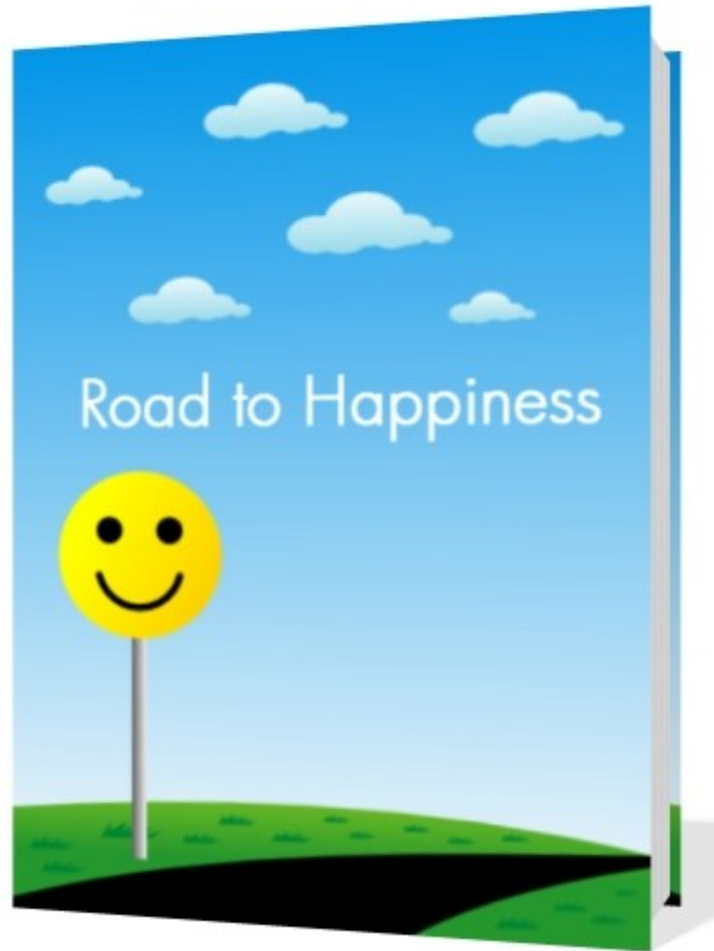


# Road to Happiness



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## INTRODUCTION

Let's play a game.

Are you ready?

Considering the current world population, can you take a wild guess on how many people are happy?

For the answer, let us look at some interesting statistics gathered by George Ortega of *The Happiness Show*.

At any given time, one fourth of Americans are mildly depressed. Here's another startling fact: Most people on this planet claim that they are LESS than 65% happy.

We might think that those people who say that they are MORE than 65% happy are those who are rich. You think this is true?

Let me show you another set of statistics. The personal income of Americans has increased more than 2 1/2 times over the last 50 years yet their happiness level has remained the same. Furthermore, 37% of the people on Forbes List of Wealthiest Americans are less happy than the average American.

Professor Daniel Kahneman of the University of Princeton shares the same findings for the British people, "Standard of living has increased dramatically and happiness has increased not at all, and in some cases has diminished slightly."

Indeed, true happiness is elusive. Most people continue to look for happiness but fail to find it. Even the great achievers, the wealthy, and most powerful people on earth have been striving for it, yet many failed to have it. Is happiness impossible to achieve?

Happiness is not impossible to attain. Didn't we feel ecstatic when we were promoted? How about when we got our first paycheck? Didn't we feel

happy while in a loving relationship? How about the first time when we cradled our child in our arms? How about being in the company of close friends? It might have been a long time ago and we totally forgot that once in our life we have experienced moments of happiness.

Why is happiness so elusive for most people? Could it be that we have been looking for happiness at the wrong places? Is it possible that we have the wrong concept of happiness?

In all these discouraging statistics and questions, this report aims to provide a ray of hope. Experiments conducted by New Zealand psychologist Kaye Hays, in line with *The Happiness Increase Experiment*, “have empirically demonstrated that individuals can be trained to be 25 percent happier through various training programs from two to ten weeks.”

This report presents breakthrough ideas in order to equip the reader with tools on how to achieve happiness. As individuals, we have a choice. We can always choose to find happiness. This report points to its various sources. Succeeding chapters will provide ideas on how to create and achieve happiness.

In addition, this report discusses the different causes of unhappiness and teaches us how to overcome them. It cites several barriers to happiness. One such barrier is our unrealistic expectations. We must always remember we cannot command the world to function according to our own desires. We can only control our needs and wants, but not the forces needed to achieve them. If we keep on desiring endlessly, we are just exposing ourselves to unhappiness.

To balance off barriers to happiness, there are happiness enhancers. What will lift our moods and reinforce pleasant disposition? One of the objectives of this report is to provide the reader with keys to living a longer, healthier, and happier life. It is hoped that after reading this report, we will be able to pursue happiness in all areas of our lives.

Happiness is a choice. We are in control of our own happiness as only we can decide what to think and feel. As Helen Keller said, “Happiness cannot come from without. It must come from within. It is not what we see and

touch or that which others do for us which makes us happy; it is that which we think and feel and do, first for the other fellow and then for ourselves.”

## CHAPTER 1 - WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

A report on happiness starts off with a quick look at the various definitions. Previous studies cited by The Happiness Show website traced the concept of happiness to the classical Greek word “Eudaimonia.” Etymologically, it consists of the words “eu” meaning good or well being, and “daimōn” referring to spirit or minor deity. This reference to spirit is extended to mean one's lot or fortune.

The same source sites a modern definition that refers to happiness “as a positive, enduring state that consists of positive feelings...and includes both peace of mind and active pleasures or joy.”

Ruut Veenhoven, acknowledged as an expert on international happiness, described happiness as “the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his life-as-a whole favorably.” Related to this is one definition of the Oxford Universal Dictionary which suggests that “it is a feeling derived from satisfaction with one's circumstances.” Wikipedia defines happiness as “a prolonged or lasting emotional or affective state that feels good or pleasing.”

The scientific community also tried to provide a biological explanation on the said concept. In the human brain, the neurotransmitter dopamine is reported to be involved in desire and seems often related to pleasure.

The definition of happiness varies for every person. Aristotle declared, “Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence.” Happiness is commonly viewed as a fundamental goal in life. In fact, British people have rated happiness as their most important component of quality of Life. It is even more important to them than money, health, and sex.

Aren't we curious to know how other people define happiness? For many, happiness is what they feel when they receive something – a material gift or some sort of favor.

On the other hand, some people find it better to give than to receive. They feel so much happiness from giving and sharing what they have. This selfless act can be the most joyful experience for those people with generous hearts. “There is a wonderful mythical law of nature that the three things we crave in life – happiness, freedom, and peace of mind – are always attained by giving them to someone else,” remarked by Peyton Conway March.

Happiness is also what we feel when we are satisfied with what we are doing or what we have attained or accomplished. There are people who derive happiness from their success, wealth, or power. According to Albert Schweitzer, “Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.”

What about the majority of people who are not lucky enough to achieve the dream they have long aspired for? Do they not have the right to be happy?

Of course, they do. Happiness starts with appreciating and finding satisfaction from simple things that life has to offer. The affection of a spouse, children, or grandchildren, the company of friends and colleagues, and the compliments paid to us – these are some of the simple things that capture the essence of true happiness.

“Happiness is what we feel when we get what we want” – this is probably the most common notion people have about happiness. If this concept of happiness is correct, then unhappiness is what we feel when we do not get what we want.

Consider the definition above. The keyword in the definition is the word “want.” The problem starts when we want something and maintain an expanding list of wants. This problem escalates when despite all efforts, only a small percentage of our wishes are fulfilled.

Unfulfilled wishes increase with time. As we grow older and fail to get what we want, we get frustrated and become unhappy. Frustration sets in when we fail to fulfill most of our desires. As we are exposed to TV, magazines, Internet, and other media, we compile a list of endless and unrealistic demands. Because of this, life becomes an endless race to fulfill desires.