

## Making Some Time for our Own Happiness

*"Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life. The whole aim and end of human existence."*  
Aristotle

One thing we as humans all have in common is that we want to be happy. Professor Richard Layard called this the ultimate good. Therefore happiness becomes a shared responsibility as it is not just for ourselves, it impacts all those around us.

Today Happiness can be measured and it is increasingly being studied as a science part of Positive Psychology. It brings us huge benefits as an individual and a collective level.



Many of us live our life with the notion. If I work harder, I'll be more successful, and I'm more successful, Shawn Achor Author of the 'The Happiness Advantage' says:

"We've been taught that if we work hard, we will be successful, and then we'll be happy. If we can just find that great job, get a raise, lose those five pounds, happiness will follow. But recent discoveries in the field of positive psychology have shown that this formula is actually backward: happiness fuels success, not the other way around".

He puts it so clearly in his Ted talk:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn\\_achor\\_the\\_happy\\_secret\\_to\\_better\\_work?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work?language=en)

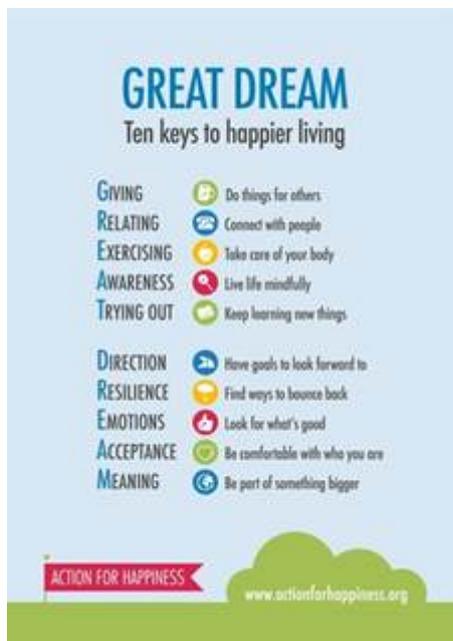
Happiness has profound positive effects on us as individuals, as a family and as collectives. Here is what the science says.....

- 90% of your happiness is predicted, not by your external world, but by the way your brain processes the world
- 75% is predicted by optimism, social support and your ability to see stress as a challenge, instead of as a threat
- Your brain at positive performs significantly better than at negative, neutral, or stressed
- Your energy rises, your creativity and your intelligence
- Dopamine, which floods in when you're feeling positive, not only feels good, but turns on all the learning centres in your brain
- Happiness is a prevention to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety

Research shows that there are some things that are scientifically proven to help us feel happy. [Action for Happiness](#) is an International charity and movement of people committed to building a happier and more caring society. They bring together like-minded people from all walks of life and help them take practical action, drawing on the latest scientific research.

I myself am part of their movement and have benefited from leading their courses. I find their resources accessible and a big support in my wellbeing work and personal life.

Based on the latest research, they have identified 10 Keys to Happier Living that consistently tend to make life happier and more fulfilling. Together they spell "GREAT DREAM".



The first five keys (GREAT) are about how we interact with the outside world in our daily activities. They are based on the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/five-ways-to-mental-wellbeing>. The second five keys (DREAM) come from inside us and depend on our attitude to life.

My invitation to you during this holiday is to print out the 10 keys, take them on holiday, put them on the fridge, incorporate them into your eight days of Passover.... perhaps as a family, or with yourself, try out each day one of the 10 keys. Notice each day how the actions you took affected your happiness and the happiness of those around you.

**If you have 1 minute GIVE:**

Give it to a good cause, help an elderly person with their shopping, smile at a stranger

**If you have 5 minutes RELATE:**

Visit a friend in need, or make that call to a loved one you keep forgetting to reach out to.

**If you have 15 -30 minutes EXERCISE:**

Go for a walk in the park or a run round the block

**If you have an hour:**

Set some time aside to tap into your **Direction or meaning**; Ask yourself what truly matters to you and then to set yourself a new goal of how to bring more of that into your life.

**If you have a day:**

Decide as a family something you can do all together that incorporates something that makes each of you happy and make a day of it: Eat an ice cream, visit other family, get into some nature, go see a movie, play a board game, tell jokes....