



Teacher Reflection and Action

Goal-Directed Behavior

Teacher Reflection

Goal-Directed Behavior: A child's initiation of, and persistence in completing, tasks of varying difficulty.

Upbeat moods, research verifies, make people view others – or events – in a more positive light. That in turn helps people feel more optimistic about their ability to achieve a goal, enhances creativity and decision-making skills, and predisposes people to be helpful.

- Daniel Goleman

Ruth Cross, a nationally recognized leader in supporting schools in teaching and measuring Social and Emotional Learning, speaks of multiple aspects of assessing student and site-level success, including the “Light in their Eyes Factor.”

When you walk into your school building and your classroom, do the faces of the adults and the students reflect excitement, engagement and happiness? The results of this informal assessment are not only ‘feel good’ but also may well provide an indication of the level of academic success one may expect to find. Learning within a daily environment characterized by a positive, caring climate and engaging teaching practices can help students be primed and ready for success in setting and achieving personal and academic goals – and ultimately to thrive in school and beyond.

READ

REVIEW OF RESEARCH: Happiness May Lead to Success (pages 3-4)

RECORD

Write in your journal or discuss with a trusted colleague(s):

Highlight areas of the text that speak to specific ways in which being happy may contribute to successfully achieving goals.

READ

“10 Things Happy People Do Differently” by Paula Davis-Laack (pages 5-7)



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RECORD

Write in your journal or discuss with a trusted colleague(s).

Review the ten items on Davis-Laack' list with your classroom in mind.

- How does the environment you're building support your students' happiness at school?
- What are you already doing to intentionally and systematically provide each of these elements for your students?
- Which areas would you like to develop further? How will you do that?
 1. Developing Strong Social Fabric (team building, cooperative learning)
 2. Facilitating Activities that Fit Individual Strengths (differentiation)
 3. Practicing Gratitude (personally and with your class)
 4. Developing Optimistic Thinking (systematically building this focus)
 5. Facilitating Peer Support and Community Service (peer coaching, cross-age buddies)
 6. Less Emphasis on Material Possessions (reducing tangible rewards while building strong intrinsic motivation)
 7. Developing Coping Strategies (intentional SEL skill development)
 8. Focusing on Health (incorporating physical activity and movement as a regular part of classroom experience)
 9. Connecting to Something Greater than Ourselves (contributing with a purpose; personal responsibility for fostering positive classroom climate; committing to working agreements and intentional ways to support one another in learning and life)
 10. Learning to Set and Achieve Goals (intentional direct instruction about initiative, diligence and thoughtful planning for future)



December 18, 2005

Review of Research Challenges Assumption that Success Makes People Happy: Happiness May Lead to Success via Positive Emotions

Read the journal article

- 1 The Benefits of Frequent Positive Affect: Does Happiness Lead to Success?
(/pubs/journals/releases/bul-1316803.pdf) (PDF, 374KB)

WASHINGTON -- Personal and professional success may lead to happiness but may also engender success. Happy individuals are predisposed to seek out and undertake new goals in life and this reinforces positive emotions, say researchers who examined the connections between desirable characteristics, life successes and well-being of over 275,000 people.

From a review of 225 studies in the current issue of *Psychological Bulletin*, published by the American Psychological Association (APA), lead author Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ph.D., of the University of California, Riverside found that chronically happy people are in general more successful across many life domains than less happy people and their happiness is in large part a consequence of their positive emotions rather than vice versa. Happy people are more likely to achieve favorable life circumstances, said Dr. Lyubomirsky, and "this may be because happy people frequently experience positive moods and these positive moods prompt them to be more likely to work actively toward new goals and build new resources. When people feel happy, they tend to feel confident, optimistic, and energetic and others find them likable and sociable. Happy people are thus able to benefit from these perceptions.

Lyubomirsky and co-authors Laura King, Ph.D., of University of Missouri, Columbia and Ed Diener, Ph.D., of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and The Gallup Organization examined studies involving three different types of evidence - cross-sectional, longitudinal and experimental designs - to determine how happiness and positive affect are related to culturally-valued success.

The authors chose to use these different types of evidence to bolster their confidence in establishing cause-and-effect relationships among happiness, positive affect, and success. Cross-sectional studies compare different groups of people and answer questions like, "Are happy people more successful than unhappy people?" and "Does long-term happiness and short term positive affect co-occur with desirable behaviors?" Longitudinal studies examine groups of people over a period of time and address questions like, "Does happiness precede success?" and "Does positive affect pave the way for success-like behaviors?" Finally, experimental studies manipulate variables to test whether an outcome will occur under controlled conditions and answer questions like, "Does positive affect lead to success-oriented behaviors?"

The results of all three types of studies suggests that happiness does lead to behaviors that often produce further success in work, relationships and health, and these successes result in part from a person's positive affect. Furthermore, evidence from the cross-sectional studies confirm that a person's well-being is associated with positive perceptions of self and others, sociability, creativity, prosocial behavior, a strong immune system, and effective coping skills. The authors also note that happy people are capable of experiencing sadness and negative emotions in response to negative events, which is a healthy and appropriate response.

Much of the previous research on happiness presupposed that happiness followed from success and accomplishments in life, said the authors. "We found that this isn't always true. Positive affect is one attribute among several that can lead to success-oriented behaviors. Other resources, such as intelligence, family, expertise and physical fitness, can also play a role in people's successes.

"Our review provides strong support that happiness, in many cases, leads to successful outcomes, rather than merely following from them, said Lyubomirsky, "and happy individuals are more likely than their less happy peers to have fulfilling marriages and relationships, high incomes, superior work performance, community involvement, robust health and even a long life.

Article: "The Benefits of Frequent Positive Affect: Does Happiness Lead to Success?", Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ph.D., University of California, Riverside; Laura King, Ph.D., University of Missouri, Columbia and Ed Diener, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and The Gallup Organization; *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 131, No. 6.

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The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 150,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 53 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting human welfare.

Find this article at:

<http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2005/12/success.aspx>

Paula Davis-Laack
Lawyer turned stress & resilience expert
Posted: 01/03/2013 12:48 am

10 Things Happy People Do Differently

How happy are you and why? This is a question I spend a fair amount of time thinking about, not only as it applies to my own levels of happiness, but also as it applies to my family, friends, and the people who I work with. Since graduating with my master's degree in positive psychology, I've worked with and observed thousands of people in a wide variety of settings, and happy people just flow with the groove of life in a unique way. Here is what they do differently:

They build a strong social fabric. Happy people stay connected to their families, neighbors, places of worship, and communities. These strong connections act as a buffer to depression and create strong, meaningful connections. The rate of depression has increased dramatically in the last 50 to 75 years. The World Health Organization predicts that by 2020, depression will be the second leading cause of mortality in the world, impacting nearly one-third of all adults. While several forces are likely behind this increase, one of the most important factors may be the disconnection from people and their families and communities.

They engage in activities that fit their strengths, values and lifestyle. One size does not fit all when it comes to happiness strategies. You tailor your workout to your specific fitness goals -- happy people do the same thing with their emotional goals. Some strategies that are known to promote happiness are just too corny for me, but the ones that work best allow me to practice acts of kindness, express gratitude, and become fully engaged. Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky offers a wonderful "Person-Activity Fit Diagnostic" in her book *The How of Happiness*.

They practice gratitude. Gratitude does the body good. It helps you cope with trauma and stress, increases self-worth and self-esteem when you realize how much you've accomplished, and often helps dissolve negative emotions. Research also suggests that the character strength of gratitude is a fairly strong correlate with life satisfaction.[1]

They have an optimistic thinking style. Happy people rein in their pessimistic thinking in three ways. First, they focus their time and energy on where they have control. They know when to move on if certain strategies aren't working or if they don't have control in a specific area. Second, they know that "this too shall pass." Happy people "embrace the suck" and understand that while the ride might be bumpy at times, it won't last forever. Finally, happy people are good at compartmentalizing. They don't let an adversity in one area of their life seep over into other areas of their life.

They know it's good to do good. Happy people help others by volunteering their time. Research shows a strong association between helping behavior and well-being, health, and longevity. Acts of kindness help you feel good about yourself and others, and the resulting positive emotions enhance your psychological and physical resilience. One study followed five women who had multiple sclerosis over a three-year period of time.[2] These women volunteered as peer supporters for 67 other MS patients. The results showed that the five

peer support volunteers experienced positive changes that were larger than the benefits shown by the patients they supported.

They know that material wealth is only a very small part of the equation. Happy people have a healthy perspective about how much joy material possessions will bring. In *The How of Happiness*, Lyubomirsky explains that in 1940, Americans reported being “very happy” with an average score of 7.5 out of 10.[3] Fast forward to today, and with all of our iPods, color TVs, computers, fast cars, and an income that has more than doubled, what do you think our average happiness score is today? It’s 7.2. Not only does materialism not bring happiness, it’s a strong predictor of unhappiness. One study examined the attitudes of 12,000 freshman when they were eighteen, then measured their life satisfaction at age 37. Those who had expressed materialistic aspirations as freshmen were less satisfied with their lives two decades later.[4]

They develop healthy coping strategies. Happy people encounter stressful life adversities, but they have developed successful coping strategies. Post-traumatic growth is the positive personal changes that result from an individual’s struggle to deal with highly challenging life events, and it occurs in a wide range of people facing a wide variety of challenging circumstances. According to researchers Tedeschi and Calhoun, there are five factors or areas of growth after a challenging event: renewed appreciation for life, recognizing new paths for your life, enhanced personal strength, improved relationships with others, and spiritual growth. Happy people become skilled at seeing the good that might come from challenging times.

They focus on health. Happy people take care of their mind and body and manage their stress. Focusing on your health, though, doesn’t just mean exercising. Happy people actually act like happy people. They smile, are engaged, and bring an optimal level of energy and enthusiasm to what they do.

They cultivate spiritual emotions. According to Lyubomirsky, there is a growing body of science suggesting that religious people are happier, healthier, and recover more quickly from trauma than nonreligious people.[5] In addition, authors Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener explain in their book *Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth* that spiritual emotions are essential to psychological wealth and happiness because they help us connect to something larger than ourselves.

They have direction. Working toward meaningful life goals is one of the most important strategies happy people utilize. I downplayed the importance of meaning during my law practice, but it became evident how much meaning mattered in my life when I burned out. Happy people have values that they care about and outcomes that are worth working for, according to Diener and Biswas-Diener.

The late, great Dr. Chris Peterson talked about his own journey with happiness as follows: “I spent my young adult years postponing many of the small things that I knew would make me happy ... I was fortunate enough to realize that I would never have the time unless I made the time. And then the rest of my life began.”

Happy people have developed a specific set of strategies over time that causes them to see life differently -- a balanced portfolio of skills and emotions. What would you add to this list?

Paula Davis-Laack, JD, MAPP, is an internationally-known writer and stress and resilience expert who helps high-achievers manage stress and increase well-being by mastering a set of skills proven to enhance resilience, build mental toughness, and promote strong relationships. Connect with Paula via:

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Goal-Directed Behavior

Persistence and SMART Goals

Goal-Directed Behavior: A child's initiation of, and persistence in completing, tasks of varying difficulty.

*I have learned that success is to be measured not so much
by the position that one has reached in life,
as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.*

- Booker T. Washington

There's nothing new about valuing the ability to set and achieve goals – a tried and true avenue toward success in college, career and community life. There is, however, fresh language that highlights new understandings about how to support students (and ourselves!) in determining and reaching large and small learning goals.

Grit, persistence and resilience are all terms that speak to the idea of an internal capacity to “stick with it” even when a task, or the circumstances, are challenging. It's very human to be optimistic, to dream big, to desire achieving something valuable and important. It's also very human to struggle with making those dreams our reality.

LISTEN (7 minutes)

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2014/03/17/290089998/does-teaching-kids-to-get-gritty-help-them-get-ahead>

If desired, click on “On the Syllabus: Lessons in Grit” link for further exploration.

REFLECT AND RECORD

Write in your journal or discuss with a trusted colleague(s):

- What is a goal that you set and reached, that you really care(d) about?
- What helped you achieve that goal?
- How have mistakes or external setbacks impacted reaching your goals? What have you learned from those experiences that can help you now?
- What are some goals that you've set but not achieved? What contributed to that outcome, that you could change in the future?



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Providing students with many, many safe opportunities to set and achieve authentic personal learning goals within their school experience prepares them well to succeed throughout their lives, even when faced with challenging or difficult situations. Within the given parameters of curriculum and standards, provided to help ensure consistent and high quality education for all, where is there room for personal passion, individual voice, and for the benefits of mulling over “what do I want and how would I best get there?”

VIEW (2 minutes)

<http://www.edutopia.org/research-made-relevant-grit-smart-goals-video>

REFLECT AND RECORD

Write in your journal or discuss with a trusted colleague(s):

- Where are some legitimate areas during our learning time that my students could explore personal goal setting?
- How can I support my students, and build a system in which they support one another, in striving for their goals? How can accountability for progress toward goals be meaningful, and simple enough that it consistently occurs?
- How does our classroom environment make it safe to take risks in setting goals and allow for learning from mistakes?
- What specific plan can I make (what goal can I set for myself) to initiate and follow through on providing explicit instruction, with practice and reflection, for my students related to Goal-Directed Behaviors?