



RESILIENT!

LEADERSHIP & THE INTEGRAL LIFE

March 2007

Edited by Dr Sven Hansen

Welcome to RESILIENT! - Our client newsletter which aims to bring you topical and practical ideas to improve leadership, build resilient organisations and create a meaningful life.

Happiness 101: Can we be serious about joy?

Are you happy? How would you know if you are? What is true happiness? Why are we less happy today than 50 years ago despite gains in material wealth? How can we build sustainable happiness?

What is Happiness?

In short, feeling good – enjoying life and wanting the feeling to be maintained. About 38% of us are very happy, 53% quite happy and 9% not very happy. Sex, friends, relaxation, prayer, eating and exercise provide most happiness – being alone and with your boss give little joy. The day starts miserable, slowly improves to lunch, crashes in the afternoon and improves massively as we head home and to sleep.

Brain scans demonstrate that happiness can be measured by activity in the left prefrontal cortex (behind forehead) and sadness by activity in the right prefrontal cortex. Simply having a happy thought activates the left. A sad face activates the right. Good genes, nurturing early days, stable family and income are important platforms for health. Social comparison is a critical determinant today. So long as we feel better off – particularly financially – than our neighbour we would gladly suffer.

Happiness and Health

Happy people tend to live longer, achieve more, have more friends and enjoy a better immune system; they are more resilient to pain and suffering. Happy people have robust immunity, less stress, better biochemistry, less illness and recover faster. At a survival level, things that make us happy – food, sex, friendship and power –

are clearly adaptive. But having beaten the bush, greater material wellbeing has not increased happiness. Sadly, depression and crime – along with associated misery – has increased markedly.

According to the US General Social Survey, the big seven factors for happiness in order are; family relationships, financial situation, work, community and friends, health, personal freedom and personal values. These factors account for 80% of the variation in happiness between nations and 57% of the variation in suicide.

Positive psychology, with Martin Seligman in the lead, is making bold strides forward. A stream of pleasurable moments is no longer good enough. A good life requires the use of our talents in our daily work and a meaningful life requires that these talents be applied to meaningful ends. Their work has shown that we can indeed build and sustain higher levels of happiness. Their work is spreading into schools, business and community.

Taking action to increase happiness?

Create all the happiness you are able to create: remove all the misery you are able to remove. Jeremy Bentham.

Some economists (read Richard Layard; *Happiness, 2005*) advocate the idea of the Greatest Happiness as the ultimate



objective for social and community policy. To achieve this we need more stable families, stable income and trusting social environs. Our desire for mobility makes this hard to secure. Nevertheless, GNH (Gross National Happiness) needs to be tracked along with GNP. At a personal level though we can all take action.

*I feel from my own experience that when I practice compassion, there is an immediate direct benefit to myself... I get 100% benefit, while the benefit to others may be 50%.
Dalai Lama*

Happiness Practices

Sound lifestyle practices: with good exercise, nutrition, sleep, daily relaxation and by taking time with family and friends we improve our health and increase happiness.

Gratitude: Seligman and others have shown that taking time to be grateful for aspects of our lives causes the most significant increase in happiness. Their favourite exercise; writing a letter of gratitude to someone who has played an important part in our lives, is particularly effective.

Optimism: simply put, when we take credit for positive events and shift some of the blame for negative events, we increase optimism. For example, in success we consciously reflect on the positive role we played (I tried really hard). In failure, we ensure that we consider other factors that may play a role (she was really good). Cognitive psychologists warn that we need to remain accurate and realistic. However, as demonstrated in solid clinical studies this "positive thinking" (or CBT – cognitive behaviour therapy) is more effective than antidepressants in the long run.

Hope and Spirituality: a positive expectation for the future is a key element for increased happiness. Good leaders have been shown to be effective merchants of hope. Hope is also a foundation of effective spiritual traditions. People who

practice faith in their daily lives enjoy greater happiness.

Mindfulness: the increasingly popular practice of tuning the mind to be fully present to the moment builds subjective happiness while also brightening the left prefrontal cortex in various brain scans. This practice can range from simply paying focused attention to what you are doing – such as the taste, smell, crunchiness and colour of a grape. More advanced practices follow Buddhist and Yogic meditation practices.

Be Here Now! Closely related to mindfulness is the practice of staying very alert to the present. When the mind ruminates on the past we are inclined to slip towards depression and when we ruminate on the future we are inclined to worry and feelings of anxiety. A fundamental principle of resilience is to keep your mind skilfully on the present moment – being calm, alert, present and engaged in what you are doing now.

A useful variation advocated by psychologist Derek Roger, goes as follows:

- **Wake up** from your daydreams (waking sleep)
- **Pay attention** to what is happening now by focusing on a feeling or sensory input
- **Switch attention** to a more constructive options presenting right now
- **Let go** the thoughts and feelings that held you in waking sleep

Compassion: central to Christian and Buddhist philosophy is a loving embrace of self, others and all sentient beings. In early phases of life and under stress we tend toward self absorption – focusing only on our difficulties and needs. In early adolescence we develop the capacity to understand others (empathy) and in early adulthood the ability to genuinely care about the difficulties and needs of others. This is compassion rather than selfish antics aimed at getting the attention of others.



Building compassion is challenging and takes time. One does not need to become a bleeding heart. Start by remembering a parent, sibling or spiritual figure. In your love for this being, see if you can enter the gentleness of their heart seeking to deeply appreciate their feelings and hopes. As one gets better this can be practiced through the day by taking a moment to appreciate how others around you are feeling.

Suggested Reading:

Richard Layard, Happiness, Penguin Books, 2005

Martin Seligman, Authentic Happiness, 2002 or www.authentichappiness.org

About Us

Based in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, The Resilience Institute works with senior executives and the entire employee base to build organisational and personal resilience. The Resilience Institute uses an evidence-based approach to introduce the personal disciplines of sustainable high performance within a meaningful life. The Resilience Institute achieves sustainable and measurable improvements using assessment instruments, consulting reviews, workshop interventions and personal coaching.

For further information...

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Resilience Programs

Practical Resilience Program – Public Program - Melbourne

There is more to life than living in negative stress, fatigue and illness that is often associated with the “dash for cash” and “dash for career”. Resilience is a key competence to help you to live and work with **higher engagement, health and happiness** and ultimately reach out to your full potential.

In two half-day workshops, learn how to train your brain and build your happiness and resilience...

- ✓ Health & Resilience assessment
- ✓ Introduction to Resilience
- ✓ Mastering Relaxation and Fatigue
- ✓ The Practice of Flow
- ✓ Health and Physical Vitality
- ✓ Emotional Intelligence
- ✓ Brain Training & attention control
- ✓ Spirit in Action

Previous attendee said...

- ✓ *The Resilience session presented by Stuart was sensational. My Wife and I are going to go over the material again as we can see real benefits to our family life.*
- ✓ *What a great inspirational speaker!*
- ✓ *The program has made me take an honest look in the mirror.*
- ✓ *I have noticed a change in my personal attitude to handling stress. I'm a much happier person and life is great again!!*
- ✓ *I feel a renewed enthusiasm for getting the balance in my life right for me, my work and my family*
- ✓ *The resilience program provided tools to address both physical and psychological wellbeing*
- ✓ *I liked the way Stuart delivered the program with honesty, authenticity and sharing his own personal stories.*
- ✓ *The resilience program was great. I found it very relevant. Now I have some techniques to help me move in more positive/optimistic directions.*

For More Information...

- Visit our website www.resilienceinstitute.com.au and download a registration form
- Contact Stuart Taylor in Melbourne on +613 9822 6176
- Email info@resilienceinstitute.com.au



Resilient Products

Freeze-Framer: Own a Resilience Building Biofeedback Device

FREEZE-FRAMER, from the Institute of HeartMath, is the most practical way to assess & build resilience under different situations.

➤ **Why we use FREEZE-FRAMER for Resilience Training:**

The HeartMath Institute has a long scientific background with hundreds of clinical studies showing measurable benefit & positive outcomes.

FREEZE-FRAMER quickly helps our clients build proficiency in a number of our Resilience Disciplines, these include:

- Mastery of effective diaphragmatic breathing (Stress Mastery)
- Quick relaxation & stabilisation (Physical Vitality)
- Cardiovascular biofeedback for lowering pulse and blood pressure (Physical Vitality)
- Building emotional resonance for stronger empathy and resilience (Emotional Competence)
- Preparation for critical meetings, presentations and negotiations (Emotional Competence)
- Management of attention disorders in kids and adults (Cognitive Discipline)
- Feedback on negative and helpless thinking (Cognitive Discipline)
- Create physiological state for optimal mindfulness, prayer or meditation (Spirit in Action)

\$450.00*
*plus GST & Postage



Practical Resilience Books

Dr Sven Hansen has written five practical books on the five disciplines of Resilience. They are practical & user friendly introductions to the concepts of Resilience & help you build your own practice strength.

1. Stress Mastery: Being Calm, Alert and Engaged
2. Physical Vitality: Enhance and Extend your Life
3. Emotional Competence: The Feeling of Being Alive
4. Cognitive Discipline: Creativity, Decisions & Execution
5. Spirit in Action: Moral Resilience, Leadership and Enlightenment

Full Series \$60*
*plus GST & Postage

Each Book \$15*
*plus GST & Postage



Facial Expressions Training CD by Paul Ekman

Build empathy: develop accurate, fast facial expression recognition.

We display around 250,000 facial expressions per day. In a busy complex workplace this is one of the leading sources on knowledge and emotional intelligence. With this CD you can train yourself to recognise micro-expressions (flashed in 0.5 seconds) and subtle expressions (part expressions).

Including tests, practice, tutorials and progressive difficulty this CD is the key to developing your capacity to read other and apply your leadership with skill and understanding.

"Probably the best hour's investment you can make!" Dr Sven Hansen



\$70.00*
*plus GST & Postage

For more information on products, visit our website www.resilienceinstitute.com.au