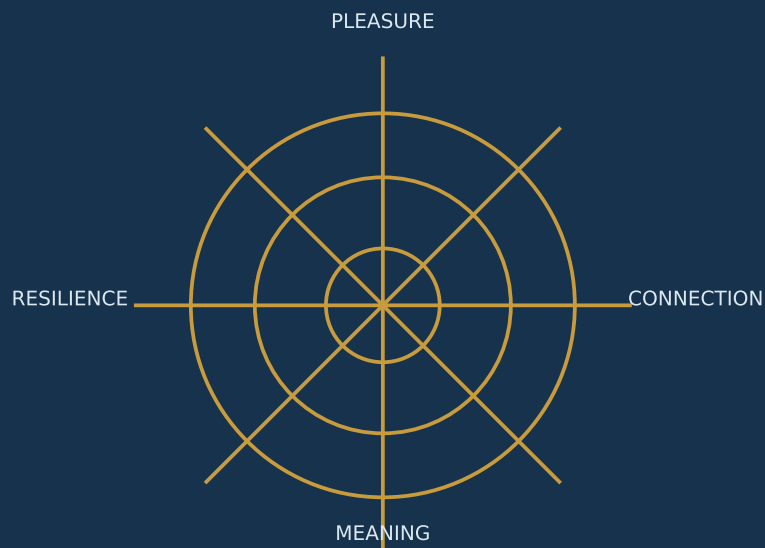


THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS

An evidence-based guide to
pleasure, meaning, relationships,
resilience, attention and the good life



2026 INTEGRATED EDITION

A practical science of sustainable well-being — not permanent positivity.

CONTENTS

CH.	CHAPTER	FOCUS
1	What Happiness Actually Is	Beyond the smile: the measurement problem
2	The Two Engines: Hedonia & Eudaimonia	Pleasure, meaning, growth and integration
3	The Hedonic Treadmill — With a Correction	Adaptation is real, but not absolute
4	The Brain Without the Myth	Reward, prediction, attention and learning
5	The Three Psychological Nutrients	Autonomy, competence and relatedness
6	Relationships: The Social Architecture	Connection, belonging and loneliness
7	The Body-Mind Foundation	Sleep, movement, nature and physical health
8	Money, Work and Time	What resources can and cannot buy
9	Emotions, Stress and Psychological Flexibility	Why happiness is not emotional perfection
10	The Digital Happiness Problem	Attention, comparison and the 2026 evidence
11	Meaning, Purpose and Contribution	The deeper architecture of flourishing
12	Evidence-Based Happiness Practices	What to do — and how much to expect
13	Designing Your Personal Happiness System	A practical 30-day architecture
14	When Happiness Is Not the Right Target	Mental health, suffering and help-seeking
15	The Happiness Audit	Measure, adjust, repeat
16	The Big Picture	A unified model of sustainable happiness

The core question

Not “How can I feel happy all the time?” but “What conditions help me function, connect, recover, grow and experience my life as worthwhile?”

CHAPTER 1

What Happiness Actually Is

Ask ten people what happiness means and you'll get ten different answers. That's because happiness isn't one thing — it's several things layered together.

You can feel cheerful this afternoon and still be unhappy with your life overall. You can feel tired and stressed about an exam and still believe your life has meaning. Happiness has more than one dial.

Researchers usually start with three basics: how often you feel good, how often you feel bad, and how satisfied you are with life as a whole. But that's not the full picture. A complete view also asks: Are you growing? Do you feel your life matters? Do you feel connected to people? Is your body getting what it needs?

This matters because a single "happiness score" can hide trade-offs. Someone might feel better by avoiding hard things — while quietly shrinking their life. Someone else might feel stressed while doing something that truly matters to them. The goal isn't to feel good every single moment. It's to build a life that works, over time.

Dimension	Practical Focus
Positive Affect	Savoring, joy, play, and recovery
Negative Affect	Acceptance, regulation, and tolerance
Life Satisfaction	Cognitive alignment with goals and choices
Psychological Well-Being	Autonomy, self-acceptance, and mastery
Meaning & Purpose	Contribution, value-based actions, and legacy
Social Well-Being	Deep relationships and group belonging
Physical Foundation	Sleep, daily activity, and somatic health

A better definition

Happiness is a mix of good feelings, life satisfaction, strong relationships, a sense of purpose, room to grow, and the ability to bounce back from hard times — not a permanent smile.

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