" health said the same.

According to the Pew Research Center, health - along with religion and marriage - were among the strongest predictors of happiness, even when adjusting for a variety of other variables.

## Time for Family, Friends, and Community

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**In the growing field of happiness research,** one thing is overwhelmingly clear. People who are socially engaged are more likely to be happy - and less likely to be depressed - than those who aren't.

In fact, the 2005 *Time Magazine* poll found that the four most significant sources of happiness - children (77 percent), friendships (76 percent), contributing to the lives of others (75 percent), and spouse/partner (73 percent) - all involved spending meaningful time with other people.

The problem: "We're so caught up with extraordinary work burdens, we don't have time to enjoy the people we love or contribute to the lives of others," says Post.

That time crunch is quite real, says John de Graaf, president of the public policy organization Take Back Your Time. "Compared to 30 years ago, the average family now spends an extra 500 hours per year working outside the home."

We're also spending more time getting to work and back.

"Traffic is getting worse and we're not investing in mass transit," says de Graaf. "Most of the data I've seen shows that we've doubled our average commute times in the past generation."

Obviously, it depends on where you live - and where you work. Those most impacted: affluent families who chose even larger homes over living closer to work, and younger families who are priced out of homes of any size closer to centers of employment.

## Giving for Your Own Good

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**This may come as a surprise to the "Me Generation,"** but happiness doesn't come from living in a big house, buying the latest techno-gadget, and getting stamps from exotic locales in your passport.

In fact, a 2005 poll by Time Magazine found that helping others was a major source of happiness for 75 percent of Americans.

"Volunteering is an opportunity to be socially engaged and contribute to the lives of others," says Stephen Post, a professor at Case Western Reserve University who co-authored the book *Why Good Things Happen to Good People* with Jill Neimark. **"It's not material goods that make us happy - it's having purpose and meaning in our lives."**

In fact, some recent research suggests that we're actually hard-wired for helping. Even thinking about helping others is enough to stimulate the part of our brain associated with feel-good chemicals like oxytocin.

Helping others doesn't just make us happier, there's also evidence it makes us healthier too. "Recent research out of England shows that cities with higher rates of volunteerism had the lower rates of depression and heart disease," says Post.

**Don't have a lot of free time?** No worries. People who volunteer just two hours per week (100 hours per year) enjoy lower rates of depression and better physical health.



## Good Urban Design



**What does urban design have to do with happiness?** More than you might think.

"The data strongly suggests that real community and real friendships are important keys to happiness," says Post. "Some cities make that possible in ways that others don't."

Post explains how urban design can facilitate social interaction - or work against it.

"Forty years ago, neighborhoods had sidewalks, front porches, and parks - geographical opportunities for people to be socially engaged," he says. "In many communities today, we are lacking these things. We don't know our neighbors anymore. We just get into our car pods and never see anyone. We no longer have the opportunity to stumble upon happiness by being good neighbors in our communities."

Good urban design and effective mass transportation can also determine how much time we spend commuting to work, and how much time we spend behind the wheel of a car running errands - both of which ultimately impact the amount of time we have for joyfully engaging with friends, family, and community.

*8th Indian Ocean Island Games – Seychelles 2011*

### **Nou Zil - Nou Zwe Courage and Mastery**

### **“Think Happy, Act Happy, Be Happy”**

To be game is to believe in the game and to be open to the joy of demonstrated Mastery.

During the event there is an awareness of fear, of desire to achieve, of concern about failure.

While success is valued, one does not enter the game to be successful; rather one seeks an opportunity to display Mastery, in the presence of significant risk of failure.

**When a competitive event is perceived as a “happening” when delight is taken in the opportunity to play, Winning is more likely to happen.**

A continuous disregard of outcome always permits the full exercise of intellect and skill to achieve the best in performance.

Believe in your child, show high hopes for them and support them in reaching their goals.

**Courage permits the player to be game and Mastery permits the game to be played joyfully.**

It cannot and it should not be forced...  
Let the games begin...  
'Nou Zil - Nou Zwe'

