

# THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE WITH SHAWN ACHOR

AN ENTERPRISE MEDIA PRODUCTION

Enterprise Media  
91 Harvey Street  
Cambridge, MA 02140  
617-354-0017  
[www.enterprisemedia.com](http://www.enterprisemedia.com)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Overview .....	4	
About the host, Shawn Achor and Enterprise Media .....	6	
<b>PART 1: USING <i>THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE</i></b>		
Using this program in a training session .....	7	
Suggested training agendas .....	8	
Create your own agenda .....	10	
Checklist for facilitator .....	11	
Message to the facilitator .....	12	
<b>TRAINING ELEMENTS</b>		
Introducing the training session .....	14	
Showing the DVD .....	15	
Discussion questions & action steps .....	16	
Transcript of the program .....	24	
<b>PART 2: IMPLEMENTATION MODULES</b> .....		38
Your guide to the modules .....	39	
Sample module training session .....	41	

## THE ZORRO CIRCLE

Overview .....	42
Questions for discussion .....	43
Transcript .....	45

## SOCIAL INVESTMENT

Overview .....	48
Questions for discussion .....	50
Transcript .....	54

## FALLING UP

Overview .....	57
Falling Up: advance exercise.....	58
Questions for discussion .....	59
Transcript .....	61

## LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE

Overview .....	64
Questions for discussion .....	65
Transcript .....	68

## MINDSET MATTERS

Overview .....	72
Questions for discussion .....	73
Transcript .....	75

YOUR NOTES .....	78
------------------	----

© 2011 Enterprise Media

ISBN 1-56106-269-3

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this program may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the written permission of the publisher.

Publisher: Enterprise Media, 91 Harvey Street, Cambridge, MA 02140, 617-354-0017 - [www.enterprisemedia.com](http://www.enterprisemedia.com)

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Happiness is something we all desire and yet it often seems elusive, always waiting for us somewhere just over the horizon. Part of the problem is that we have been taught that hard work and success must come first, happiness second. If we work hard, we'll be successful, and once we're successful, *then* we'll be happy. But decades of scientific research have proven that this formula is backward. Happiness makes us smarter and more efficient — it actually fuels our success. This video package is designed to help people understand how the Happiness Advantage works — and how everyone can benefit from these principles.

In *The Happiness Advantage* training program, Shawn Achor reveals the latest research into the science of happiness. In the process, he makes some amazing revelations.

- Happiness is the cause, not just the result, of a whole host of positive outcomes in the workplace. Happy employees receive better work evaluations and higher pay, take fewer sick days, and bounce back from setbacks faster.
- If you can shift your brain into a positive mindset, you can improve your productivity, your level of intelligence, and your ability to interact with coworkers, family, and friends.
- Happiness is something we can all learn. Through a few simple activities we can permanently raise our happiness baseline and capitalize on all the advantages listed above.

Using humor and straightforward explanations, Shawn Achor brings this cutting-edge research to life and provides every viewer with the tools to capitalize on the Happiness Advantage.

*The Happiness Advantage* focuses on three elements: First, we explain the science of happiness. After two decades and thousands of studies, the research is clear: we perform at our best when we are in a positive state of mind. In the second part of the video, Shawn Achor describes a number of simple exercises that will help you adopt a positive mindset and put the Happiness Advantage to work. Finally, you'll learn how you can spread the Happiness Advantage to your co-workers, friends, and family.

The expanded training edition of *The Happiness Advantage* provides you with five Implementation Modules, which are designed as tools to help you work on implementing the Happiness Advantage at work and in your life. The modules will help improve your ability to lead others using the Happiness Advantage (Leading Positive Change), overcome stress and set attainable goals (The Zorro Circle), and permanently improve your happiness and performance (Social Investment, Mindset Matters, and Falling Up).

PREVIEW

## ABOUT SHAWN ACHOR AND ENTERPRISE MEDIA

### Shawn Achor

Shawn Achor, author of *The Happiness Advantage*, spent over a decade at Harvard University where he won numerous distinguished teaching awards for his work. He graduated magna cum laude from Harvard and earned a Masters from Harvard Divinity School in Christian and Buddhist ethics. In 2006, he was Head Teaching Fellow for "Positive Psychology," the most popular course at Harvard at the time. In 2007, Shawn founded Good Think Inc. to share his research with a wider population. When the global economy collapsed in 2008, Shawn was immediately called in as an expert by the world's largest banks to help restart forward progress. Subsequently, Shawn has spoken in 45 countries to a wide variety of audiences: bankers on Wall Street, students in Dubai, CEOs in Zimbabwe. Shawn's research on happiness and human potential have received attention from the Harvard Business Review, New York Times, Forbes, CNN, and NPR.

### Enterprise Media

*"It isn't often that art, effective instruction, and crucially important topics come together in a business film. It's even rarer when it's a hoot to watch. All of these things are true of **The Excellence Files**."* --

**Training Media Review, 1998**

Enterprise Media is a leading producer and distributor of entertaining and informative training programs, documentaries, and TV programming to the global broadcast, corporate, and educational markets.

Enterprise Media has more than 80 business titles to their credit including: **In Search of Excellence with Tom Peters & Bob Waterman**, **Who Says We Can't Do It: Lance Armstrong's Journey**, **Succeeding in a Changing World with John Kotter**, and **Re-Imagine! Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age with Tom Peters**. Over the years, our videos and television programs have earned respect from viewers, awards for content, and ratings that are among PBS' highest for public affairs programming.

## PART 1: USING *THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE*

### Using this program in a training session

Shawn Achor brings the topic of positive psychology to life by providing practical lessons that anyone can use to improve their happiness and performance. The accessibility and range of the messages in *The Happiness Advantage* makes the program useful in many different organizational settings and situations. Everyone can benefit from improving his or her mindset, and even when these positive changes are made with the workplace in mind, they quickly expand to life at home with family and friends. Audiences who will find the video particularly useful include:

**MANAGEMENT AT ALL LEVELS:** Managers at all levels need to have a solid understanding of the key concepts presented in this video. It provides a framework for improving communication, productivity, employee satisfaction, employee retention and overall business performance. In the Implementation Module, “Leading Positive Change,” Shawn Achor targets managers specifically to help them optimize the benefits of *The Happiness Advantage* within their organization.

**ORGANIZATION-WIDE TRAINING:** The message of *The Happiness Advantage* is a universal one, beneficial to CEOs and first year associates alike. We all want to operate at the highest level possible. We all want to be more productive, happy and successful, to get more out of ourselves and the people around us.

**STUDENTS:** This video is based on the lessons Shawn Achor first started teaching at Harvard University, where his course on happiness was the most popular on campus. His message clearly resonates with students, especially those who are striving to find both meaning and success—those who want to perform at the highest level without sacrificing happiness in the process.

## SUGGESTED TRAINING AGENDAS

Two separate agendas are provided below to help you prepare for your training session. They can easily be modified to fit your needs and or desired timeframe. On the following page, we have also provided you with an untimed agenda so that you may customize your own training agenda.

### 1.5 Hour Agenda

	Time	Page
Introduce the Training Session to Participants	5	14
Watch and Discuss the DVD*	40	15
Break	10	--
Discussion and Participate	25	16
Session Debrief	10	--

\* The DVD includes the full version *The Happiness Advantage* which is 38-minutes long as well as a 27-minute version and a "Short Cut" that is 20-minutes in length. We have provided you with these different lengths so that you will have flexibility to incorporate your training within a timeframe that works for you.



Three-Hour Agenda Using the Implementation Modules	Time	Page
Introduce the Training Session to Participants	5	14
Watch and Discuss the DVD*	40	15
Explore Discussion Questions and Action Steps	25	16
Break	10	--
Introduce the First Implementation Module	5	--**
Watch the DVD	10	--
Explore the Discussion Questions	30	--
Break	10	--
Introduce the Second Implementation Module	5	--**
Watch the DVD	10	--
Explore the Discussion Questions	30	--
Session Debrief	10	--

\* The DVD includes the full version *The Happiness Advantage* which is 38-minutes long as well as a 27-minute version and a "Short Cut" that is 20-minutes in length. We have provided you with these different lengths so that you will have flexibility to incorporate your training within a timeframe that works for you.

\*\* You can choose from the following five Implementation Modules: Leading Positive Change on page 64, The Zorro Circle on page 42, Social Investment on page 48, Falling Up on page 57, and Mindset Matters on page 72.



# CHECKLIST FOR FACILITATOR

This checklist will help you gather everything you need to complete this training session.

## MEETING PREPARATION

- Write down your training objectives.
- Send the Program Overview (page 4) to your participants prior to the training session.

## LOCATION

- Book the room in advance.
- Create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.
- Provide a surface for writing and be sure that it's adequately lit.
- Check for sound.
- Be sure all of the seats have a good view of the visuals.

## EQUIPMENT

- Make sure the DVD player or computer is working.
- Check the DVD all the way through to be sure it works properly.
- Check any other equipment you will be using in advance of the session.

## MATERIALS

- Leader's Guide
- DVD of "*The Happiness Advantage*"
- Paper and pens or pencils and nametags
- Any required additional equipment

## MESSAGE TO THE FACILITATOR

You don't have to be a professional trainer (or a university professor) to use this program. Shawn Achor's message is straightforward and easy to deliver and implement. We all know that happiness feels great. What this video provides is (1) a framework for understanding how happiness can improve your success at work, and (2) the tools necessary to improve your own happiness and therefore capitalize on this advantage. As facilitator, you will act as the agent to help your viewers put these lessons to work. As we know from the video, this process requires an investment of time and effort. You can't implement these ideas in an instant. You should encourage your group to try out the exercises for 21 days in a row. (Remember that when you do something for 21 days in a row it becomes a "life habit.")

The benefits that can come from happiness are invaluable. You can improve the productivity and performance of everyone in your training session. You can help them spread their own happiness to their colleagues and direct reports, and eventually to their whole organization. Customer service, employee turnover, job satisfaction, productivity, creativity, and overall performance all improve.

Be sure to emphasize this and help your participants work towards the goal Shawn explains. Keep communications open and reinforce the positive. Allow participants to share their thoughts and brainstorm new ways to implement *The Happiness Advantage* in the workplace and in their lives. When you are preparing the program, remember the following:

- Create an environment where participants feel free to have an open discussion.
- Send out a memo to participants with an agenda and goals you wish to accomplish ahead of time.
- Play fun music while people enter the training room.

- Make sure you watch the DVD several days before the training session so you are familiar with the content.
- Invite people to sit up front and not hold back.
- Remind participants of the session a day in advance via e-mail.

PREVIEW

## TRAINING ELEMENTS: INTRODUCING THE TRAINING SESSION

**Time Required:** 10 Minutes

**Objective:** To introduce the subject, explain who Shawn Achor is and introduce the facilitator and the participants to each other.

Introduce yourself and explain what you hope to accomplish. Smile, make eye contact and tell them something about yourself, thus creating a positive and energizing atmosphere. Have everyone introduce themselves to one another.

Tell your participants/audience who Shawn Achor is and explain his message. Share with them Shawn's bio (page 6) and what he's done.

Explain to the group that you are seeking to share with them the exciting new research on happiness and how it can improve their lives, their work and their state of mind. Explain that the video is divided into three parts:

- Understanding the Science of Happiness
- Putting the Happiness Advantage to Work
- Spreading the Happiness Advantage

Explain to everyone that these three points will be fully explored when they watch the video. Ask them to take notes when they watch the video and start to think about how they can implement the ideas in the video in their jobs and lives.

## TRAINING ELEMENTS: SHOWING THE DVD

**Time Required:** 40 to 50 minutes (see note below)

**Objective:** To learn about the “Science of Happiness” and to put *The Happiness Advantage* to work for each participant.

Watch the DVD *The Happiness Advantage*.

Distribute the DVD discussion questions.

**NOTE:** The DVD includes the full version *The Happiness Advantage* which is 38-minutes long as well as a 27-minute version and a “Short Cut” that is 20-minutes in length. We have provided you with these three different lengths so that you will have flexibility to incorporate your training within an optimal timeframe.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ACTION STEPS

### Introduction:

Ask your group what they thought of the video of the Piano Staircase: Do the members of your group think they would have taken the stairs instead of the elevator if they were at that subway station? Why do you think people acted that way? How do you think this video applies to the material Shawn Achor discusses in his program? [Note: you can show and discuss other examples like the piano staircase. We recommend that you check out "The Bottle Bank Arcade" and "The World's Deepest Bin." The same team in Sweden who produced the Piano Staircase video created these videos. You can find these clips if you search under "The Fun Theory" on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)]

---

---

---

---

Discuss Shawn's "Unicorn Story." Have you seen how children can change their attitudes when distracted? The action of Amy, Shawn's sister, shows that our brains are single processors and we can change our mindset with the right encouragement.

---

---

---

---



## Understanding *The Happiness Advantage*

Train your brain with the Tetris Effect: Your brain can be trained to use a specific pattern for evaluating the environment (the Tetris Effect). For instance, people who write down three things they are grateful for every day trigger their brains to cognitively rewire. The result is that they become more skilled at capitalizing on positive situations and avoiding hassles and stresses.

---

---

---

---

Have you ever gotten stuck in a negative Tetris Effect? How did that affect your work? The next time this happens, what are some ways you might get out of it? Are there things you and your colleagues could do to help each other avoid this trap?

---

---

---

---

## Putting the Happiness Advantage to Work

**Move your body:** You know about the physical benefits, but don't forget the mental ones: just 30 minutes of exercise can act as an anti-depressant. Another study found that executives who started a regular exercise routine experienced a 70% improvement in their ability to make complex decisions. You may think you can't afford the time to exercise, but given the cognitive benefits to your productivity and efficiency, you can't afford not to. Do you exercise? Start a discussion with those who exercise and those who don't. Ask people to set up a game plan to start exercising (or increase their amount of exercise). What can you do to improve the likelihood of exercising? List your ideas below.

---

---

---

---

Did Shawn mention a positive habit in the video that you have already made an important part of your life? (Could be exercise, meditation, gratitude, journaling, etc.) What benefits do you receive from this positive habit? Share your habits with each other, as well as your tricks for making sure they stick.

---

---

---

---

**Commit conscious acts of kindness:** As the saying goes, “those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.” A nice sentiment, sure, but also scientifically true. Every time you perform an act of kindness, however small, your brain enjoys a spike in happiness. Write a thank-you note, compliment a colleague’s tie, or drop coins in a stranger’s meter. In one study, people who performed just five of these acts over the course of a week experienced a large boost in happiness that lasted long after the week was over.

---

---

---

---

**Use your Outlook program to help kick start your happiness habits:** If you want to start one of the happiness habits Shawn mentions in the program, you can set up a daily reminder in your phone, computer calendar, or Outlook. That way, you will reduce the activation energy and make it easier for you to start a life habit. Try putting in a daily notification at 11:00 AM to remind you to start your gratitudes. Or start each day with a reminder to send a positive e-mail. Share your Outlook ideas with your team.

---

---

---

---

**Raise your ratio: 2.9013.** This may seem like a random number, but performance studies have proven just how important it is. To be successful, a workplace needs at least 2.9 positive interactions to counteract every one negative interaction. Think of it as a 3 to 1 ratio of positive to negative. Does your office pass the test? Are there at least three positive comments for every one negative? Unfortunately, many people discover themselves below this tipping point, and their performance suffers accordingly. So when you feel your ratio slipping, do your part to raise the positive discourse. Every small interaction counts. And if you can get the ratio all the way up to 6 to 1, you'll be a high performing — and happier — worker.

---

---

---

---

**Follow The 20 Second Rule:** Make positive habits easier to adopt by managing activation energy--the amount of energy necessary to start a task. Lower it for things you want to accomplish, and increase it for things you want to avoid. Just adding 20 seconds to an action that you are trying to avoid will make you far less likely to do it. For instance, putting your exercise clothes 20 seconds closer to your bed will make you more likely to head to the gym when you wake up in the morning. Or, if you want to start keeping track of three things you're grateful for every day, set an Outlook alarm on your computer or phone that goes off at the same time every day, and have a document on your desktop ready for you to write in.

---

---

---

Pick one positive activity that Shawn mentions in the video that you would like to turn into a habit over the next 21 days. How could you use the 20 Second Rule to lower the "activation energy" of that activity?

---

---

---

---

Now think of one negative habit that you would like to curtail. How might you raise the "activation energy" required for that activity, so that you are less likely to do it?

---

---

---

---

PREVIEW

## Spreading the Happiness Advantage:

**Capitalize on the Happiness Advantage:** When appropriate, be more open to positive emotion at work. Encourage humor. Compliment a colleague. Send a YouTube clip along with weekly feedback. Give a peer one sentence of positive encouragement before they head into a big meeting. Happy employees are more productive, receive better work evaluations and higher pay, take fewer sick days, and bounce back from setbacks faster.

---

---

---

---

Brainstorm other easy ways you can be more open and positive at work. Write down your ideas on a whiteboard and then make a list of the top ten ideas. Distribute this list to everyone attending the training session.

---

---

---

---

# Getting Started

Which of the ideas presented by Shawn resonated the most with you? (And which did not?)

---

---

---

---

What are three quick things you can do to prime your brain to be positive before attempting a difficult task at work?

---

---

---

---

## TRANSCRIPT OF THE PROGRAM

Turning a staircase into a piano...

It seems like a crazy idea, but it certainly had a positive impact on the people who were on a boring commute that day... and it's an interesting lesson about happiness and the brain...

Hello I'm Shawn Achor.

I study how happiness affects the way we live in the world just like we saw in the Piano Staircase video... Over the past decade, I've been at Harvard University - teaching, researching, and learning about the field of positive psychology. Positive psychology is a branch in social science, which is attempting to study how we can change the way that we look at work, success, and happiness. I actually began this research, long before I was at Harvard...

*I got into that research when I was just seven years old, my sister was five years old, she was two years younger at the time and she's actually still two years younger now... but at that time that meant that she had to do everything that I wanted to do and I wanted to play War (I'm from Texas).*

*So I had all of my GI Joe Soldiers on the top bunk of my side of the bed all lined up – GI Joe Soldiers and weaponry - and on her side she had all of her My Little Ponies and unicorns. There are differing accounts of what happened and since my sister is in Texas and I'm here in New York, let me tell you the true story.*

*Which is, my sister is a little bit on the clumsy side and somehow without any help or push from her older brother at all, suddenly Amy disappeared off of the top of the bunk bed and landed with this crash on the floor and I nervously peered over the side of the bed to see what had befallen my fallen sister and saw that she landed painfully on her hands and knees on the floor – on all fours – which wasn't the smartest way to land but also not the best time to mention it to her.*

*And I saw on my sister's face a wail and pain and suffering and injustice threatening to erupt from her mouth and threatening to awake my parents from their long winter's nap for which they had settled.*



*So I did the only thing my little frantic seven-year-old brain could think to do to avert this tragedy. I said, "Amy, Amy wait don't cry! Did you see how you just landed? No human lands on all fours like that!" She looked up with confusion on her face. I said "Amy, I think you're a unicorn!" Now of course I was cheating because there is nothing in the world my sister might not want more at that moment, to not be "Amy the Hurt Five Year Old Little Sister" but "Amy The Special Unicorn".*

*Of course that option was not open to her brain at any point in the past. And you could see on my poor, admittedly manipulated, sister's face conflict, as her brain attempted to devote resources to feeling the pain and suffering she just experienced or contemplating her new-found identity as a unicorn and the later won out. Instead of crying, instead of ceasing our play, instead of creating all the negative consequences that would have ensued for me, instead a smile spread across her face and Amy scrambled right back up on to the bunk bed with all the grace of a baby unicorn...*

We had no idea at the time that what my sister and I stumbled across at this tender age of just five and seven was something that was going to be at the vanguard of a scientific revolution occurring two decades later--something that has changed the way that we look at the human brain. What we've started to learn is that brain is like a single processor. It's capable of devoting only a finite amount of resources to experiencing the world around us. Which means that our brains give us an unconscious - or perhaps a conscious choice - to choose to view the world through a lens that sees only the negativity, the uncertainty, the stress, and the frustrations we feel. Or to choose to devote those finite and valuable resources to scanning our world for the things that make us grateful, for the possibilities of changing our environment, and a way of rippling that positivity and success out to other people.

Embedded in that original story of my sister and me on top of a bunk bed is actually the core of the scientific movement called positive psychology.

**OPENING TITLES**  
**Enterprise Media Presents**  
**Shawn Achor**  
**In**  
**The Happiness Advantage**

Over the past several years, I've taken the research that I started on that bunk bed, and then continued in earnest at Harvard University, out to companies and schools in 42 different countries. And amazingly, what I found at almost all of these schools and companies is that they follow the same formula. And that formula is: If you work harder, then you'll be more successful. And if you're successful, well, then you'll be happier.

What we're finding in the field of positive psychology is that this formula is broken. Part of that has to do with how we define success. Every time we're successful, we merely move the goalposts of what success looks like. So, for example, if we hit our sales target last quarter, we merely change what that sales target is for the next quarter. And if happiness is on the opposite side of that success, every time you change what success looks like, happiness gets pushed over the horizon.

But more importantly, what we have discovered in the field of positive psychology is that the formula is actually backwards: Our brains work in the opposite way.

Happiness actually fuels success, not the other way around. If you can find a way to get your brain to become positive, your success rate will increase, and, as a result, work will become more productive, enjoyable, and rewarding... So, if we can change the formula - if we can reverse it - then we can maximize our brain's potential and our performance will increase dramatically. Not to mention the fact that we'll be happier right now, in the present.

I can imagine that you might be skeptical about all of this. Could happiness really make a difference to our work? Well, the research shows that it does.

Let me explain... In one study, researchers tested a group of four-year-old children on how quickly they could put blocks together into shapes. One group of children was primed to be positive and one group was left at neutral. The children who were positive put the blocks together faster and more accurately than the children who were neutral.

But this doesn't only apply to children and blocks. In another study, researchers did a similar experiment with doctors:

*These researchers tested the doctors to see if they could prime them to be positive, neutral, or a third category – which is they had them read a scientific journal to get them a scientific mindset before looking through patient histories trying to make correct diagnoses.*

*And what they found was the doctors who were primed to be positive, showed up to a 50% increase in the speed and accuracy of the diagnoses as they went through the patient's histories and a three-fold increase in intellectual flexibility around their original misdiagnosis.*

*What they started to realize is when you prime an individual to be positive, we found that it changed not only your intelligence and accuracy, it started to change everything. In fact, if I gave you all 15 different types of intelligence tests, and we tested you on every dimension*

*of intelligence that we know, what we find is that if we prime you to be positive (as opposed to neutral or stressed), your brain shows more intelligence at not one or two dimensions of intelligence, but all 15...*

*Now when I first heard that statistic I said all right, that doesn't make sense. Because let's think about it: you know, that's great research but it doesn't comport with reality because let's be honest, happy people really aren't usually the smart people. Right? Happy people are the ones who don't get it. Happy people are the ones you have to keep explaining things to, they don't understand how the markets are working, they don't understand how the company's not working, they don't understand how unhappy their happiness is making me. They don't understand any of that at all.*

*But that's not what this research was saying. It was actually much more significant because everyone in here knows somebody who's successful and not happy. And everyone in here knows somebody who's brilliant and not happy. So what this research is saying is not that if you're happy then you're brilliant. What it's saying is that your brain, primed to be positive or happy, outperforms your brain in negative or neutral, or stressed.*

So that is what we're now calling "The Happiness Advantage." The research has shown that every single business outcome is actually predicted by our level of positivity. For instance, if you look at positive employees vs. negative employees, positive employees are better at keeping their jobs, they show as much as 31% higher levels of productivity, they're more resilient, suffer from less burnout, and less turnover.

Happy employees are perceived as being more charismatic and more trustworthy, which results in higher levels of sales. Happy employees (and students for that matter) perform better on intelligence tests, and they also take fewer sick days throughout the year. They even make more money.

This is great news for the people who are already happy, those people for whom positivity comes naturally. But what about the rest of us? Can we capitalize on this advantage too? Thankfully, the scientific research has proven that we can.

In the rest of this program, I will be discussing exactly that--how you can reap "The Happiness Advantage" at work and in your life as a whole.

First, I'll go into the science of the Happiness Advantage, so we can understand it better.

In the second part of this program, we'll talk about how we can put "The Happiness Advantage" to work.

And finally, I'll talk about how we can spread "The Happiness Advantage" to your coworkers and everyone in your organization, even to your family members and strangers on a street.

## UNDERSTANDING THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

We view the world through a specific pattern, and that perspective directly affects our performance and success. We can also change that lens, which is something I learned after a very interesting research study that was conducted at Harvard University. A study involving the game of Tetris...

*How many people have played Tetris? Oh, a lot of people have played Tetris. It's ok if you haven't – you're more productive than all the people that just raised their hands.*

*Tetris is a fantastic video game where shapes fall from the ceiling, like they do in real life, and you're just rotating the shapes around to make straight lines in the video game. At Harvard Medical School they hired Harvard Business School students to play Tetris for five hours straight. What they were testing was what happens inside the brain.*

*But what really occurred in the experiment was what happened afterwards. See one of the female participants in one of the studies was walking through Harvard Yard and saw the professor and went up to him and said "Hi Professor" and he said "I'm sorry I don't know who you are" and she said "I did your Tetris experiment" and he said, "Thank you" and started to walk away from this young lady. And she grabbed this old professor, she grabbed him and turned him back around and shook him a little bit and said, "Professor, I need to tell you something. You're going to think that I'm crazy but after that experiment where you made me sit in that basement of that psychology building for five hours straight making straight lines over and over again with that annoying music in the background, I walked out of your experiment and walked through Harvard Yard, walked onto Mass Ave, walked into the supermarket and found myself re-arranging the bread on the shelf to make straight lines." She said, "Professor, am I crazy?" and he said, "Yes, yes you are. Please stop touching me."*

*But it turns out, these individuals had gotten stuck in something we call the Tetris Effect. The Tetris Effect is that we have patterns through which we view the world that we can get stuck in.*

*I've been working with several different companies, but one of the ones we just finished a very large psychology experiment with is KPMG, a large accounting firm, and what we did with them is we were working with their tax managers and what we were finding was that many of these tax managers were spending 8-14 hours a day looking through their tax*

*forms, looking for mistakes and errors, which made them very, very good at their jobs. . . until they had to manage a team, or they had to go home to their family, or they started thinking about their working life and suddenly their brain was stuck in a Tetris Effect, this after image of looking for the mistakes and errors first.*

*I talked to one of the managers who said that over the past quarter he's been so depressed he's getting about 20-25% less work done, and in passing this tax manager mentioned to me that, to make things better at home he had, on a break at work, made an Excel spreadsheet of all of the mistakes that his wife had been making over the past six weeks. And he printed it out and brought it home to his wife, ahem, to his ex-wife, and I'm listening to this guy and he is so clearly stuck in a negative Tetris Effect, I didn't want to laugh but then, but, then I did. What we found is that many of these individuals, because they see the world through one pattern, get stuck in that pattern. And this tax manager was actually treating his wife like a tax form.*

What happened with that accountant was that the pattern that was so good in one domain (working on tax returns) was maladaptive when he applied it – unwittingly-- to his home life. But the good news is this: If you can imprint the brain for a negative pattern, you can also imprint the brain with a positive one.

So that's the great question: How do you train your brain to get stuck in a positive Tetris Effect - a positive way of viewing the world that will bring all the resulting benefits? In this next section, I'll describe how you can train your brain through a series of habits and mindset changes, to start reaping "The Happiness Advantage" at work.

### PUTTING THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE TO WORK

Who wouldn't want to be more intelligent, more productive, have higher levels of performance, and even be perceived as more charismatic and attractive? We all want The Happiness Advantage. The real question is: how much is possible? How much can we change? What if we're born with genes for pessimism? What if we practice the same patterns so much that it's ingrained in the way we see the world?

What we've studied in Positive Psychology is how much you can actually change.

*Two researchers, Emmons and McCullough, went into a company in 2000 and 2003. And what they were doing was they were testing individuals who always tested pessimist. Every time you tested them, they tested as "Pessimist." Maybe they had genes for pessimism. . . or maybe they had been rewarded for that in the past. What they did was, they wanted to see what would happen if you had these pessimists create what we call a "life habit" that's an action you do 21 days in a row so it becomes a pattern in your life.*

*What would happen if you took a pessimist – with genes for pessimism – and made them create a life habit out of gratitude, which is the opposite of what they're scanning for as they look at the world?*

*So what they did was had optimists and pessimists at a company when they got into work write down three things that they were grateful for... And they had to be specific. It's not just, "I'm grateful for my health." Who cares? Why are you grateful for your health? Or you're grateful for your children. Great. Why are you grateful for your children? So you write down, you know, "I'm grateful for my child because she gave me a hug today which means I'm loved regardless." They do three new things every day for 21 consecutive days. If you do this, after writing them down for 2 minutes – these three things you're grateful for – your brain is slightly happier. But honestly as a researcher, I could care less. I could care less because we get the exact same effect with chocolate.*

*What we're interested in is long-term changes to your happiness level. What we found is after a 21-day period of time, these pessimists - who always test pessimist – suddenly test as low-level optimists. And then, when you test them six months later, they're still low to moderate level optimists. With effects upon their senior evaluations, their productivity as perceived by themselves, their optimism levels, their life satisfaction, and their work satisfaction. What we started to realize is that these individuals were changing the pattern through which they view the world: That they got so stuck into a pattern of scanning the world for things that made them negative and stressed first.*

*You know somebody could walk into this room right now or walk into any of your homes or into your jobs or into your work lives and no matter what is going on they could find the thing to complain about. Those people are not bad people – scientifically - those people are experts. Their brains are experts at scanning the world for stresses and hassles. What the problem is, is our brains are like single processors and the more that we devote resources to only seeing the stresses, hassles and complaints, the less of the resources our brain is able to devote to things that we are grateful for and the things we find meaning in and the possibilities we see in our environment for changing the parts we want to change.*

Gratitude isn't the only thing that trains your brain for "The Happiness Advantage." Researchers have found several different habits that you can do that create not only happiness in the moment, but train your brain for "The Happiness Advantage" long-term.

One of those is simply exercise. Many people know that exercise releases endorphins. But what we have found that if you exercise every day for 21 days in a row, you are training your brain to see that you are

successful. . . This results in a positive cascade. Suddenly, your self-regulation muscle actually improves in other domains of your life. I find that when I exercise, I'm significantly more likely to eat healthier. Not just that, but research shows that adopting a habit of regular exercise actually improves your ability to stay on a budget and keep your house clean. . . Odd, I know, but it turns out that when the brain adopts patterns of success, they ripple out, increasing your ability to capitalize on the happiness advantage.

Another positive habit is to reduce multitasking. We live in a world that almost demands that we multitask. . . And we can do it: the only problem is, when we attempt to multitask, our brain actually decreases our success rate on both of those tasks. Remember, our brain is a single processor. It likes to do one thing at a time, so when we multitask, our focus on each task decreases, while the stress on our system increases. If you want to be happier and more productive at work, one of the best ways is to train your brain to do one thing at a time.

Meditation is one of most effective ways to do this. To practice, take your hands off the keyboard for just two minutes a day and focus on one, singular, calming action. I like to sit there and just watch my breath go in and out. You're breathing anyway, you might as well watch it. People who do this on a regular basis not only become more mindful about doing one thing at a time, but they actually increase the area of their brains devoted to experiencing happiness.

*The last one is "Conscious Acts of Kindness." They found that one of the greatest ways of creating a positive Tetris Effect at a company or a school is altruism. That if you scan your day for how you can affect somebody else, it changes how you're looking at the world, from "how is the world affecting me" to "how can I affect the world." What they did in this study is they had individuals scan the world for five positive things they could do for other people. They now know if you do that with managers, the entire team benefits. The managers enjoy their work more; the teams become more profitable and more successful. We know that.*

*In my own research, I had difficulty to get the managers that I talked to in the midst of a crisis or challenge to do five of these. So, what I got them to do is just a single one - and we routinize this. Every day when they come into work - for 21 consecutive work days - I have these managers at large financials and fortune 500 companies, write a single email, with a maximum of two sentences (so it takes less than two minutes to do) a maximum of two sentence e-mail, to a family member, friend or co-worker: Praising them or thanking them for something. It's an email that is designed to help somebody else or to praise them or to have a positive effect. It changes something as soul draining as email can be into something that is life giving. It re-trains the brain to see how even opening your email during the day can have a positive effect upon somebody else. We find that those managers then start giving more (and positive) encouragement to people around them. They start recognizing*

*people for their accomplishments. They start reaching out to other people and they start seeing how they can effect change as instead of how change is being effected upon them. When that happens, they're more likely to stay at a company, they're happier, they become more successful, and they create more social support networks, which ripples that positivity out.*

So, those are some suggestions, but you can probably think of a number of other things that would increase your happiness if you did them on a daily basis. The real question for scientists – and for all of us – is how we go from *wanting* to do these things to actually *doing* them. We all have New Years' resolutions that we set at the beginning of the year, and by January 5<sup>th</sup> we're waving at them in the rear-view mirror until the next year, when we vow to start being more positive, or to exercise, or to meditate, or to practice conscious acts of kindness...all over again.

What we now know is that this inability to follow through on good intentions is a symptom of our own biology. Permanent change is so hard because our brains find it incredibly difficult to get over something called "Activation Energy." I learned this when I was trying to make a life habit out of playing my guitar...

*William James says if you do the same activity for twenty-one days in a row you create a life habit. I say to William James, twenty-one days later I should be a musician. I tried it, made an Excel spreadsheet of twenty-one columns and at the end of the twenty-one days I checked off only the first two days of playing the guitar, which made me depressed because I am a positive psychologist and then I felt depressed that I felt depressed... positive psychologist.*

*So what I did was I decided to do an experiment on myself. I decided to time how long it took me to get the guitar out of the case and the guitar out of the closet... which took me 20 seconds exactly... which is fast but not applause worthy. Then I bought a two-dollar stand from one of my friends, took the guitar out of the case and the closet on the stand and started the experiment again. Twenty-one days later, William James was right. Actually now every day that I am in Cambridge, I play the guitar. And every day I'm traveling, I miss it. But that's not the point of the story. The point of the story is that I had an illusory twenty-second mental barrier to doing something that I really wanted to do. See what happens is that every time I walk past the closet, I would say, "Hey, do I want to play the guitar?" and my brain would say, "It takes forever to get that guitar case out of the case and out of the closet. Why don't we do something else?" and I would say, "Ok! What are we doing?" and then I would never play the guitar.*

*What I was experiencing is something you might remember from back in your high school days, of something called "activation energy" from your chemistry or your physics classes.*



*Activation energy in a physical or chemical formula is the amount of energy it takes to start a chain reaction or to catalyze a reaction and it's the highest amount of energy in the formula at the beginning. Same thing is true for the human brain, in order to catalyze a reaction in your life to create a change in the patterns through which you view the world there is an initial investment of energy called activation energy which is at the highest point at the beginning of the formula and then begins to get easier. What we found is, by the way, this is the reason we procrastinate.*

*We procrastinate because we wait for our stress level to crest up higher than the activation energy it takes to start the task. It also means it takes more mental energy to start a task than to do a task. What we found is this, if you slightly change the activation energy up or down, your brain magnifies it for you, creating those changes to be even more likely or less likely. Let me give you two examples:*

*Let's say you have a negative habit that you want to change. For me, I definitely had a negative habit, when I was at Harvard there was a period when I would watch three hours of television every day. That was decreasing my productivity, I wasn't spending as much time with my real friends and so I wanted to stop but I knew that for a while. But every time I come home from work I would be exhausted, sit down on my couch and press the "on" button on the remote control – low activation energy.*

*So what I did was I played the same trick that my brain had played upon me with the guitar - on the TV. I took the batteries out of the remote control, walked them exactly twenty seconds away to my bedroom and left the batteries there. Then the next couple of days I came home from work, sat down on the couch and pressed the "on" button on the remote control – usually repeatedly – and go "ugh! I hate that I do these experiments! Where did I put the batteries this time?" And my brain says, "Shawn, we put them twenty seconds away, we even timed it, lets go get it and we can watch as much TV as we want." And then my brain said, "No, it takes forever to go get those batteries. Why don't we do something else?" And I say, "Ok – what are we doing?"*

*Right next to me I put all the work I needed to be doing on one side of the couch and on the other side of the couch I put a book that I always wanted to read that had sat on my shelf that I haven't read and I had an open journal sitting in front of me and my guitar still in reach and my phone so I could call my friends on my phone and meet up with them for dinner instead of watching my fake friends on TV. And as a result of that, I dramatically decreased the amount of TV I was watching. I then only watched TV when it was worth the time investment to go get the batteries. Which meant I only watched "Lost." But I gained back two hours of conscious time a day. And by adding just twenty seconds to my day,*

*twenty seconds of my activation energy, I gained by fourteen conscious hours a week, which is an entire conscious day.*

*If you want to create a positive habit, your brain works the opposite way! If you want to create something in your life, a new reaction, you have to slightly decrease the activation energy. For me, I wanted to start exercising every morning. I knew that if I exercised in the morning it's the equivalent of taking an anti-depressant. I know that if you exercise before work it increases your IQ for the first two hours at work. And I know that if you exercise it creates a cascade of belief that your behavior matters. I know all that, but information is not transformation. Because every morning I'd wake up and say "Hey Shawn, do you want to exercise?" And my brain goes "No, I do not. Where are my clothes? Where are your shoes? What part of your body are you going to exercise?" and at by that point I'd fallen back asleep. So what I did was, I decided to slightly decrease the activation energy in the morning by one night I decided to move my athletic shoes right next to my bed and I put a work-out routine on the wall so I wouldn't have to argue with myself in the morning and then for twenty-one days and only twenty-one days, I just went to sleep in my gym clothes. My mom wonders why I'm single. I think it's these experiments. But, they were clean and I had shoes right next to the bed, I had a work-out routine on the wall – all I had to do in the morning was roll out of bed and put my feet, which already had socks on it, right into the shoes and I was up exercising. That's all it took my brain to be able believe it was easy enough to start the task, to start it and to create that life habit of change. Similarly, we find that if you can get your feet into your athletic shoes, something weird happens to your brain where you actually think it's easier to go work out now than to have to take all this stuff back off again. Which it's not! I've timed it, it's much easier to take all this stuff back off again than to go to the gym but our brains take little tiny units and when you are able to take a single task and make it slightly easier to do you can actually dramatically increase the chances of your brain creating that positive habit.*

The best way to put *The Happiness Advantage* into action is to adopt a new positive habit... and the best way to do that is to lower the activation energy enough to make it possible.

So think about your own life: what would it look like for you to get your athletic shoes on at work, metaphorically? What could you do to make those positive habits much more likely to happen? Because if you can make those small changes, not only will you be increasing your own happiness and success, but as we're about to see, those changes will ripple out to affect everyone around you...

## SPREADING THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

Positive changes made by an individual can ripple out to an entire organization.

I am sure that all of you have seen how both positivity and negativity can spread like wildfire in a company. An angry, negative coworker walks into a meeting, and ten minutes later everybody else walks out in the same mood. And as we now know, that's going to affect their productivity and success over the next hour. So let's look into this phenomenon more closely. What we are particularly interested in is how it starts and how it spreads. To start off, let's try a brief experiment... I'd like you to watch this video.

[“LAUGHING BABY ETHAN” CLIP]

So what was your reaction? By the end of that video, did you find that you were smiling or laughing as well? If you were, you are going along with about 80% of the audiences that have watched this. The majority of people actually started laughing themselves.

What you have just experienced is a biological phenomenon called emotional contagion. It exists because of a certain very specific part of the brain that scientists just discovered in the last decade.

If I put you into a brain scan and ask you to smile, I'll see on the scan that part of your brain is activating — showing me that you're smiling. That shouldn't be too surprising. But if I tell you to remain neutral, while I have someone *else* smile at you, I'll see on the brain scan that parts of your brain are still lighting up. These brain cells — called Mirror Neurons — mirror what you're seeing someone else do, and act as if you yourself are doing it.

In essence, your own brain is tricking itself. When you see someone else smile, your brain drops dopamine, the pleasure drug into your system, and your face starts to contort into a smile before you can even stop yourself. I'm sure I don't need to put you in a brain scan to convince you — you've seen this “mirror neuron” effect before in your own life. Think about the last meeting you had when somebody started yawning. Suddenly the yawns are going around the table, whether people are tired or not. Mirror neurons are the reason we laugh more at movies that we see in the theater than the ones we see at home: when we're around other people who are laughing, we're much more likely to laugh ourselves.

It's not just actions like yawning or laughing that can spread, but feelings like happiness or anxiety. We call it the “Ripple Effect” and we've seen it in all facets of life. For example, in one research study, researchers find a small group of 15 people waiting on a subway platform for a train, or in line at the airport...

*... And you introduce somebody called a research confederate — that's somebody who works on my team who is a researcher, but the other people don't know it's a researcher. While these people wait for a subway or for a plane... while they're waiting there, this confederate comes and stands in the middle of them and starts to bounce nervously in place*

*and tap their foot impatiently on the floor and look at their watch repeatedly with a frown on their face... within two minutes of waiting for that subway, between seven to twelve of the 15 individuals, on average will start to unconsciously bounce nervously in place, tap their foot impatiently, or look at their watch repeatedly. If you don't believe me, this is one of the experiments you can do yourself... If you want to spread stress and negativity to other people...*

What this experiment shows is that the negativity and stress of one individual can ripple out to the people they are standing next to – even strangers. This occurs because of our mirror neurons and means that not only do smiles and laughter spread (which you saw in the video earlier), but so can negativity, stress, and uncertainty.

So, how can we buffer our brains against the negative effects of people and the environment around us? More importantly, how can we use these mirror neurons to create a one-way street so our positivity can ripple out to the people around us?

Researchers have found that if you bring three people into a room together, the other two people will leave with the emotions of the most expressive person in the group. So you might be an optimistic person already in your organization. But if you are not verbally and behaviorally expressive of it, that will remain only with you. And you might actually pick up the negativity or the stress of the people around you who are expressive of their complaints and hassles.

So if you want to create a positive “Ripple Effect,” you need to be expressive. Nonverbally, you can remember to smile and make eye contact with your coworkers. Verbally, you can work on increasing the number of positive and specific comments you make — praising the well-done work of direct reports, expressing your faith in their ability, even sending around an amusing YouTube clip in a team email. As we know from the science of *The Happiness Advantage*, these aren't just empty platitudes or silly recommendations. Priming your team in this way actually activates their brains. Just as the researchers did to the children with blocks and the doctors making diagnoses, expressing positivity will actually increase the success of those around you, so that it starts to spread across your organization.

So by changing your brain and practicing these happiness habits, not only will you reap the “*The Happiness Advantage*” yourself, but you'll also be capitalizing upon the mirror neurons to spread *The Happiness Advantage* to the rest of your organization. You'll be improving both the mood and the performance of your colleagues, your family, even the strangers waiting for a train standing next to you.

## CONCLUSION: GETTING STARTED

In the past 10 to 15 years of positive psychology research, we've accumulated thousands of research studies on how happiness helps people thrive in organizations, and how we can all reap *The Happiness Advantage*—many of which have been described in this video.

The problem is: information alone is not transformation. If you really want to make these positive changes happen, if you want to reap "The Happiness Advantage" in your own life, you have to change the way you think about work, and then change your daily habits to reflect that.

So, my goal for you is to take one concrete action you'd like to adopt and try it out for 21 days in a row, so that it can become a habit. *One positive habit.* Maybe it's sending out a two-sentence email first thing every morning, thanking a coworker for something. Or maybe you've decided to include meditation or the Three Gratitude Activity during the course of your workday. Or maybe you'd like to start exercising during your lunch break. Whatever it is that you decide you want to do, test it out. Be a scientist for yourself. See if it has an effect upon your success at work. If all this research is correct, not only will you start to reap "The Happiness Advantage" in your own life, but it should also spread throughout your organization. The science is clear. Happiness is a choice. Happiness raises performance and happiness spreads. The only thing left is to put it into practice. Because happiness is not just an emotion or something you find, happiness is a work ethic.

# The Happiness Advantage

## PART 2: IMPLEMENTATION MODULES

PREVIEW

## YOUR GUIDE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION MODULES

Part of the challenge of *The Happiness Advantage* is that it presents a series of revolutionary new ideas. Based on the latest research, we know that happiness improves your performance and satisfaction at work. We also know that it can be difficult to adopt the happiness habits that are necessary to achieve success. To help in this process, Shawn Achor has created five “Implementation Modules.” Each of these modules elaborates on aspects of Shawn’s research and provides specific ideas for implementing *The Happiness Advantage* in your work and in your life. In addition, these Implementation Modules can help in the following ways:

**Reinforce Happiness Habits:** The modules reinforce Shawn Achor’s message as well as provide new, practical suggestions for putting *The Happiness Advantage* to work in a real organizational setting. They place Shawn’s advice in context and expand the number of tools in your arsenal, so you can better address common workplace problems, like dealing with toxic coworkers, as well as learn the best ways to handle stress, set goals, and form meaningful bonds with coworkers.

**Extending the Message Over Time:** Training programs often provide ideas and inspiration, but then fail to deliver over the long haul. As Shawn states in *The Happiness Advantage*, “Information is not transformation.” After the session ends, how do you get people to really implement these ideas? Part of the solution comes from creating a 21-day life habit (and overcoming “Activation Energy”). Another part comes from reinforcing the message over time. That is where these modules come into play. You can use them over time to reinforce Shawn’s message, but even better, each of the modules builds on the core elements of the one before it, so that the effect is cumulative, the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

**Leading with *The Happiness Advantage*.** One of the modules, “Leading Positive Change,” provides instructions specific to people in leadership positions. The most successful organizations have leaders who know how important employee mindset and well-being are to the company’s bottom line. This module reveals how a manager can inspire his or her team to greater success by making just a few changes to the way he or she delivers instructions, assigns projects, and praises performance.

The Implementation Modules are designed to build upon the key lessons found in *The Happiness Advantage* training program. They can be viewed individually so that participants can supplement their learning, or be used in group sessions, where discussion and shared goal-setting can increase the likelihood of real transformation.

PREVIEW



# SAMPLE IMPLEMENTATION MODULE TRAINING SESSION

## PRE-SCREENING PREPARATION

- Welcome people to the training session and give them an overview of the program.
- You may want to address the concepts presented in this program in the context of your own organizational goals.
- You also may want to recap the key lessons in *The Happiness Advantage* to remind people of the program and of the benefits that can come from adopting a positive mindset.

## SCREENING

- Show one of the five Implementation Modules.

## POST SCREENING DISCUSSION

- Use the themes from the Implementation Module as a catalyst for discussion. You can also use the discussion questions as a way to trigger a group discussion.

## POST-SCREENING "ACTION LIST"

- You may want to create "takeaway" lessons from each of the implementation modules. Use your group discussion to create a list of action steps that people can adopt. Distribute this list to everyone in the group.

# IMPLEMENTATION MODULE: THE ZORRO CIRCLE

## OVERVIEW

Kick starting positive change can be difficult—we don't know where to start, or how. We try to tackle too much at once, and then feel out of control and overwhelmed by the challenge. *The Zorro Circle* Implementation Module provides a framework and guidelines for regaining control and setting attainable goals that will spark real positive change.

The facts are simple: research has shown that when we feel like we are in control of a situation, we're happier and able to perform at a higher level. But when our work piles up and we lose that feeling of control and influence over our environment, our brains become hijacked by stress and fear, and our abilities plummet. The key to regaining control is to start with small, manageable steps, and then slowly expand this mastery outward, so we can start conquering larger and larger goals. What does this have to do with Zorro? That's a story Shawn has to explain.

## THE ZORRO CIRCLE: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Do you often feel overwhelmed by adversities at work, or a to-do list that never seems to get any smaller? Think about the Zorro Circle story. How can you use the ideas in the story to help you with your tasks?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Discuss in your group both the story of the Zorro Circle and the story that Shawn tells about Barry and his backlog of e-mails. Do you or your colleagues have other examples of how you have overcome a backlog of work? List and discuss the action steps needed to overcome them.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Do you have a big goal you'd like to achieve? Think about how you can use the ideas of *The Zorro Circle* to realize your goal. Write out a list of small, manageable steps you can take at the beginning, and then think about how you can increase your "circle of influence" one step at a time until your goal is within reach.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Write down all of your stresses, daily challenges, and goals in the space below or on a sheet of paper. Then separate them into two categories: things that you have control over and things you don't. Now focus your energy on the things that you have control over and let go of the ones that you don't.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Zorro Circle: Transcript

According to legend, and to Hollywood, Zorro was a disciplined and fearless fighter, a hero. But he wasn't always able to swing from chandeliers and overpower ten men with his sword. At the beginning he's the young and impetuous Alejandro, the higher he flies, the farther he falls, until he soon feels out of control and utterly powerless, drunk and in despair. Until the sword master Don Diego meets him. In the hidden cave that serves as Don Diego's lair, the elder sword master begins Alejandro's training by drawing a circle in the dirt. Hour after hour, Alejandro is forced to fight only within this small circle. As Don Diego wisely tells his protégé, "This circle will be your world. Your whole life. Until I tell you otherwise, there is nothing outside of it."

Once Alejandro masters control of this small circle, Don Diego allows him to slowly attempt greater and greater feats, which, one by one, he achieves. Soon he is swinging from ropes, besting his trainer in a sword fight, even performing a set of pushups over burning candles (not the most practical skill to hone, but cinematically impressive nonetheless). But none of these achievements would ever have been possible had he not learned first to master that small circle. Before that moment, Alejandro had no command over his emotions, no real faith in his ability to accomplish his goal, and worst of all, no feeling of control over his own fate. Only after he masters the circle does he become legend.

The concept of the Zorro Circle is a powerful metaphor for how we can achieve our most ambitious goals in jobs. One of our biggest drivers of success is the belief that our behavior matters; that we have control over our future. Yet when our stresses and workloads seem to mount faster than our ability to keep up, feelings of control are often the first things to go, especially when we try to tackle too much all at once. When it comes to our work, we are often faced with unreasonable expectations-both those we set for ourselves and those others set for us. In today's results-obsessed workplace, it's no wonder we're impatient and overly ambitious. We want to be the top salesman or earn the highest bonus or have the biggest office-and we want it NOW. If we hire a new CEO, we're expected to be profitable the next quarter; if we hire a new head coach, we're expected to win the very next game. Unfortunately, this strategy often leads to failure, feelings of helplessness, and burn-out. Faced with the seemingly impossible, our brains get hijacked by stress and we lose the ability to function at our best.

If, however, we first concentrate our efforts on small manageable goals, we regain the feeling of control so crucial to performance. By first limiting the scope of our efforts, then watching those efforts have the intended effect, we accumulate the resources, knowledge, and confidence to expand the circle, gradually conquering a larger and larger area.

So how do we put this Zorro Circle idea into action in the workplace? When I work with managers, whether they're in Shanghai or Dubai or Stamford, Connecticut, I always have them do the same thing first. I ask them to write down and write out all their stresses, daily challenges, and goals on a sheet of paper, then to separate them into two categories: things that they have control over and things they don't. Anyone can do this simple exercise on a scrap of paper, an Excel spreadsheet, or even on a napkin at a bar. The point is to separate the stresses that we have to let go of because they're out of our hands, while at the same time identifying the areas where our efforts will have a real impact, so that we can then focus our energy accordingly.

Once you're armed with a list of what is indeed still within your control, it's time to draw that first circle. Identify one small goal that you know you can quickly accomplish. By narrowing your scope of action, and focusing your energy and efforts, the likelihood of success increases. Think of it this way: The best way to wash a car is to put a thumb over the hose's spout, so that only a fraction of the area is open. Why? Because this concentrates the water pressure, making the hose much more powerful. At work, the equivalent of this is concentrating your efforts on small areas where you know you can make a difference. By tackling one small challenge at a time—a narrow circle that slowly expands outward—we can overcome even the most stressful situations and get enormous amounts of work done.

Here's an example of how one employee put this strategy into action. After a talk at a financial company one day, a senior manager named Barry approached me, and confided that not only was his office a complete mess, but that his email in-box contained over 1400 messages. The mere thought of addressing the problem seemed to send his body into a reflexive stress response. Not only did he want to avoid dealing with his e-mail, he was so overwhelmed by the situation, he didn't feel like doing any work at all.

First, dealing with two months' worth of unread e-mails was more than anyone could handle all at once, and Barry needed to see some progress right away. So I told him to forget everything that had been written before today and to respond only to each new e-mail as it came in. After three or four days of tackling only new e-mails, once he started to feel in command of the situation, he could go back through the e-mails of the day before and address those. And so he could proceed, tackling on one extra day at a time, until he slowly worked his way back to the beginning. I also told him he couldn't spend more than an hour each day on this task.

Three weeks later, I received an e-mail from Barry. He proudly told me that if I responded immediately, I would be one of only five e-mails currently in his in-box. I was amazed. Furthermore, he had attached a picture of his spotless office. I wrote back that, assuming he hadn't subbed in a photo from an Office Depot ad, congratulations were clearly in order. He had started with a small, manageable step forward, and now he was celebrating a giant success.

So to take advantage of the Zorro Circle strategy, remember: don't try to change 100% immediately. When you're feeling overwhelmed at work, start with one small action that you know you can accomplish. Set manageable goals, and then build up from there. Before long, you'll be... well, you probably won't be swinging from chandeliers but you'll be increasingly successful at work.

PREVIEW

# IMPLEMENTATION MODULE: SOCIAL INVESTMENT

## OVERVIEW

When it comes to handling stress, some of the smartest people actually make the biggest mistake. When work piles up, they retreat from social connections and focus only on the tasks at hand to the exclusion of all outside “distractions.” Yet research shows that when the going gets tough, this is the exact opposite of how we should react. Our social connections are actually the most important part of the Happiness Advantage. This section teaches us how to invest more in the very greatest predictor of happiness and performance—our social support network.

To form new social connections, as well as strengthen existing ones, remember to do the following:

**Make Eye Contact:** When you pass someone in the hallway, stop for a second to say hello, and remember to smile and make eye contact. It may seem trivial, but eye contact is crucial to social connection—it fires the mirror neurons in our brain and cements the bond between two people.

**Ask Interested Questions:** The quickest way to employee engagement is letting your coworkers know that you’re interested not just in what they’re doing, but in who they are. Greet them in the hallway, start a dialogue, ask specific questions, and refer back to past conversations. The more you connect with your colleagues, the more the Happiness Advantage will ripple out to everyone around you.

**Be Present:** Given our devotion to technology and the multi-tasking it enables, we often forget how important it is to give someone our undivided attention. When you meet with a colleague, be fully present. Maintain eye contact, and don’t glance down at your iPhone or Blackberry. Don’t type an e-mail while



you're on the phone with someone—they'll feel undervalued the minute they realize your full attention is not with them.

**Get Moving:** With employees just an email or phone call away, it's easy to stay confined to your office all day. Unfortunately, this means we miss out on the full power of social investment. So get out from behind your desk and interact with your colleagues in person. Think MBWA: Manage By Walking Around. This strategy improves employee satisfaction and productivity, as well as your own well-being, which is why it's a leadership tool practiced by some of the world's most successful CEOs.

PREVIEW

## SOCIAL INVESTMENT: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What do you do when work gets overwhelming? Do you retreat “into your shell?” Discuss your reaction to stress with your colleagues. Do they have the same reaction? Think of ways you can encourage social interaction in your office. Perhaps you can organize a social gathering after business hours, plan a weekly team lunch, or simply set a daily alarm that will remind you to get up and visit your coworkers. The ideas don’t all have to be work-related, and feel free to make it fun. If a “Decorate your cubicle contest” or a “Donut tossing competition” gets people engaged and interacting, it’s worth it. So don’t wait... start planning!

---

---

---

---

---

---

As a manager or co worker, how can you increase your social ties with your team? Share ideas with your colleagues and then brainstorm ways to implement them.

---

---

---

---

When people stop by, do you keep your eyes on your computer screen? Think of ways you can force yourself to give the other person your undivided attention. (Shut your laptop? Turn your chair so you're facing the window?)

---

---

---

---

---

When you meet with someone in person, do you constantly check your computer or mobile phone, or do you wish you could? Try having a "Blackberry, iPhone, and iPad Free" meeting. See if it helps with the agenda and discussion.

---

---

---

---

---

---

Discuss ways you can increase the social cohesion of your team. List the ideas on a whiteboard and make sure you involve everyone. Think of one strength each team member brings to the table, and explore how each person can use their strength to connect with everyone else.

---

---

---

---

---

---

All the principles in the video are important, but research has shown that one — Social Investment — is perhaps the most crucial to long-term happiness, health, and success. How socially cohesive is your work team? What is one way you might increase the number of high-quality connections you have at the office?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Does your work allow you the time and energy to cultivate meaningful relationships outside the office? What is one (small) thing you could in your daily life to strengthen one of these relationships?

---

---

---

---

---

PREVIEW

## SOCIAL INVESTMENT: TRANSCRIPT

Brilliant people sometimes do the most unintelligent thing possible.

Imagine: A daunting project gets dropped in your lap, and as the deadline looms and the pressure mounts, you start eating lunch at your desk, working late, coming in on weekends. Soon, you're cutting face time with direct reports, no casual hallway chats, no time even for nonessential calls with clients. As for time with family and friends, well, these things are the first to go when you're in crisis mode.

If this sounds at all familiar, you're not alone. When work gets overwhelming, we too often retreat into our own shells. While that may be the natural reaction, it's exactly the wrong one. The most successful people take the exact opposite approach. Instead of divesting from their social ties, they invest. And the dividends are enormously rewarding: Not only are these people happier, but they are more productive, engaged, energetic, and resilient. Based upon my research, we know that social relationships are the single greatest investment you can make in the Happiness Advantage.

When we have a community of people we can count on we multiply our emotional, intellectual, and physical resources. We bounce back from setbacks faster, accomplish more, and feel a greater sense of purpose.

But don't take my word for it. In a study appropriately titled "Very Happy People," researchers wanted to find out the characteristics of the happiest 10% among us. Do they all live in warm climates? Are they all wealthy? Are they all physically fit? Turns out, there was one-and only one-characteristic that distinguished the happiest 10% from everybody else: the strength of their social relationships.

When I did an empirical study of 1,600 Harvard students, I found the same result - social support was a far greater predictor of happiness than any other factor; more than GPA, family income, SAT scores, age, gender, or race. In fact, the correlation between social support and happiness was 0.7. This may not sound like a big number, but for researchers it's huge - it's larger than the correlation between smoking and cancer. The point is, the more social support you have, the happier you are. And as we know, the happier you are, the more successful you become at work.

Social support has a strong biological effect too. People without strong social ties are more susceptible to illness and stress, and actually have shorter life spans. One study found that employees who had a bad relationship with their boss were 30% more likely to suffer from heart disease! If you don't cultivate ties among your boss and coworkers, it can be as bad for you as a steady diet of fried foods - and not nearly as much fun.

On the other hand, even the smallest positive interactions with your colleagues can have huge benefits. Each positive encounter you have during the course of the workday actually helps your cardiovascular system recover from stress, which improves your cognitive abilities and protects you from the negative effects of job strain.

And yet, despite all this overwhelming evidence, during the recent economic downturn I saw some of the smartest workers in the world constantly undercut themselves by ignoring their social ties. At the very same time that they needed each other most, they forgot their most valuable resource. Time and again during those perilous months, I saw companies jettison team trainings and social "perks," ignoring plummeting team morale in favor of things deemed more "important." The best companies, on the other hand, actively invested in social cohesion - it's why cutting-edge software companies have foosball tables in the employee lounge, and why the Google cafeterias stay open well past the hours of the traditional workday, making it easy for the employees to dine together as much as possible.

And then companies reap the rewards. MIT researchers found that employees with strong ties to their manager brought in more money than those with only weak ties - besting the company average by \$588 of revenue each month.

So, how can we take more advantage of one of the greatest predictors of happiness and success? It certainly doesn't require becoming best friends with everyone in your office. Especially that guy sitting next to you right now. Here are a few actions you can take:

When traveling down busy corridors, greet colleagues you cross paths with, and remember to look them in the eye. This isn't just for show; neuroscience has revealed that when we make eye contact with somebody, it actually sends a signal to the brain that triggers empathy and rapport. Ask interested questions; schedule face-to-face meetings, and initiate conversations that aren't always task-oriented. A popular manager at a top 100 law firm once told me that he set out to learn one new thing about a co-worker each day, which he would later reference in conversation. The social capital he invested in each day paid out in increasingly large ways as his employees felt more connected to both him and the firm.

Third: Be present, both physically and mentally. That means when someone walks into your office to talk, don't stare at your computer screen. When someone calls you on the phone, don't keep typing that e-mail. The minute someone hears your clicking keyboard on the other end of the phone call, they're going to know you're disengaged. Forging a connection requires active listening - giving someone your full attention and also allowing them to have their say. One of the best managing directors I know makes his meetings Blackberry-free, so that all eyes are on each other at all times.

Finally: The leaders most committed to social investment also get moving, quite literally. The best way to form more connections at work is to get out from behind the desk. This idea of "managing by walking

around" was popularized in the 1980s by leadership expert Tom Peters, who learned about the practice from the leaders of Hewlett-Packard. This tactic allows managers to get to know employees, share good news and best practices, hear concerns, offer solutions, and ultimately deliver encouragement and happiness.

PREVIEW



# IMPLEMENTATION MODULE: FALLING UP

## OVERVIEW

What do you do when bad things happen? Are you resilient? Do you have the same philosophy that you can find in the lyrics from the old Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movie “Swing Time:”

*Nothing's impossible, I have found.  
For when my chin is on the ground,  
I pick myself up, dust myself off,  
Start all over again.*

It turns out that those lyrics actually reflect the latest scientific research—studies show that when we are able to view failure as an opportunity for growth, we are more likely to actually experience growth. Mindset is a powerful indicator of future success, and simply knowing that we can get back up again actually helps us get back up again.

The fact is that we all face obstacles and setbacks in our daily lives. If you're in sales, for example, failure and rejection can be common. But as Shawn states in this Module, all it takes is a subtle shift in mindset to rise above these rejections and achieve greater success. In a famous study conducted at the insurance company Met Life, optimistic salespeople outperformed their more pessimistic counterparts by a huge margin. It turned out that an employee's intelligence mattered far less to their sales success than the way they viewed failure.

So the key to “picking yourself up” after falling down is the mindset you use to evaluate what happened. As Shawn explains, when we choose a “positive counterfactual” to assess a past adversity, we get over the adversity faster and increase the likelihood of future success.

## FALLING UP EXERCISE (FOR USE IN ADVANCE OF THE SCREENING):

1. In advance of showing the video, present your team with Shawn's hypothetical scenario:

*Imagine for a moment that you walk into a bank. There are 50 other people in the bank. A robber walks in and fires his weapon once and you are shot in the right arm. Now if you were honestly describing this event to your friends and coworkers the next day, do you describe it as lucky or unlucky?*

2. Ask your team the question, "Do you view this as a lucky or unlucky event?" Ask each member of your group to write down his or her answer. Ask them to also write down the reasons why they think it is lucky or unlucky.
3. Show the video.
4. After the video, ask people if they still agree with their first answer, or if they have changed their minds.
5. Ask someone to provide an example of a common workplace adversity, and then let everyone provide potential counterfactual responses to this event. What is the most positive counterfactual they can come up with, and how would adopting that mindset affect their future actions?

## FALLING UP: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Think of a recent disappointing event. What did you say to yourself about the event? Could you have invented a more positive counterfactual? Write down the positive counterfactual.

---

---

---

---

---

Discuss the story of the two shoe salesman, and then ask the group to think of a similar situation they have faced in the business world. When confronted with this scenario, did they view it as a dead end, or an opportunity for growth?

---

---

---

---

---

Discuss the Met Life experiment. Why do you think optimistic people perform better than less optimistic people?

---

---

---

---

---

---

As a manager, how can you encourage your employees to see failure as an opportunity for learning and growth? How can you use obstacles and setbacks as fuel for progress and innovation?

---

---

---

---

---

---

## FALLING UP: TRANSCRIPT

You might have heard the oft-told story of the two shoe salesmen who were sent to a village in Africa in the early 1900's to assess opportunities. They wired separate telegrams back to their boss. One read: "Situation hopeless. They don't wear shoes." The other read: "Glorious opportunity! They don't have any shoes yet."

We often think that greeting obstacles with such a high level of optimism is unintelligent. But it turns out that it's one of the most successful ways to get ahead in the business world. When insurance giant MetLife started evaluating how their employees dealt with setbacks, they discovered something extraordinary. Testing revealed that the agents with more optimistic ways of explaining hardships sold 37% more insurance than their pessimistic ones. The most optimistic agents actually sold fully 88% more than the most pessimistic ones. Furthermore, agents who were more optimistic were half as likely to quit as the pessimists.

Aware it had struck gold, MetLife decided to completely overhaul its hiring practices from that day on. They changed their hiring practices so that they focused almost exclusively on how well would-be agents reacted to setbacks-were they optimistic? Within only a few years, MetLife's turnover rate had plummeted while its market share had increased by almost 50%. So how can you leverage this clear competitive advantage??

Consider the following scenario: I have presented to business leaders in countries around the globe, always to the same effect. Imagine for a moment that you walk into a bank. There are 50 other people in the bank. A robber walks in and fires his weapon once and you are shot in the right arm.

Now if you were honestly describing this event to your friends and coworkers the next day, do you describe it as lucky or unlucky?

When I pose this same question to executives in my training sessions, the response is generally divided about 70/30: 70% claim it is a supremely unfortunate event; the other 30% claim to have been very fortunate indeed.

People in the unfortunate group say:

"I could have walked into any bank, at any time. This kind of thing almost never happens. How unlucky is it that I happened to be there? And that I was shot?"

Or, "There's a bullet in my arm; that's objectively unfortunate."

Or, "I entered the bank perfectly healthy and I left in an ambulance. I don't know about you, Shawn, but that's not my idea of a good time."

But my all-time favorite response was someone on Wall Street who said, "There were at least fifty other people in the bank. Surely someone deserved getting shot more than I did." (With a response like that, I'm not sure that's true.)

These people cannot understand how a typical bank errand turned gunshot wound could be construed as fortunate. But then they hear the other side's explanations of the same event:

"I could have been shot somewhere far worse than my arm. I could have died. I feel incredibly fortunate."

Or, "It's amazing that nobody else got hurt. There were at least 50 other people in the bank, including children. It's unbelievably lucky that everybody lived to tell the tale."

Even though the responses differ dramatically, the point is that every brain in the room does the exact same thing. It invents - and that's an important word - a "counterfactual." A counterfactual is an alternate scenario our brains create to help us evaluate and make sense of what really happened. Here's what I mean. The people who saw the outcome as unlucky imagined an alternate scenario of not having been shot at all; in comparison, their outcome seems very unfortunate. But the other group invented a very different alternate scenario: that they could have gotten shot in the head and died, or that many other people could have been hurt. Compared with that, surviving is very fortunate.

Here is the crucial part: Because the counterfactual is invented, we actually have the power in any given situation to consciously select a counterfactual that makes us feel fortunate rather than helpless. And choosing a positive counterfactual, besides simply making us feel better, sets ourselves up for the whole host of benefits to motivation and performance we now know accompanies a positive mindset. On the other hand, choosing a counterfactual that makes us feel more fearful of adversity actually makes it loom larger than it really is.

Here's how to put this brain training into practice. Think about a recent adversity or challenge. Imagine you have to stay late at work for a project. It's easy to be unhappy if you use the counterfactual, "I could be at home with my family right now." But remember that's invented. You can just as easily frame the situation in this way: "I might have a job that does this every night, or, I might not have a job at all." Now these might not balance out, but the purpose of the counterfactual is to merely acquaint your brain with the idea that there are always multiple ways of evaluating an event, even something as bad as a car accident, bank robbery, or economic collapse.

Of course, the counterfactual has to be palatable, if a stock broker is working with a client who has just lost 40% of her savings, it is not helpful for the broker to say, "Well at least you didn't get shot in a bank today."

And here's the most exciting part: when your brain realizes that there are multiple ways of viewing something, suddenly you're processing the event not in the negative, stressed part of your brain, but in the part that can strategize about how to get past it successfully - the part that comes up with solutions. Which means, by realizing you're grateful for having a job when so many others don't, you actually jumpstart your cognitive skills, so you can get your work done more efficiently and intelligently. And that means that you'll get home to your family even faster. A quick change in mindset really can make all the difference.

PREVIEW

# IMPLEMENTATION MODULE: LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE

## OVERVIEW: MODULE FOR LEADERS AND MANAGERS

As a leader, you can have a huge impact on the happiness and performance of every member of your team. When you lead using the principles of *The Happiness Advantage*, not only will you and your team benefit, but the positive effects will ripple out to the rest of your organization. In this segment, Shawn reveals how managers who use frequent recognition and encouragement get more out of their employees, and he explains exactly how this type of feedback should be delivered for maximum effect.

## THE KEY LEARNING POINTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) **Use Positive Recognition.** When delivered correctly, praise can be a powerful leadership strategy. Managers who openly recognize employee performance build individual productivity, team cohesion, and even enjoy a boost to their own happiness.
- 2) **Your Delivery Matters.** When a leader uses positive language and tone to deliver task instructions, employees absorb the message more completely and then perform the task more accurately and efficiently.
- 3) **Create Realistic Goals.** Encourage group goal setting so that each employee feels connected to the team's larger purpose, and make sure the goals are challenging but attainable, specific, and operationalized, so that the attainment of each subgoal can be recognized and rewarded.
- 4) **Recognize Individual Effort: Praise The Process.** Your recognition should not be focused merely on the outcome. When managers praise the process, team dynamics, and positive behavioral changes along the way, employees learn that their effort and actions matter, and their results improve accordingly.



## LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

In a group, discuss successful leadership strategies with your colleagues. Share the strategies that you think are most successful in terms of praise and recognition: write these ideas down on a flip chart or white board and share them with your colleagues.

---

---

---

---

---

Think about your current leadership style. Do you use positive recognition with your team? Do you use eye contact? Do you smile? Think about how you present yourself to your team. Discuss ways you can improve your delivery.

---

---

---

---

---

Think about how you can make positive recognition a regular part of your routine, while still remaining authentic and true to your own leadership style. Try setting a daily Outlook or calendar reminder that will encourage you to "Manage By Walking Around," or send out a two-sentence e-mail recognizing or praising a colleague.

---

---

---

---

---

Do you practice "frequent praise and recognition" with your employees? And when you do praise someone, do you focus only on the outcome, or on the process as well?

---

---

---

---

---

What kind of tone do you usually use when delivering instructions to your employees? Have you noticed whether that makes a difference in their performance? How might you adopt a more positive tone that still feels authentic to your own personality and motivational style?

---

---

---

---

---

---

PREVIEW

## LEADING POSITIVE CHANGE: TRANSCRIPT

Often, when I speak to groups, I get the question “How do you lead using ‘The Happiness Advantage?’” There are many different leadership styles ranging from positive and empowering to fear-based leadership. Fear-based leadership can work in the short term. . . I was once told about a leader who ran a trading floor operation. He was known for saying, “You make one mistake, and you’re fired.” This leader seemed to be effective in the short term, but over time, his style proved to be counterproductive.

In fact, our research shows that in the long run, leading with fear will fail. It fails because it turns off the brains of everyone on the team; their adrenaline might be up, but their cognitive skills decline, they become less creative, less resilient, and far more susceptible to stress. Positive leadership, on the other hand, primes employees for high performance, and that starts with praise and recognition...

*We found that if you actually just increase the amount of positivity and praise that you do, as a manager for example of a company, you can have an affect upon the entire team. Greenburg and Arakawa found in 2006 that managers who increase the frequency of their recognition and encouragement by one per day at work, that’s just one more praise or compliment that they get than normal, saw an up to a 31 % increase in the productivity of their team. The most common quote that we hear from people that love the work that they do, is not they “get paid a lot for it” or any of other aspects or that they are the smartest person in their field, it’s that their project manager recognizes their accomplishments regularly.*

*I think that’s true not only in the working world but I think that’s true for parenting and our schools as well. The belief that we are being recognized for our actions helps us to believe that our behavior matters. And if our behavior matters, we keep trying in the midst of challenge. So one of the questions I often get, is how does this translate not just for the working world but also to your parenting as well and in your families because of course because that’s where you want to raise up positivity and performance as well.*

*One of the things, I think, that is most life changing for me is the way that you think about how you increase positivity for other people. I would have thought, as a positive psychologist, given all this research, that you just praise mercilessly to the people around you. Everything they do is fantastic. If they play a soccer game, they get a trophy for second place.*

*What we found is that that can have quite a detrimental effect upon the individuals that are there. And here's the research for it. What we found is that if you take a parent, and all of this has implications for managers as well so if you are one or the other jump ahead to that, but let's say you take a parent, because that's where the research began, who has a child who comes home with an "A" on a spelling test. You say what I might say to that child which is "You got an "A" on that spelling test! I am so proud of you! I love you so much! You are so intelligent! Lets put this on the refrigerator with magnets so that every time we open it we can remember how intelligent, smart, and proud we are of you!" Which works very well momentarily for the child because they just got praised for getting that good grade.*

*But it creates a calculus in that child's brain, a pattern, which says that that "A" means loved, intelligent, and valuable. What we find is that those individuals then take one of two paths, either that child or that employee at a company where only the outcome is measured, that child either doesn't want to risk the privileged state that their manager or parent had put them in so they curtail their own potential - not taking any of those risks that cause us to grow. Or Carol Dweck found that they did the opposite. What she found is that those individuals kept trying and then lo and behold they got a "C" on a spelling test or they didn't get their sales target or they didn't get the client they were hoping to or they didn't make first chair violin. As a result of that, the formula now works against you. Now I am no longer valuable, no longer intelligent, and no longer meaningful.*

*What we found is that the parents and managers that were the most successful were the ones that emphasized as they were praising, not just the outcome, but the process itself. If a child got an "A" on a spelling test – "I am so proud of you! I saw how much you were studying for that spelling test" or "It makes me so proud of how much you care about your education!" Because then, with the vagaries of life, the ups and downs that are definitely going to occur for those individuals, that what's keeping them going through that, is not just the belief that they are successful at the top but that they are successful going through the process.*

*And when I talk to managers at companies, especially public ones, they say "That's great Shawn, but our shareholders don't care about how much effort you put in. They only care about the outcomes." But remarkably, if you change the social script and believe in "The Happiness Advantage" research, what we find is you actually can increase the business outcomes by emphasizing praising the process. If I say "Run as far as you can tomorrow morning" you will not run very far, if you run at all. But if we give you specific goalposts for you to run around, you'll push yourself towards those goalposts. And as a result of that, we find that those individuals, that continually believe that their behavior matters, or will*

*eventually matter, those are the individuals that go through that process and that go through that challenge.*

*I did a study with 1,600 Harvard students, it's the largest, in terms of numbers study we have ever done, in terms of happiness and potential at Harvard and what we found was this... we found that many of those children were, ever since they were one year old, placed into a crib wearing a onesie that said "Bound for Harvard" and a cute little Yale hat in case something terrible happened. And ever since they were in special pre-pre-pre-K school, which they got into four years before being conceived, they were at the top 1% of their class. They knew those primary colors. Top one percent of Junior High, top one percent of High School, take the standardized test – top one percent! They walk in the freshman dining hall on the first day of being at Harvard and have a terrible realization – 50% of them are now below average. To put it more pointedly, what I tell those students is "based upon my research, seems as if 99% of Harvard students don't graduate in the top one percent." They don't find that funny either.*

*But that's not the interesting part; the interesting part is what happens next. All of us have something called a mental construction; it's the way that you conceive the world around you. If I ask you this question, "Up to this point, have you lived a valuable, a successful, and a meaningful life and why?" Your answers in either direction to that, is your brain's perception of you. It's what we call mental construction. Many of those Harvard students and many students worldwide are now thinking that if they get good grades then they are meaningful, valuable, and successful. They know that they are meaningful because they get better grades than other people; they know they are successful because they are a big fish in a little pond. But when suddenly when they are put into environments, whether its at schools or companies, where they are no longer the big fish, where there are other people who are as good if not better than them, suddenly their mental construction starts to break down.*

*As I have worked with the financial sector over the past two years, we find that many of those individuals had started to link their mental construction to the idea that "I know I am successful because I received this bonus over the past year" or "I know that I'm successful because my assets have been increasing" or "I know that the time I spent away from my family was meaningful because this is the rewards I am seeing in my job". But suddenly those rewards go away, the assets start to shrink and they don't receive the bonuses they deserve then suddenly their mental construction starts to break down.*

*What we find is you can rebuild that back up again by helping those individuals to see and perceive where their behavior matters. And once they start that process and take that initial*

*step, they are more likely to take another step and another step, creating that cascade of success that begins with a positive initial belief – the belief that your behavior matters. Because underneath most of our successes is the belief that eventually if we keep trying that it will have an effect. So our praise has to follow the exact same way.*

So how do you lead using “The Happiness Advantage?”

First, you need to realize that positive recognition is a powerful leadership tool. When you use it correctly, it builds team productivity, personal satisfaction and can even give *you* a happiness boost as the leader. So use frequent recognition.

Second, remember that your delivery matters. Give direction and feedback with a positive tone and a smile. Studies have shown that when a leader gives instructions in a positive way, employees absorb the message more completely and then perform the task more accurately and efficiently.

Third, you need to create realistic goals and then reward your team when they reach these milestones. Setting specific goalposts, especially in collaboration with your employees, helps them stay focused, driven, and connected to the company’s overall mission.

Finally, your recognition should not be focused merely on the outcome, but also on individual effort. For example, you may want to praise the process, team dynamics, positive behavior, and other elements that got the team to a positive outcome. When people understand that their actions matter, their results improve accordingly.

# IMPLEMENTATION MODULE: MINDSET MATTERS

## OVERVIEW

With unrelenting doom and gloom still a constant feature in people's lives, maintaining a positive mindset can often prove challenging. Yet the people who do remain optimistic are at a significant advantage, able to see opportunities for success that their more negatively minded peers simply pass over.

If you have heard about the Placebo Effect, you already know how powerful mere thoughts can be. Many studies have shown that when people receive a sugar pill that they believe is real medicine, their health will actually improve. As Shawn explains in this Implementation Module, the same is true in the workplace. Research shows that when we believe good things will happen to us, and when we express faith in our own abilities, we're actually more likely to succeed.



## MINDSET MATTERS: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What do you think stops you from maintaining a positive mindset? Do you find, for example, that you can get in a funk after watching the news on TV? Or does interacting with a particular coworker turn you pessimistic for the rest of the day? Think about ways you might buffer yourself against the onslaught of negativity we all encounter in our daily lives.

---

---

---

---

---

Discuss the luck study that Shawn Achor presents in the video. Do you believe in luck? Have you ever experienced a time when your mindset influenced an event in the real world? Do you know someone who seems consistently lucky? What is their mindset like?

---

---

---

---

Write the following quotes down on a whiteboard or a flipchart:

*"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."*

Winston Churchill

*"Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail"*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Discuss the quotes: Do people agree or disagree with them? Discuss how difficulties can affect your mindset. Think about strategies for maintaining a positive mindset (specifically, review the Social Interaction Implementation Module and the Falling Up Module).

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## MINDSET MATTERS: TRANSCRIPT

Your mindset makes a huge difference to your happiness. In fact scientific research has proven that the belief that you can become happier and more successful is actually a huge factor in your ability to become happier and more successful. In medicine, we call this the “Placebo Effect.” Often a patient’s health can be positively changed when they believe that the medicine that they’re taking will work (even when it is a neutral placebo). We now know that the same thing can happen in your brain while you’re at work. Your mindset matters – how optimistic you are actually affects your productivity, your ability to make sales, even the number of sick days you take. Of course, not all optimism is good.

*As somebody that studies optimism, I am very aware of the fact that optimism is part of the reason we’re in this economic situations in the first place. Right? If you think about it, optimism – irrational optimism – causes bubbles to form. It causes us to buy apartments and houses that we can’t afford. It causes our leaders to sugarcoat the present and then make bad decisions in the future. That’s irrational optimism.*

*What we’d like to talk about is the opposite. It’s something called rational optimism. Rational optimism doesn’t start with a Pollyanna-ish or rose-colored glass vision of the world, what it starts with is (as close as you can) to a realistic assessment of the present, while maintaining the belief that you behavior will eventually cause a positive outcome. It’s retaining the hope while recognizing the current situation that you’re in as best you can.*

*Now realism is very difficult for us to discover. But often times what we find is that two people are often seeing the exact same reality, but with completely different lenses. And as a result of that, experiencing the world in dramatically different ways.*

*Now some people... the normal pushback is, “Well if we don’t focus upon the negative and the problems, how will we ever see how to move forward?” What we’ve discovered is two answers to that that are extraordinary. First of all, a study that just came out in Nature in December (which is one our big journals) found – and they always out this in kind of boring language – but they said that the visual cortex processes more information at positive, which is a boring way of saying that when your brain is at positive, your brain actually... it’s like having a faster computer processor in your brain. It processes more of the reality around you. Now, you can believe that pessimists are the realists, but scientifically that’s inaccurate because it’s the optimists who actually process more of the reality than the pessimists actually are – with dramatically different results.*

*One of the studies was done by this researcher named Richard Weisman, who was studying luck – which is something we normally don't think about in science. Right? Nobody thinks about studying luck – it's the opposite of science. It's what happens in those random moments, not in the times you can predict. But he doesn't buy that. Because he, like most scientists, believes that there's a scientific explanation for most things. So, if you see somebody who continually seems to be so lucky, there's got to be a scientific explanation. So what they did was, they had people come into a room – like this one – and they had them answer a couple of questions. One of them would be, "Do you consider yourself a lucky person? Do good things naturally happen to you? Do you expect good things to happen to you? Or do bad things befall you? Or are you a defensive pessimist. You expect the bad and if it happens, you were right and if it doesn't happen, well that's just serendipity." So we get people into two camps – the lucky or the unlucky – the pessimists and the optimists.*

*Once they'd done that, they then had all these individuals – originally it was done with students – and they gave them newspapers and they said, "We'd like you to count the number of photographs in this newspaper. And if you get it right, we'll give you five U. S. Dollars. Which, for the college students works very well. For you, you'd be like, "And here's the paper back. Good luck with your experiment."*

*But what we found is that was enough to give these individuals stress. So they started counting the newspaper pictures as fast as they possibly can in the time allotted to them. Interestingly though, in everyone's newspaper – on page two – in big block letters (but not in a photograph) it says, "there are 86 photographs in this newspaper. Stop this experiment now, and we'll give you \$50." Now you don't have to be a banker to realize that was a much better deal than the one you were proffered before. But what we find is about 80 to 86 percent of the individuals that were in the "optimistic" category stopped the experiment and said, "Give me my money." It's a very expensive experiment to run. Between 20 to 25 percent of the individuals that claim that they are unlucky stop the experiment. Meaning 75% of them don't. It's a complete opposite reactions based on being lucky or unlucky.*

*We then asked the unlucky - or the pessimistic – ones "Did you see it?" Because maybe we thought they saw those big words saying there were 86 photographs and they're like, "I'm not falling for this. You know, I know what psychologists are like. I'm going to keep doing the experiment and get the five dollars I was promised." What they say is - and the majority of them say this – they say, "I didn't see that." Or "That's not my newspaper. My newspaper doesn't have that in it." Or, "Shoot, did anyone else see this? I can't believe I missed that."*

*They say that didn't see it. But they're wrong. Their brains did see it, but their brains deleted it. Their brains deleted that information because within our brain is something – the equivalent of a spam filter. And what it does is, it knows that you get way too much on a daily basis. Not just with emails, even sensory – with the world around you, all your senses are bringing in way too much information.*

*You can't think about your work, think about your clothes, think about the clothes of the people around you; think about how everybody's reacting all at the same time, so your brain focuses on specific things. What we decide to focus and attend to determines the lens through which we view reality. And the individuals that are in an optimistic state of mind, their brains believe they not only had the ability to accomplish a task, but they could start looking for cognitive shortcuts. They could look for other possibilities in their environment and then act on them.*

*What we find is that the optimists are actually better at seeing the possibilities of their environment, and this is one of the first experiments that we've used to prove that. That not only do optimists see the possibilities, they are then able to act upon them. So when you see individuals in companies and schools, and in society that seem to have so many good things that happen to them over and over again, it's not just serendipity that's occurring, their brain is scanning the world for possibility instead of the hassles, complaints, and stresses around them.*

The key is your mindset. If you leverage a positive and optimistic mindset, not only can you make your own luck, you can begin to reap the benefits of "The Happiness Advantage."

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

PREVIEW

PREVIEW

PREVIEW