

ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS



Episode #575
The Science of Happiness: Can It Be Measured?
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Transcript

[00:00:05] Hello, hello, hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English, the show where you can listen to fascinating stories and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge, and over the past few weeks, we've had quite a few heavy topics: Roman [tyrants](#)¹, [hijackings](#)², and American criminals.

[00:00:32] So today we're talking about something completely different: happiness.

[00:00:38] It's something we all want to be; it's something that we all can be, but what does happiness really mean? Can it ever be truly measured, and what, according to the Global Happiness Report, really makes a person happy?.

[00:00:55] OK then, let's talk about happiness.

[00:01:00] Dictionaries are sometimes pretty useless.

[00:01:03] If you look up “happiness” in a dictionary, it'll probably say something like “the state of being happy”.

[00:01:11] So you look up “happy”, and it'll say something like “feeling or showing pleasure or contentment”, or “a state of well-being”.

¹ cruel rulers who used power unfairly

² taking control of vehicles, like planes or ships, by force

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[00:01:20] And there isn't much reason to look up the definition of "happy", at least in a [monolingual](#)³ dictionary.

[00:01:28] I know what it means, you know what it means, from an office on the 90th floor of a skyscraper in Tokyo to a Kalahari [Bushman](#)⁴, we might have different words for it, but we know what it means.

[00:01:42] It, of course, means different things to different people; different things make different people happy, there are different types of happiness, and something that makes one person happy might make another person sad.

[00:01:57] What is universal is that happiness is something humans, throughout history, have always [sought](#)⁵.

[00:02:06] Happiness as a goal in itself might be more of a recent ideal, but it seems reasonable to suppose that even early [hunter-gatherer](#)⁶ communities tens of thousands of years ago would have [pursued](#)⁷ activities that would have brought them

³ using only one language

⁴ a member of an Indigenous group from southern Africa

⁵ looked for, tried to get

⁶ early people who hunted animals and collected plants for food

⁷ engaged or participated in

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happiness, whether that was sitting around a fire and eating a roasted rabbit together, or painting animals on the walls of caves and telling stories to their children.

[00:02:35] One can imagine that a caveman, his [belly](#)⁸ full, his partner and children singing songs around him, his face warmed by the sun setting in the west, and just about to [retire](#)⁹ to his cave for the evening, might have thought, “life is good”.

[00:02:52] Perhaps he would even have declared something [along the lines of](#)¹⁰ “I am happy”.

[00:02:59] Fast forward to the modern era, and we have scientists, [statisticians](#)¹¹, economists and even governments trying to measure happiness, using it as a [yardstick](#)¹² for the well-being of a country, as an alternative to metrics like GDP, Gross Domestic Product.

[00:03:19] So, can happiness really be measured?

[00:03:23] And before we can measure it, we need to ask: what exactly are we measuring?

⁸ stomach

⁹ go to bed

¹⁰ similar to, like

¹¹ people who study and use numbers to understand information

¹² something used to measure or compare things

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[00:03:30] Is happiness the **fleeting**¹³ pleasure of a **slice**¹⁴ of rich chocolate cake, or a glass of wine after a long day at work?

[00:03:39] Is it the satisfaction we might get after completing something difficult? A long run, or having a conversation in English that you might have thought you never could?

[00:03:50] Is it the longer-term satisfaction of a life well lived, someone looking back on their life and thinking, “I am proud of myself”?

[00:03:59] Is it meaning, purpose, joy, contentment, or all of those things?

[00:04:07] Psychologists often **distinguish**¹⁵ between two **broad**¹⁶ types of happiness: **hedonic**¹⁷ happiness, which is about pleasure and the **absence**¹⁸ of pain, and something called eudaimonic happiness, which is about purpose, growth, and living **in line with**¹⁹ your values.

¹³ lasting for only a short time

¹⁴ a thin piece

¹⁵ see a difference between them

¹⁶ wide, general

¹⁷ relating to pleasure and enjoyment

¹⁸ non-existence or lack of

¹⁹ in accordance or agreement with

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[00:04:26] This is actually something that goes all the way back to Aristotle, the 4th-century BC Greek Philosopher who spent [considerable](#)²⁰ time addressing the question of happiness.

[00:04:38] Now, Aristotle didn't exactly split happiness into two categories the way modern psychologists do. His focus was on eudaimonia, which is often translated as “[flourishing](#)²¹”, living a [virtuous](#)²² life [in line with](#) your values.

[00:04:56] He did talk about hedone, or pleasure, but he saw it as just one part of a good life, not equal to eudaimonia.

[00:05:07] Modern psychology has borrowed and adapted these ideas into what we now call [hedonic](#) and eudaimonic happiness.

[00:05:17] And then there's an even more modern addition: what researchers call [subjective](#)²³ well-being.

²⁰ large or important

²¹ growing, being healthy and successful

²² good and moral, doing the right thing

²³ based on personal feelings or opinions

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[00:05:24] That's a [catch-all term](#)²⁴ that usually combines three things: how satisfied you are with your life overall, how much positive emotion you experience, and how much negative emotion you experience.

[00:05:38] In other words, it's to do with how happy you feel.

[00:05:43] Because, at the end of the day, that's the only thing that matters, your [perception](#)²⁵ of your own happiness.

[00:05:50] The [caveman](#)²⁶ sitting around a fire 50,000 years ago wasn't thinking, "I wish I had a flat screen TV", and there are plenty of people today who have plenty of things that [theoretically](#)²⁷ make a person happy—a nice house, a secure job, a loving family—yet for whatever reason, they don't feel satisfied themselves.

[00:06:14] So, even before we attempt to measure it, defining what we are measuring, what happiness is, is not exactly easy.

[00:06:25] Now, one of the first attempts to measure happiness came in the late 18th century, with the father of the Utilitarian movement, Jeremy Bentham.

²⁴ a word that includes many different things

²⁵ how you see or understand it

²⁶ prehistoric man who lived in caves

²⁷ in a way that works in theory, but not always in real life

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[00:06:36] He tried to mathematically calculate happiness, and his [equation](#)²⁸ was based on [subtracting](#)²⁹ painful activities from pleasurable ones.

[00:06:47] It was slightly more complicated than this, and activities were split up into seven [factors](#)³⁰: [Intensity](#)³¹, [Duration](#)³², Certainty, [Proximity](#)³³, [Fecundity](#)³⁴, Purity, and Extent.

[00:07:02] Now isn't the time to go into all of these, and we do actually have a [standalone](#)³⁵ episode on Jeremy Bentham – it's episode number 116 – but the point is that it was an early attempt to account for the fact that pleasure and pain have different qualities.

²⁸ a mathematical statement that showed two things were equal

²⁹ taking one away from the other to calculate the difference

³⁰ things that influenced the result

³¹ how strong something was

³² how long something lasted

³³ how close something was

³⁴ the ability to produce more of something, fruitfulness

³⁵ separate, not part of something else

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[00:07:23] In other words, the pleasure you might get from eating an apple, let's say, was worth less than the pain of being locked up in prison and [tortured](#)³⁶ for 10 years. And the pleasure of knowing that you had saved the lives of tens of thousands of children was worth more than the pain of [stubbing](#)³⁷ your toe.

[00:07:44] So Bentham was one of the first to dream of quantifying happiness.

[00:07:50] But his [calculus](#)³⁸ stayed mostly theoretical. After all, if we assume that his weightings and calculations were 100% correct, which they surely were not, then the process of calculating individual happiness would have been so long and complicated that it would firstly have been [impractical](#)³⁹, and secondly would have taken so long that its subject would no doubt have become quite unhappy while it was taking place.

[00:08:21] It wasn't until the 20th century that psychologists began developing practical tools – surveys, [scales](#)⁴⁰, and experiments – to try to measure how happy people really were.

[00:08:35] And the most common tool, even today, is perhaps the simplest: the survey.

³⁶ subjected to great pain

³⁷ hitting it against something by accident

³⁸ a system or method of calculating it

³⁹ not easy or possible to do in real life

⁴⁰ systems for measuring or comparing it

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[00:08:43] You've almost certainly seen questions like these before:

[00:08:46] "On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?"

[00:08:52] "Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, quite happy, not very happy, or not at all happy?"

[00:09:01] These so-called life satisfaction questions are the [backbone⁴¹](#) of most happiness research.

[00:09:08] They are simple, easy to administer across large populations, and when you add them up, you can start to compare one country to another, or [track⁴²](#) changes over time.

[00:09:21] Now, surveys like this are neat, but they have a big limitation: they rely on people remembering and summarising their happiness.

[00:09:33] Psychologists know that memory is unreliable: we tend to [overemphasise⁴³](#) the highs and lows, and [undercount⁴⁴](#) the ordinary moments. This is sometimes

⁴¹ the most important part

⁴² follow or record

⁴³ give too much importance to

⁴⁴ not count enough of

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referred to as the “peak–end rule”: when people [recall](#)⁴⁵ an experience, they mostly remember the most intense moment, the “[peak](#)⁴⁶”, and how it concluded, the “end”.

[00:09:59] You sort of forget the bits in the middle.

[00:10:02] So if you really want to capture happiness more accurately, you need to measure it in the moment, rather than asking people to remember it later.

[00:10:13] Obviously, this is more complicated, but it is possible.

[00:10:18] That’s where a method called Experience Sampling comes in.

[00:10:22] This involves [pinging](#)⁴⁷ people at random times of the day, with a text, an app notification, or even a [beeper](#)⁴⁸ back in the 1980s, and asking: “How are you feeling right now? What are you doing? Who are you with?”

[00:10:39] The idea is that, by collecting hundreds or thousands of these little [snapshots](#)⁴⁹, you can build up a far more realistic picture of what makes people happy.

[00:10:51] And Experience Sampling studies have found some fascinating patterns.

⁴⁵ remember

⁴⁶ the highest or strongest point

⁴⁷ sending a short sound or message to get attention

⁴⁸ a small device that made a sound to send messages

⁴⁹ short records of a moment

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[00:10:57] People tend to report being happiest when they're socialising, exercising, or engaged in activities that give them a sense of flow, that feeling of being completely [absorbed](#)⁵⁰ in what they're doing.

[00:11:12] The situations in which they [tend to](#)⁵¹ be least happy are probably unsurprising: commuting, working in stressful conditions, or when they're ill.

[00:11:25] If you are listening to this with a cold on a crowded [commuter](#)⁵² train, well, you're probably feeling a bit rubbish.

[00:11:33] Now, self-reported happiness surveys, even these "experience sampling"-style ones, only take us so far.

[00:11:42] Scientists have also looked at physiological measures: heart rate variability, levels of the stress [hormone](#)⁵³ cortisol, and even patterns of brain activity.

[00:11:54] Neuroscientists have found that certain regions of the brain light up when people report feeling happy. When we feel happy, there are clear physiological changes and measuring these kinds of changes is the most accurate way to measure happiness, theoretically speaking, at least.

⁵⁰ fully focused on or interested in

⁵¹ usually are, are likely to

⁵² a person who travels to and from work each day

⁵³ a chemical in the body that controls how it works or feels

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[00:12:15] But while these methods can be incredibly **precise**⁵⁴ in a lab, they're expensive, **invasive**⁵⁵, and not exactly practical for large populations.

[00:12:27] In recent years, researchers have tried a different approach altogether: big data.

[00:12:33] By analysing billions of words on social media, or even the emotional **tone**⁵⁶ of song lyrics, they attempt to track collective happiness in real time.

[00:12:47] One famous study found that people's tweets tended to be more positive in the morning, **dip**⁵⁷ during the workday, and then rise again in the evening. Hardly surprising, perhaps.

[00:13:01] Another tracked changes in national **mood**⁵⁸ based on how cheerful or **gloomy**⁵⁹ song **lyrics**⁶⁰ became over the course of decades.

⁵⁴ exact and correct

⁵⁵ involving going into someone's body or private life

⁵⁶ the feeling or mood in them

⁵⁷ go down

⁵⁸ the way someone feels

⁵⁹ dark, sad, or without hope

⁶⁰ the words of a song

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[00:13:10] Interesting from the point of view of measuring the happiness of a wider population over time, but not particularly helpful when it comes to more [granular](#)⁶¹ measures.

[00:13:22] So from smartphones to surveys, [saliva](#)⁶² samples to social media, there are now dozens of different ways to try to measure happiness.

[00:13:34] None of these is perfect, but there has been enough research into the subject over the course of several decades that there are some interesting themes and [trends](#)⁶³ that researchers have seen about what makes someone happy, or not.

[00:13:50] Some of these will not be surprising; others might be.

[00:13:54] One of the clearest findings is that money matters, but only up to a point.

[00:14:01] When people are struggling to meet their basic needs, more money [reliably](#)⁶⁴ increases happiness. The difference between living on two dollars a day and ten dollars is enormous.

⁶¹ very detailed or specific

⁶² the liquid in your mouth, spit

⁶³ general directions in which things change or develop

⁶⁴ in a consistently good or accurate way

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[00:14:14] But once you reach a certain level of comfort, the effect [flattens out](#)⁶⁵.

[00:14:20] Going from an income of €10,000 a year to €20,000 makes a big difference.

[00:14:28] But going from €100,000 to €200,000? Much less so.

[00:14:34] Another theme is the importance of social connections.

[00:14:39] Time and time again, the research shows that people who feel they can rely on friends, family, or their community report higher levels of happiness.

[00:14:50] Loneliness, on the other hand, is one of the strongest predictors of unhappiness.

[00:14:57] During the Covid-19 pandemic, when isolation was forced on much of the world, surveys found sharp declines in happiness, especially among younger people.

[00:15:10] Spending time with other people, perhaps unsurprisingly, is positively correlated with self-reported happiness. And the worrying thing is that, across much of the world, people are reporting spending more and more time alone.

[00:15:27] One of the markers of this is “eating alone”.

[00:15:31] According to the 2025 World Happiness Report, “In 2023, roughly 1 in 4 Americans reported eating all of their meals alone the previous day – an increase of 53% since 2003.”

⁶⁵ stops rising or changing much

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[00:15:48] And in the same report, household size is positively correlated with happiness, up to a point at least.

[00:15:57] According to the report, “In Mexico and Europe, a household size of four to five predicts the highest levels of happiness. Couples who live with at least one child, or couples who live with children and members of their extended family, have especially high average life satisfaction.”

[00:16:17] But the report goes on to acknowledge that people who live in very large households do report lower levels of happiness, but this is probably due to lower levels of economic satisfaction. Or to put it another way, it might be nice to live with lots of people, but not if you have to queue for 1 hour for a shower every day and there’s only one [loaf⁶⁶](#) of bread to feed 15 people.

[00:16:45] There’s also the role of trust.

[00:16:48] Countries where people believe that others can be trusted, that institutions are fair, and that corruption is relatively low, [tend to](#) report higher levels of [wellbeing⁶⁷](#). It isn’t just about how much money a country has, but about how fair and safe life feels.

[00:17:10] To give you a personal example, I live in Sweden, a country that is always towards the top of these happiness reports.

⁶⁶ a single large piece of it

⁶⁷ a state of being healthy and happy

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[00:17:20] A few months ago, I was coming back from a swimming lesson with my son, and we, or rather I, accidentally left his favourite Spider-Man [rucksack](#)⁶⁸ on the [tram](#)⁶⁹. He was very sad, but I went to the lost and found office the following day, and found that someone had handed it in. I had to pay a very small administration fee, and I got it back.

[00:17:45] This made me happy temporarily, and him very happy when I returned it to him, but it also made me happy on a deeper, more permanent level to think that I live in a place where someone will do that.

[00:18:01] Of course, it might not have been returned, which might have made me unhappy, so if I had been asked if I was happy immediately after I'd been told "sorry, nobody has handed that in", this might have [clouded](#)⁷⁰ my [mood](#), which highlights a problem with this self-reporting sampling method.

[00:18:19] But it is a real-life, single data point.

[00:18:24] And in fact, this year's Global Happiness Report made this sensation a [core](#)⁷¹ focus.

⁶⁸ a bag carried on the back

⁶⁹ an electric vehicle that runs on tracks

⁷⁰ made worse, saddened

⁷¹ the main or most important part

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[00:18:30] One of the things they tracked was almost exactly this: how likely respondents believed it was that a dropped wallet would be returned, depending on whether it was found by a neighbour, a stranger, or a police officer.

[00:18:46] What they found was a definite [trend](#)⁷²: the more likely someone thought someone else was to do them a good [deed](#)⁷³, such as returning their lost wallet, the more likely they were to say that they were happy.

[00:19:00] There were exceptions, of course. Costa Rica is the sixth-happiest country in the world, on a self-reported basis, but comes 128th in terms of trust in a stranger to return a wallet.

[00:19:15] And Iran is the 99th happiest country in the world, so towards the bottom of the scale, but Iranians were the 2nd most likely people to say that a stranger would return their wallet.

[00:19:29] There are exceptions, but there was a strong overall [trend](#).

[00:19:35] And interestingly enough, this report compared the data on expected wallet return with data on other acts of “caring” for fellow citizens, such as donating to charity, volunteering, or helping a stranger.

⁷² a pattern or change that continues over time

⁷³ an action, especially something kind or brave

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[00:19:52] There was a general [trend](#) whereby people in countries [ranked](#)⁷⁴ higher on these “caregiving” scores reported having higher levels of happiness.

[00:20:02] But the [trend](#) was much more defined for the countries that ranked highest on the “care receiving” metrics.

[00:20:12] To put it another way, yes, caring for others tends to have a positive effect on happiness, but the effect isn’t as great as living in a country where you expect others to care for you.

[00:20:27] Interesting, right?

[00:20:29] Now, to [wrap things up](#)⁷⁵, there is unquestionably more to happiness than believing a stranger is going to return your wallet, or in my case, your son’s Spider-Man rucksack.

[00:20:41] Happiness is messy, complicated, and impossible to [pin down](#)⁷⁶ with complete precision.

[00:20:48] We can try, and we have got better and better at it.

[00:20:52] And we should keep on trying.

⁷⁴ given a position on a list based on quality or level

⁷⁵ finish, conclude

⁷⁶ explain exactly

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[00:20:55] After all, to quote one of the original thinkers on the concept of happiness, Aristotle, “Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence”.

[00:21:10] OK, that is it for today's episode on the science of happiness.

[00:21:14] I hope it's been an interesting one and that you've learnt something new.

[00:21:17] I'll put a link to the Global Happiness Report in the show notes, if you'd like to check that out yourself.

[00:21:23] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds by Leonardo English.

[00:21:28] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Tyrants	cruel rulers who used power unfairly
Hijackings	taking control of vehicles, like planes or ships, by force
Monolingual	using only one language
Bushman	a member of an Indigenous group from southern Africa
Sought	looked for, tried to get
Hunter-gatherer	early people who hunted animals and collected plants for food
Pursued	engaged or participated in
Belly	stomach
Retire	go to bed
Along the lines of	similar to, like
Statisticians	people who study and use numbers to understand information
Yardstick	something used to measure or compare things
Fleeting	lasting for only a short time

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Slice	a thin piece
Distinguish	see a difference between them
Broad	wide, general
Hedonic	relating to pleasure and enjoyment
Absence	non-existence or lack of
In line with	in accordance or agreement with
Considerable	large or important
Flourishing	growing, being healthy and successful
Virtuous	good and moral, doing the right thing
Subjective	based on personal feelings or opinions
Catch-all term	a word that includes many different things
Perception	how you see or understand it
Caveman	prehistoric man who lived in caves
Theoretically	in a way that works in theory, but not always in real life
Equation	a mathematical statement that showed two things were equal

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Subtracting	taking one away from the other to calculate the difference
Factors	things that influenced the result
Intensity	how strong something was
Duration	how long something lasted
Proximity	how close something was
Fecundity	the ability to produce more of something, fruitfulness
Standalone	separate, not part of something else
Tortured	subjected to great pain
Stubbing	hitting it against something by accident
Calculus	a system or method of calculating it
Impractical	not easy or possible to do in real life
Scales	systems for measuring or comparing it
Backbone	the most important part
Track	follow or record
Overemphasise	give too much importance to

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Undercount	not count enough of
Recall	remember
Peak	the highest or strongest point
Pinging	sending a short sound or message to get attention
Beeper	a small device that made a sound to send messages
Snapshots	short records of a moment
Absorbed	fully focused on or interested in
Tend to	usually are, are likely to
Commuter	a person who travels to and from work each day
Hormone	a chemical in the body that controls how it works or feels
Precise	exact and correct
Invasive	involving going into someone's body or private life
Tone	the feeling or mood in them
Dip	go down
Mood	the way someone feels

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Gloomy	dark, sad, or without hope
Lyrics	the words of a song
Granular	very detailed or specific
Saliva	the liquid in your mouth, spit
Trends	general directions in which things change or develop
Reliably	in a consistently good or accurate way
Flattens out	stops rising or changing much
Loaf	a single large piece of it
Wellbeing	a state of being healthy and happy
Rucksack	a bag carried on the back
Tram	an electric vehicle that runs on tracks
Clouded	made worse, saddened
Core	the main or most important part
Trend	a pattern or change that continues over time
Deed	an action, especially something kind or brave

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Ranked given a position on a list based on quality or level

Wrap things up finish, conclude

Pin down explain exactly

Language spotlight

1. Pin down

- **Meaning:** To find or explain something exactly; to make something clear.
- **Synonyms:** Identify; define; determine.
- **Antonyms:** Confuse; blur; make unclear.
- **Examples:**
 - It's hard to **pin down** what really makes people happy.
 - Scientists are still trying to **pin down** the cause of the problem.

2. Wrap things up

- **Meaning:** To finish or complete something, usually a discussion, meeting, or activity.
- **Synonyms:** Finish; conclude; bring to an end.
- **Antonyms:** Start; begin; open.
- **Examples:**
 - Let's **wrap things up** for today and continue tomorrow.

- The teacher **wrapped things up** by summarising the main points of the lesson.

3. Cloud someone's mood / judgement

- **Meaning:** To make someone's emotions or thinking unclear or less positive because of another feeling or event.
- **Synonyms:** Affect; confuse; influence negatively.
- **Antonyms:** Clarify; clear up; make brighter.
- **Examples:**
 - His disappointment **clouded his mood**, even though everything else was fine.
 - Don't let one bad experience **cloud your judgement** about the whole situation.

4. In line with

- **Meaning:** In agreement with; matching or following a rule, idea, or standard.
- **Synonyms:** According to; matching; consistent with.

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- **Antonyms:** Against; different from; opposite to.
- **Examples:**
 - His actions were **in line with** his values.
 - The new policy is **in line with** international law.

5. Catch-all term

- **Meaning:** A general word or phrase that includes many different things or ideas.
- **Synonyms:** General term; umbrella term; broad category.
- **Antonyms:** Specific term; precise word; narrow category.
- **Examples:**
 - “Subjective well-being” is a **catch-all term** for different types of happiness.
 - The word “media” is a **catch-all term** that includes TV, radio, and the internet.

Quiz

Listening Comprehension Multiple Choice Questions

1. How did Aristotle approach the concept of happiness?
 - a) He thought it was only about pleasure
 - b) He focussed on the idea of living a virtuous life
 - c) He believed that it couldn't be defined or achieved
 - d) He concluded that it depended on wealth

2. What is "Experience Sampling"?
 - a) A method for collecting saliva to measure stress
 - b) A type of laboratory experiment using volunteers
 - c) A way of analysing brain scans
 - d) Asking people about their happiness at random moments during the day

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3. What is one major limitation of happiness surveys, according to the podcast?
 - a) They are too expensive to conduct
 - b) They rely on people's memories, which can be unreliable
 - c) They can only be used in rich countries
 - d) They don't allow people to explain their answers

4. What did the "wallet" study in the Global Happiness Report measure?
 - a) Whether people believe others would return a lost wallet
 - b) How much money people carry daily
 - c) The average number of wallets lost per year
 - d) People's trust in their local banks

5. What did researchers discover about money and happiness?
 - a) More money always leads to more happiness
 - b) Poor people are usually happier than rich people

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- c) After a certain income level, more money doesn't make much difference
- d) Happiness depends only on how much money you save

True or False

- 6. Jeremy Bentham's "happiness calculus" is still widely used today to measure happiness. (True/False)
- 7. Psychologists often divide happiness into two types: hedonic and eudaimonic. (True/False)
- 8. Big data studies have been used to measure happiness by analysing song lyrics and social media posts. (True/False)
- 9. One way to measure happiness is to use "beepers" that ask people about their mood during the day. (True/False)
- 10. The podcast says that happiness can be measured perfectly with modern scientific tools. (True/False)

Fill-in-the-Blank

- 11. It seems reasonable to suppose that even early hunter-_____ communities tens of thousands of years ago would have pursued activities that would have brought them happiness.

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12. Perhaps he would even have declared something along the _____ of “I am happy”.
13. But once you reach a certain level of comfort, the effect flattens _____.
14. When people recall an experience, they mostly remember the most intense moment, the “_____”, and how it concluded, the “end”.
15. This involves _____ people at random times of the day, with a text, an app notification, or even a beeper back in the 1980s.

Vocabulary Practice

16. The word “**virtue**” in “living a virtuous life” means:
- a) A skill or ability
 - b) A moral quality or goodness
 - c) A type of happiness
 - d) A temporary feeling

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17. The word “**absorb**” in “being completely absorbed in what they’re doing” means:

- a) To be distracted
- b) To remove something
- c) To be fully engaged or focussed
- d) To take a break

18. The word “**reliably**” in “more money reliably increases happiness” means:

- a) In a way that can be trusted or depended on
- b) Occasionally or sometimes
- c) In an unusual or strange way
- d) Quickly and suddenly

19. The word “**granular**” in “not particularly helpful when it comes to more granular measures” means:

- a) Very detailed or precise

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- b) Rough and unclear
- c) Easy to understand
- d) Large-scale or general

20. The word “**proximity**” in Bentham’s happiness factors means:

- a) How unusual an event is
- b) How intense the feeling is
- c) How many people are involved
- d) How close in time or space something is

Answers

1. b) He focussed on the idea of living a virtuous life
2. d) Asking people about their happiness at random moments during the day
3. b) They rely on people's memories, which can be unreliable
4. a) Whether people believe others would return a lost wallet
5. c) After a certain income level, more money doesn't make much difference
6. False
7. True
8. True
9. True
10. False
11. gatherer
12. lines
13. out
14. peak
15. pinging
16. b) A moral quality or goodness
17. c) To be fully engaged or focused
18. a) In a way that can be trusted or depended on
19. a) Very detailed or precise
20. d) How close in time or space something is