



Rocky Mountain Project Management Symposium
Navigating the Waves of Change: Learn. Lead. Succeed.

The Happy Project Manager

Using Happiness Science to
Learn, Lead, and Succeed in a
Changing Environment

By Susan McMillin, PMP



Why Happiness



The Obvious

Happiness
Feels
Good!

Happy People are:

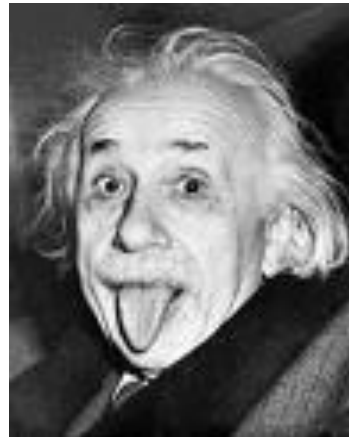
- Better problem solvers- faster and more creative
- Optimistic
- More likely to act for the good of the team
- Conflict averse- They Seek Win-Win solutions
- More flexible in the face of change



The Business Case for Happiness

Happy People are
Better Performers

Better Performers are
attracted to Happy
Workplaces



Happy people are more likely to champion breakthrough solutions that open new markets or fields of study.

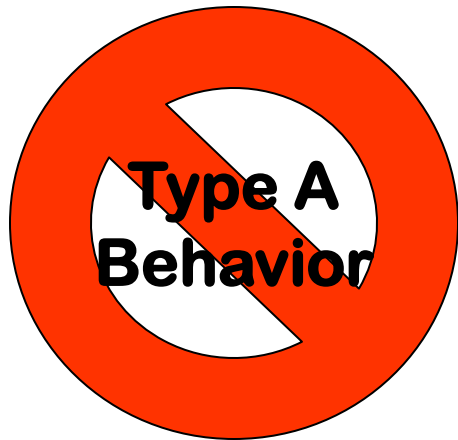
Paraphrased from Authentic Happiness by Martin Seligman.

The Downside to Happiness



Some people distrust happy people or think happiness is frivolous.

Happy Project Managers build credibility by planning, executing and communicating well.



**Happiness can not be
Controlled, Forced or
Faked**



Happiness is...



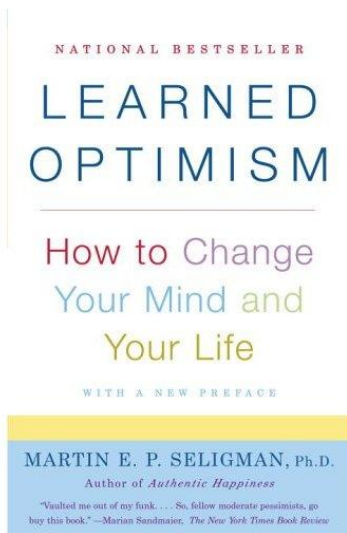
- A state of mind and body
- Measure it with
 - Brain waves
 - Heart rhythms
 - Smiles that include the eyes
 - Body Temperature
 - Subjective Judgment

Measure your happiness at

<http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx>

Happiness Can Be Learned

Dr. Martin Seligman started out studying learned helplessness in dogs. He found that both helplessness and optimism could be learned.



His landmark work on learned optimism helped spark the field of Positive Psychology



The Happiness Formula

**Level of
Enduring
Happiness**

=

**Happiness
Set Point**

+

**Life
Circumstances**

+



Individual Habit Patterns

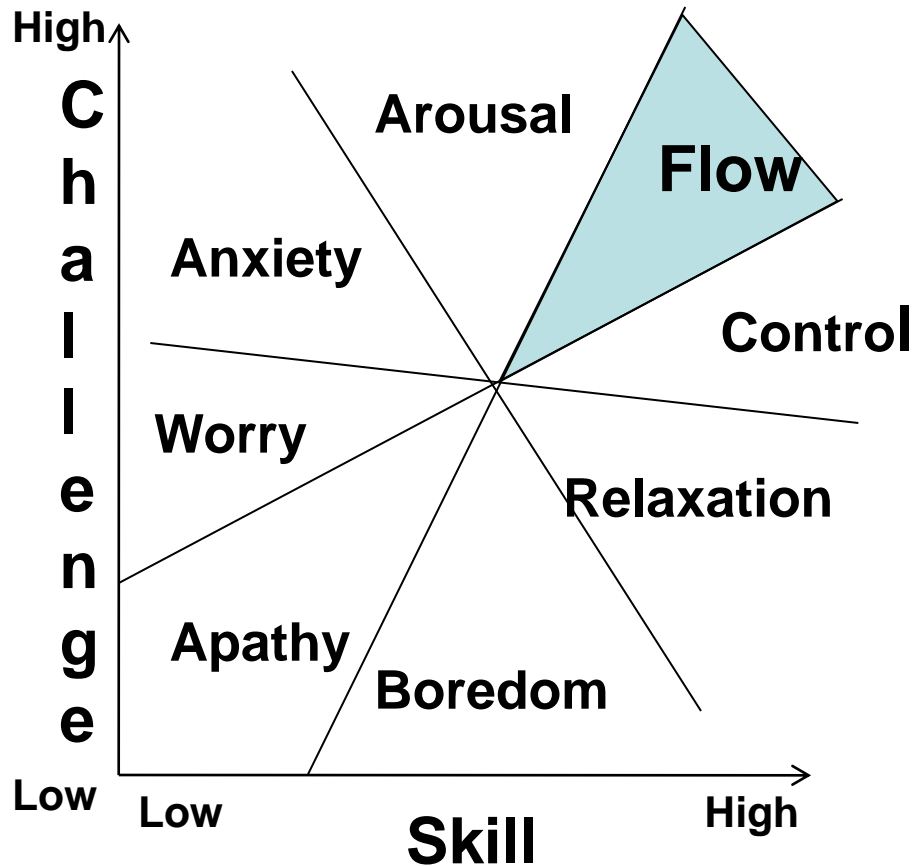
**Happy
Thoughts**

+

**Happy
Activities**



Finding Flow- Happy Activities



Micaly Csikzentmihalyi- Finding Flow

FLOW

- in the Zone
- Peak Experience

Happens when skill and challenge are high and well matched.

Typical in Games with

- Clear objective
- Clear feedback or score

Using Strengths

A strength is something you:

- like to do*
- are good at.*
- learn quickly*

From Dr. Donald O. Clifton



Based on over 20 years of Gallop Polls

People are always stronger when they have their successes and strengths clearly in mind.

Great performers focus on strengths and manage around their weaknesses.

Gratitude – Powerful Happy Thought

Gratitude is more than acknowledgement or appreciation.

Gratitude is a deep sense of luck, grace, and being loved, of receiving a gift you did not earn.

People who kept a **Gratitude Journal** – a list of things they were grateful for every day for 7 days were 25% happier at the end of the week.

Months later most still had elevated happiness levels.

Dr. Robert Emmons



Leading with Happiness



Happiness is
contagious.

You go first.



Do What PMs Do Best

Set Goals and Keep Score

- Keep the goals clear with a project plan.
- Match milestones to the skills of the team- challenging, but possible.
- Show progress towards the final product- earned value, status reports.





The Project Manager's Advantage

People who need people...

Are the happiest people in the world.

All happy people have a rich and diverse network of friends and close relationships.

We do not know if happy people attract more friends, or if having more friends makes you happier.

Manage your relationships for happiness.



Identify Strengths

- Know your strengths and the strengths of your team.

» Now, Discover Your Strengths by Donald O Clifton

- Using strengths to do something worthwhile **creates Flow.**
- Relying on someone else's strength **creates Gratitude.**



Appreciate

- Appreciate People and Accomplishment.
- Relationships flourish when positive comments outnumber negative ones by 5:1
- Know how far you have come-
at least as well as you know your gaps.
- Know what is going right.

Show Gratitude



The opposite of risk is luck

- Celebrate crossing a risk off your list when it is no longer a risk- you were lucky.

Say Thank You often.

Encourage your team to thank each other.

Give Kudos at every meeting.



Sidestep Barriers

Avoid Conflict from
Disagreement over

- Resources
- Priorities
- Roles

**With Good Project
Plans and Charters.**

Avoid Worry with
Tracking, Status Reports,
risk management, and
project metrics.

Avoid Overwhelm with
project plans, tracking,
and schedule
adjustments.



Succeeding With Happiness

- Listen to your feelings- do what feels right
- Develop Flow
 - Set goals, keep score, use strengths
- Pay attention to people
- Count your blessings
 - appreciation and gratitude
- Laugh Often

Why Happiness?



Herein lies the likely reason for feelings. Just as negative feelings are a "here-be-dragons" sensory system that alarms you, telling you unmistakably that you are in a win-lose encounter, the feeling part of positive emotion is also sensory. Positive feeling is a neon "here-be-growth" marquee that tells you that a potential win-win encounter is at hand.

Dr, Martin Seligman



Calm Seas and a Steady Wind



The best win-win solutions open up whole new realms of possibility- like the printing press or telephone.

Necessity may be the mother of invention, but happiness gives it wings.