



Supporting Research, Results, And Impact Studies

**A Powerful Evidence-based Positive Psychology
Program for Schools, Organizations
and Entire Communities**



**The only
evidence-based offering which
started in the classroom at Harvard, and
whose research has now extended to over 50 countries.**

SECTIONS

- I. Bringing Research to Life: The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog Workshop
 - a. Bridging the Gap with *The Orange Frog*
 - b. The Happiness Advantage Principles at Work on the Island
 - c. Illustrative Research for Each Principle
- II. Educational Impact Results and Success Profiles
- III. The Seven Principals from *The Happiness Advantage* — Supporting Research
- IV. The Five Tactics from *The Happiness Advantage* — Impact Studies and Example

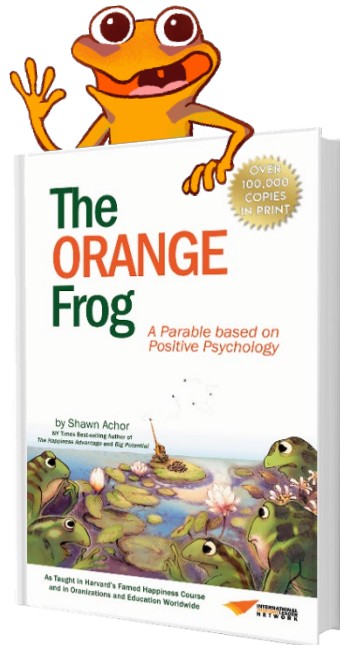


www.OrangeFrogSchools.com



The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog Workshop™ used to increase engagement, build resilience, and spread optimism was honored as the **2021 ATD Excellence in Practice Award Winner – for Change Management**

I. Bringing Research to Life: The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog Workshop



BRINGING RESEARCH TO LIFE

BRIDGING THE GAP WITH THE ORANGE FROG

I am told that most academics have a difficult time translating their research to people outside of academia, and that the average scientific journal article is read by all of seven people.

That means a huge gap exists between what we have actually learned about human potential and what most people know. So, I have dedicated my life to helping bridge that gap by making research understandable, practical, and useful in our personal and professional lives.

Sometimes I use graphs at Fortune 500 companies depicting how happiness affects the bottom line. Sometimes, like in my TED talk, I use funny stories like my sister falling off a bunk bed. Sometimes I use case studies of outlier organizations.

And sometimes, when I want to make research come to life, I use an orange frog.

I studied literature as an undergraduate at Harvard, learning how people can best express their beliefs. My thesis was on the Oxford Don C.S. Lewis who made philosophy and theology come alive through children's fiction. I believe narratives are crucial if we want to move from information to transformation.

In that spirit, Spark was born.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Shawn Achor'.

Bridging the Gap with *The Orange Frog*

USE OF METAPHOR

The brain does interesting things with metaphor. Metaphors stick with the brain because they cause us to process information in more depth.

As a species our ability to understand what psychologists call “Dual Representation Theory” has been theorized as critical to our development of culture, and art, and even written language.

At its essence, this understanding occurs when the brain acknowledges that “one thing” stands for “another thing.”

Symbols stand for numerical quantities; words stand for objects, people, or ideas; letters are parts of words... and in our case metaphors in our parable are objects or ideas that have another meaning altogether. A Bull can signify a good stock market. A crown can represent a style of government. A bitten fruit can symbolize a technology behemoth.

At some age, readers recognize that stories like this one are not simply about frogs and colors, but about something else entirely. As we read, interpret, and encode the metaphor, the brain must process this information differently and as a result some interesting things happen:

- First, we get more interested; remember, we like metaphor.
- Second, we remember it better, because of the extra processing and encoding.
- Third, we develop a shorthand for talking about a topic.

All of these promote better learning and retention.

In this section we will look at some of the metaphors used in the story.

Being Green represents being ordinary, average; it also represents the lack of meaning or joy many of us feel at work. There is nothing inherently bad about being green, but it severely limits what we are capable of achieving both from a pure “happiness” perspective and also, as science has recently shown, it limits us from being able to reach our true full potential.

Being Orange also represents many things. First, it represents having a positive mindset and any activity linked with meaningful engagement. Second, for Spark it means being a positive outlier. Being Orange represents all that we are able to achieve when our minds are set to positive.

Transition Week is meant to remind us of the continuous ongoing transitions we face every day. From global economic changes, to changing market forces, all the way down to changing procedures for email communications; the pressure to Transition is ever present. And it is in these times of transition or change that we need to harness the full potential of our Orange brains.

The Thrall represents the malaise that many people feel in the working world, with too much work and too little meaning.

The Deluge represents the continual cycles of large problems that companies face—competition, restructuring, downsizing, market crashes.

And of course, the Herons represent the daily fears that are continually preventing us from seeing the positive solutions to problems.

Bridging the Gap with *The Orange Frog*

Of course, this reveals some of the one-to-one relationships, but in truth, an Orange frog or a Deluge can come to signify much more than just one thing. It becomes a new way of processing the old patterns. And we can become transformed by such a renewing of the mind.

WHY POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?

As neuroscience has demonstrated, when we are “Green,” our brain reacts overwhelmingly to stressors and stimuli at work with the Jerk - a response driven by the amygdala, a part of our brain which scans the world for threats; think fight or flight. In truly dangerous situations this response is immensely important. However, in everyday situations this response siphons valuable resources from our brain and creates an “emotional hijack.” It is difficult to be productive when our brain’s resources are hi-jacked and splintered.

The Thrall, The Deluge and The Herons all represent fear-based thinking and bring forth the Jerk.

On the other hand, when we are Orange we are shutting off the Jerk and turning on the Thinker, or the pre-frontal cortex - a part of our brain that is responsible for good decision making, processing possibility, and meaning formation.

While deciding to be Orange seems simple and just good common sense, it is certainly not common practice. As I work with both Fortune 100 companies and educators around the globe, I repeatedly bear witness to a trend toward feeling less and less meaning and optimism at work.

All of the convergent evidence leads to one conclusion: There is something is wrong with the way we mentally process our work and our lives.

TWO REMARKABLE LESSONS

There are two main teachings in this parable:

1. Being positive (Orange) is contagious – so is green as it turns out
2. Being positive (Orange) is adaptive - By this I mean it can help us innovate to be more effective in our current environment and adapt positively to new environments.

These lessons are exquisitely important because they hold forth the hope for turning around our own Thrall, as indicated in the Conference Board Findings and elsewhere.

On the Island all the frogs were originally multi-colored—we are ALL designed with brains that work best at positive. But just as stress, work, negative messaging, or lack of praise can overwhelm us, it overwhelmed the frogs - eventually they all turned green.

The threat level of orange is a joke, but also pokes fun at our culture that often derides optimism, the general fear that the media plays up, and the uncertainty we sometimes experience in our teams causing us to focus on the negative – especially when we are green.

In the story, I made sure that all of the frogs share the same genes, and that the denizens of the new Pond 4 were randomly chosen. The point being that we do not need to live under the tyranny of our genes or our environment. Only 10% of our long-term happiness can be predicted based upon our environment; 90% of our long-term happiness is predicted based upon how our brains process the world.

Bridging the Gap with *The Orange Frog*

Moreover, research on twins and recent discoveries in genetics show that while genes set the initial baseline for our personality, happiness, obesity, etc., we can change our life outcomes merely by changing our behavior and our mindset. In other words, being Orange is open to all, not just based on genes and environment, but also based upon the voluntary activities and mindsets we cultivate within our Pond. Habit and mindset can change your baseline.

This is the good news!

ORANGE IS CONTAGIOUS

The story illustrates that orange is contagious by showing how Spark and ultimately all frogs have a direct impact on the color of the other frogs. Spark influences Misty to bring flies to Plop and Spark's Orange starts to spread to Misty. Spark encourages Bull to follow the practices that led to his own transition to Orange and Bull gets infected. Perhaps the biggest change is in Plop – who after seeing the benefits of being Orange and being scared of the alternative (getting wiped out by the Deluge) begins a frantic effort to help other frogs turn Orange and finally becomes the spokesperson for choosing a color (Orange), not a pond.

Intentional changes to the environment can cause the Orange contagion to spread. Misty's efforts to bring the tables closer helped spread the contagion as did pairing up Orange Frogs with green frogs.

The conversion moments are crucial in this parable. Yes, being Orange is contagious, but also requires a choice and a behavior change to sustain the transformation. Spark's conversion starts because of gratitude, random acts of kindness and exercise—three habits that I highlighted in The Happiness Advantage. However, the thing that most catapults his transformation is when he begins helping (providing social support for) the rest of the team. In my study at Harvard of 1600 students, we found social support is correlated at .7 with happiness, which is incredibly strong. Social support is the key to sustained positive habits.

THE FLIP SIDE IS ALSO TRUE. GREEN SPREADS JUST LIKE ORANGE.

So, Orange is both contagious and teachable. The orange spots went away, however, when Orange-spotted frogs were surrounded by green frogs. If we surround ourselves with negative people, it can cause us to lose our own Orange spots, as recent research on mirror neurons has proven.

Importantly, Spark had to choose to be positive before he became fully Orange. Happiness is a choice, but it is one we must make actively and with disciplined behavior change so that we don't devolve into fear-based thinking.

Misty, Plop and Bull each eventually become champions of Orange in the Pond, representing how positive leaders help cascade positivity in their organizations once they have adopted the transformation themselves. Bull's conversion occurs when he realizes the success formula is reversed. Misty's conversion occurs when she increases social support and provides altruistic service to Plop. Misty putting the tables together at her restaurant is representative of the intentional value of increasing social engagements and positive communication at organizations. (This is a good example of how leaders at any level can help ripple out the Happiness Advantage.) Part of Plop's full conversion occurs because of his attempt to teach the other Ponds to become Orange to avoid the Deluge. This is not "fake it till you make it," but rather

Bridging the Gap with *The Orange Frog*

“act it until you believe it.”

The story also shows the power of building The Happiness Advantage principles into existing work routines or creating new work routines which encapsulate these principles. You see this in evidence when Hue creates the “Orange list” or when Spark ends the days by reframing challenges into lessons learned. By building these principles into work practices, it lifts some of the burden from the individual and provides social support and accountability.

The final chapter helps make it clear that for companies to survive, they must convert, adapt, and choose to become more positive. Inside each company, every person can begin to take on roles that allow them to ripple positivity to their team, just as Bull, Misty and Plop do after the Deluge.

Teams that do not will continually be harried by Herons and Deluges but will also never realize the advantage that happiness brings.

ORANGE IS ADAPTIVE

The story illustrates three ways in which being Orange is adaptive.

- First, becoming Orange improves the engagement and the work speed of the frogs as they develop creative ways to overcome the Herons and the Deluge.
- Second, being Orange protects them against the threats of Herons. Instead of giving in to the paralysis of fear, being positive actually decreased the amount of problems that the frogs had to deal with. The research I did with Yale researchers Ali Crum and Peter Salovey, published in the top social psychology journal, shows that the same level of stress does not create the same problems for different people. If you have a positive mindset about stress, the negative effects of stress diminish significantly. Stress is inevitable but its effects are not. Sometimes just being Orange eliminates the problems that anxiety perpetuates and propagates.
- Third, being Orange is adaptive because it opens the frogs’ eyes to the possibility of moving to the trees (adaptation). Research on attentional blindness shows that if we are focused on the negative, we can miss out on solutions; as soon as the frogs began freeing themselves of the Thrall, they began seeing new opportunities, like the trees. This is one of the reasons that optimism is such a high predictor of entrepreneurial success; we cannot act on possibilities that we do not perceive.

All of my research can be summed up like this: change is possible. By being willing to be different, and to actively choose happiness, we can not only change our own life, but others’ lives as well. And when we are more positive, the science is clear: every single business outcome rises significantly. Happiness is not only contagious; it is adaptive. Are you willing to make the changes necessary to see what your full potential is? Sometimes it just takes a Spark...

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL SCRIPTS IN THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

How can we shift our mindset toward the positive? While challenges still loom high, change is possible. But to initiate positive transition...we must also understand the forces that perpetuate the status quo.

I argue that much of the status quo is bound up in Social Scripts; those invisible yet powerful and pervasive

Bridging the Gap with *The Orange Frog*

rules that tell us how to Think and Act. Social Scripts, our Mindsets and our Belief Systems are highly intertwined and self-reinforcing.

In the parable, there are four mindsets related to happiness and success in the workplace, represented by the four ponds. These can also be visualized on a 2x2 grid where the X-axis represents the beliefs we hold about our BEHAVIOR and the Y-axis represents our beliefs about our THINKING:

- **Pond 1:** What I DO does Matter / What I THINK doesn't Matter
- **Pond 2:** What I THINK does Matter / What I DO doesn't Matter
- **Pond 3:** Nothing Matters
- **Pond 4:** What I THINK and what I DO both MATTER

These four belief systems translate into four very different mindsets and ultimately become the operating Social Scripts for each particular pond.

Pond One is represented by Bull. He believes that happiness and success will result from his behavior. The only thing that matters is what he does; he doesn't give much thought to anything else. As a result, he, and the frogs in Pond One are typical workaholics, all work, and no real happiness. Over time, this mindset has become the prevailing social script within Pond One, exerting tremendous influence over others to conform to it.

Pond Two is represented by Misty. She is very different from Bull in her beliefs. Where Bull believes that his behavior is the only thing that matters, Misty is just the opposite. She believes that nothing she does matters; her behavior will not make a difference. This leads her and others from Pond Two to conclude that the best way to cope is to stay pre-occupied and simply ignore anything negative; they only think of good things. Misty and her Pond Two compatriots represent what we call Irrational Optimism. Her mindset and that of Pond Two is "Don't worry about things you can't control – just (try to) be happy." And that has become the dominant social script for Pond Two.

Pond Three is represented by Plop. Plop's beliefs are different again. Plop and the Pond Three contingent have lost all hope. They have come to believe that neither what they think nor what they do matters. This is what psychologists call learned helplessness. As a result, their mindset is "nothing matters, why do anything?" As the prevailing social script this limits Pond Three frogs from doing all but the bare minimum.

Pond Four is represented by Spark; the positive outlier who comes to believe that both what he thinks matters and what he does matters. While it is difficult for Spark initially to break free of the prevailing social scripts, when he does, he creates a new Mindset: "I Matter. I Can Make a Difference. I Need to Take Action and Make a Difference." Fueled by both optimism and the belief he can make a difference, Spark engages and brings the rest of the Island along with him. As Spark's Mindset starts to ripple out to others a new Social Script is born, "Let's Act Positively and Make A Difference." This is the Social Script that is most needed by organizations today.

THE MAGIC & SCIENCE OF THE POSITIVE OUTLIER

One of the central tenets of my book, *The Happiness Advantage*, is that if we want to improve, we cannot study and focus only on the average. If we study and focus only on what is average, we will remain merely

Bridging the Gap with *The Orange Frog*

average. There are many reasons for this but here are two. One, we tend to move towards that which we focus on. Two, when it comes to achieving and increasing our potential those who hold the most promise get systematically ignored.

(While there are many instances in which finding and focusing on the average is good, we unfortunately tend to misapply that thinking pattern even when it is not the best approach. This is most certainly the case when it comes to maximizing our potential because focusing on the average, by definition, limits our potential).

I often show the graph to the right. It depicts a nice trend and suggests a pattern. Individuals along the trend line are those that are “normal” or “average.”

Outliers are those that Think and Act in ways that are outside the norm.

The one little Orange dot represents the “Positive Outlier;” someone who is above the curve.

The concept of the positive outlier is critical as it is Positive outliers who outperform the average and are often the inspiration for change and renewal.

The Positive Outlier in our story was obviously Spark. And Spark faced what legions of positive outliers face: pressure to conform.

In organizations around the world, there are frighteningly strong organizational tendencies - gravity even - that pulls positive outliers back down to the curve. These forces are as pervasive as they are often subtle. “Don’t be different.”

How many ways do we tell people “We’ve already tried that” – there is no need for you to think? Or how frequently do we fail to acknowledge when people work hard on a project - what you do doesn’t really matter? And unknowingly and unintentionally we create Social Scripts in our environments that say in effect, “Just fit in – be average.”

And hidden below the visible layers of activity we engage in daily; these Social Scripts grow and grow and get strong over time.

As Spark discovered, it is quite easy being normal or average; but to be the positive outlier, you must often overcome and rewrite existing social scripts.

Many times, people just don’t want you to be different; it calls into question their own beliefs and behavior. Other times, people may genuinely think they are being helpful by “helping” outliers “fit in,” as Misty did when she suggested that Spark cover himself in mud and moss so he could be green like the rest of the frogs.

The hard truth is, especially during times of transition, whether we like it or not, we need people like Spark, who bring forth innovative ideas and are comfortable acting on them. We need people that act positively in the face of change and bring a positive mindset to the workplace.

So, if we wish to benefit from those positive outliers, we must shift our focus to study them and understand the conditions they face and find ways to make it more comfortable for them to be above the line – and ultimately once we understand that our job is to bring the average up.

THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE PRINCIPLES AT WORK ON THE ISLAND

I initially wrote The Orange Frog to support a workshop because it seemed like a good way to help initiate conversations in a workshop environment. The key is to get everyone on the same wavelength, but the problem is that with our busy schedules, we sometimes don't take time to read. Few things are as discouraging to an author than the following discovery made possible by e-reader tracking: the average person stops reading a third of the way through a book (that they paid money for). If you only read a third of the way through the Happiness Advantage, you never got to Principle #2 of the seven of the principles. This is more reason to not be average.

The fact is, the more people that are exposed to and try to adopt a more positive mindset, the more people that succeed - and the more people succeed, the easier it gets. Just like on the Island. So, the Orange Frog training for organizations—and for people who don't read long books—is simply an example of the 20 Second Rule (which we will get to shortly).

Let's return to the original research in The Happiness Advantage. In that book, I published Seven Core Principles that would help people achieve that Happiness Advantage.

These were:

- The Happiness Advantage (which included several personal habits)
- Zorro Circles
- The 20 Second Rule
- Social Investment
- Mindset Matters
- Tetris Effect
- Falling Up

In this section we'll quickly look at each principle and identify where it shows up in The Orange Frog:

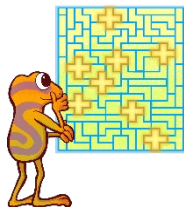


The Happiness Advantage principle is about the advantages that positively wired brains have over their less positive counterparts. This theme shows up first when Spark starts setting records for catching flies and continues throughout the book. I also introduced a number of habits for starting to activate the Happiness Advantage that are used by Spark as he starts his journey to orange; these are gratitudes, conscious acts of kindness and exercise. Done for just 21 days in a row, these habits can create long term changes to our positive mindset and business outcomes.



Zorro Circles. This principle is about reducing stress and anxiety by starting with small achievable goals and getting some early wins to tell our brains that our behavior matters. In the story, Zorro Circles show up in the way that Spark first attempts only to change Bull and Misty and when he gets some success there, he moves on to Plop and then larger conversions of whole ponds. Start small – get early wins and fuel motivation for more.

The Happiness Advantage Principles at Work on the Island



The Tetris Effect. If you see the world through the same cognitive pattern for long enough, your brain can retain the imprint of that pattern. That is why it is crucial to create a positive lens through which to see the world so that you can see more aspects of reality that can move you forward. Once the frogs begin turning Orange, they suddenly see more and more opportunities and reasons to be positive. Bull is able to create a positive Tetris Effect by seeing first-hand how being Orange can be adaptive, and the more he realizes this, the more he is apt to utilize that positive mental pattern. Once Spark begins to analyze what makes him orange he begins practicing it. The more he focuses on it, the easier it becomes. Once Spark realizes that being grateful actually intensifies his being orange, he begins to make a habit of it and more and more things to be grateful for. In the same way, we find typing has become so easy we need not think much to accomplish it, we want to help individuals to create patterns that make optimism and gratitude not habits, but a default response to the world.



Social Investment. The greatest predictor of long-term happiness is social support. And researchers have found that social connection is a greater predictor of profitability than collective IQ or years of experience on a team. Thus, the greatest investment we can make toward our success is investing in other people first. The problem is that when we get stressed, we often do the opposite. In The Orange Frog, social investment is responsible for the conversion of Spark as he brings the flies to the hungry frogs and results in him becoming more Orange.



The 20 Second Rule. This principle simply shows that by managing even a small investment of energy we can help get transitions started. To our brains, getting started is often the biggest part of the battle. Research shows that investments of as little as 3-20 seconds can radically shift our perspective of the desirability to start something. The 20 Second Rule shows up on the island when Misty links the tables. By making conversation even just a little bit easier, the path of least resistance tips towards social connection rather than isolation.



Mindset Matters. In The Happiness Advantage, this is called the Fulcrum and the Lever because the greater a positive potential you see, the more leverage (or power) over an environment you get. This results in being able to perceive more possibilities to jump on. When the Orange frogs look through a lens of opportunity rather than fear, they see the Trees, they construct positive solutions to the Deluge, and they see opportunities to make others Orange.



Falling Up. So often we get focused upon how negative events will have a debilitating effect upon us. If you experience a trauma, psychologists are taught to help you look for points of post-traumatic stress. But there is a huge body of literature that suggests that some people, in the midst of trauma and the worst that the world can throw at us, experience post-traumatic growth. Stress and negative events can strengthen social bonds, raise our resilience for future events, and teach us that our behavior matters. You can see this in two ways in Spark. After Spark's close shave with the Herons, he suddenly realizes that being Orange helped make him resilient. Instead of having to cower in fear, he could teach others that the Herons could be beaten. And second, even in the midst of the frightening Deluge, the frogs in the trees continued to sing. They could do this because even in the aftermath of the Deluge, they knew that their behavior could matter and that they would return stronger.

ILLUSTRATIVE RESEARCH FOR EACH PRINCIPLE

In my research and in writing *The Happiness Advantage* and *The Orange Frog*, I draw upon numerous studies and case studies to validate each major principle. Here are few key pieces of research that support the 7 Principles of *The Happiness Advantage*:

THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

One of the most famous longitudinal studies on happiness comes from an unlikely place: the old diaries of Catholic nuns. These healthy 180 nuns from the School Sisters of Notre Dame, all born before 1917, were asked to write down their thoughts in autobiographical journal entries. The nuns whose journal entries had more overtly joyful content lived nearly ten years longer than the nuns whose entries were more negative or neutral. By age 85, 90 percent of the happiest quartile of nuns were still alive, compared to only 34 percent of the least happy quartile. Clearly, the nuns who were happy at 20 didn't feel that way because they knew they would go on to live longer; their superior health and longer life spans could only be the result of their happiness, not the cause. This study highlights another clue to answering the chicken or the egg question: Happiness can improve our physical health, which in turn keeps us working faster and longer and therefore makes us more likely to succeed. — from *The Happiness Advantage*.

(Danner, D., Snowdon, D., & Friesen, W. (2001). Positive emotions in early life and longevity: Findings from the nun study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 804–813.)

THE 20 SECOND RULE

Studies have found that American teenagers are two and half times more likely to experience elevated enjoyment when engaged in a hobby than when watching TV, and three times more likely when playing a sport. And yet here's the paradox: these same teenagers spend FOUR times as many hours watching TV as they do engaging in sports or hobbies. As psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi put it, "Why would we spend four times more time doing something that has less than half the chance of making us feel good?" The answer is that we are drawn — powerfully, magnetically — to those things that are easy, convenient, and habitual, and it is incredibly difficult to overcome this inertia. Active leisure is more enjoyable, but it almost always requires more initial effort — getting the bike out of the garage, driving to the museum, tuning the guitar, and so on. Csikszentmihalyi calls this "activation energy." In physics, activation energy is the initial spark needed to catalyze a reaction. The same energy, both physical and mental, is needed of people to overcome inertia and kick-start a positive habit. Otherwise, human nature takes us down the path of least resistance time and time again, even when it is not in our best interests. — from *The Happiness Advantage*. (Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Finding Flow: The Psychology Engagement in Everyday Life*. New York: Basic, at 67.)

ZORRO CIRCLES

By making big goals easier, we can overcome the short-circuiting that sometimes hinders our ability to create positive change. How can you take a hospital, which we normally perceive as a place of sickness, and turn it into a positive environment? Seems overwhelming. How much would we need to change? In the cover story for HBR magazine for Jan 2012, I described how, at a large health care provider in the US, 11,000 employees were trained to change their social scripts based upon the Ritz Carlton principles of

Illustrative Research for Each Principle

good service. Employees in the hospitals were asked to make eye contact when within ten feet of anyone else, and to say hello at 5 feet. Very simple, and small. In testing the individuals six months later, there was a significant increase in unique patient visits and a 5% increase in Likelihood to Refer, the key predictor of patient satisfaction. By making the change simple (just a smile) and restricting the circle down to just the hallways, positive change on a grand scale was created.

<https://bit.ly/3g0LSoe>

SOCIAL INVESTMENT

Based on the study I performed on 1600 Harvard students in 2007, we found that there was a .7 correlation between perceived social support and happiness. Following up, we developed three metrics, each ten questions long, which are even more predictive than previous measures for work optimism, provision of social support, and positive stress management. Individuals high on provision of social support are ten times more engaged at work and have a 40% higher likelihood of promotion over the next four years.

<https://s.hbr.org/2UdN1AU>

MINDSET MATTERS

Martin Seligman from the University of Pennsylvania found that a positive mindset was crucial to seeing potential for sales at MetLife. He found that the top 10% of optimists at MetLife 90 91 were outselling the other 90% by another 90%. So, he convinced MetLife to hire individuals with this positive mental mindset. The next year, these agents outsold their more pessimistic counterparts by 21 percent; during the second year, by 57 percent. Mindset matters. (Seligman, M.E.P. (1991). *Learned Optimism*. New York: Knopf, p. 19–21.)

TETRIS EFFECT

In the midst of the worst tax season in history, I did a 3-hour intervention at KPMG describing how to change your lens. This was done for 50% of the tax managers in NY and NJ at KPMG. Four months later, their optimism, life satisfaction and job satisfaction were retested, and were significantly elevated compared to the control group that received no training to change their lens. Their reported levels of happiness moved from 22 to 27 on a 35-point scale, a 24% improvement in job and life satisfaction. This is one of the first long-term ROI studies proving that happiness leads to long-term quantifiable positive change.

<https://s.hbr.org/3AJb5uW>

FALLING UP

If we only see stress as negative and debilitating, we will never find the Third Path that leads to positive growth. In a study we (Alia Crum, Peter Salovey, and I) did in partnership with Yale and UBS, using 3-minute video teaching employees how to view that stress can be enhancing, we created a 23% drop in fatigue related health problems (headaches, back aches, fatigue) 6 weeks later compared to a group that saw stress as traumatic. We did a 1-hour training to deepen the learning and that resulted in an increase in the duration of the “stress is enhancing” mindset. If you look for the positive in the midst of challenge, even stress can have a positive effect upon us.

Illustrative Research for Each Principle

<https://s.hbr.org/3xLov86>

For a review of post traumatic research, see: Linley, P. A., & Joseph, S. (2004). Positive change following trauma and adversity: A review. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 17(1), 11–21. Here is a sampling of studies that support the list given in this chapter: Bereavement (Davis, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Larson, 1998), Bone marrow transplantation (Fromm, Andrykowski, & Hunt, 1996), Breast cancer (Cordova, Cunningham, Carlson, and Andrykowski, 2001; Weiss, 2002), Chronic illness (Abraido- Lanza, Guier, & Colon, 1998), Heart attack (Affleck, Tennen, Croog, & Levine, 1987), Military combat (Fontana & Rosenheck, 1998; Schnurr, Rosenberg, and Friedman, 1993), Natural disaster (McMillen, Smith, & Fisher, 1997), Physical assault (Snape, 1997), Refugee displacement following war (Powell, Rosner, Butollo, Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 2003).

Educational Impact Results and Success Profiles

II. Educational Impact Results and Success Profiles

- Superintendent of the Year in Wisconsin (2019) and Iowa (2020)
- Administrator of the Year in Kentucky (2019)
- Named a 2019 Top Workplace in Iowa by the Des Moines Register
- Top 2% of all districts in America in student learning growth, as measured by Stanford University and published in the New York Times
- 15% increase in ACT scores
- Higher daily attendance and retention
- 12.9 percent reading proficiency gain, according to the state's FAST literacy assessment
- Student resilience to stressors evaluated along a resilience/wellness continuum at 79% of its students reporting overall wellness in the optimal and average ranges, a 9% increase over 2018 and well above national averages
- Significant increase in academic proficiency in math and reading on state achievement tests
- From bottom 10% of schools nationwide to listed among America's Best Schools in 2017 and 2018
- Culture surveys indicating highly satisfied and engaged staff at 3X the national average and the highest among big school districts in America
- 42% greater connection to the school district
- 59% increase in employee perception of recognition for their efforts
- 81% increase in employee perception that their organization encourages feedback
- Over \$2.5 million in student open enrollment revenues (a 500% increase)
- Over 11,000 conscience acts of kindness in Flint, MI across 28 projects helping families in 1,000 homes across the community and state
- Features stories by Good Morning America, The Today Show and US News & World Report

Educational Impact Results and Success Profiles

HOW ONE PRINCIPAL SPARKS STUDENT SUCCESS AND RESILIENCE



Connie Crigger Principal of Mann Elementary was named 2018 Administrator of the Year by KASA. Her award was in large part a recognition of her leading role in enhancing school culture and supporting social and emotional learning. With Mann already a National Blue-Ribbon School, Crigger began focusing on ways to spark more positivity in education... incorporating ways to increase happiness, well-being and engagement for staff, teachers, and students alike. To achieve and sustain these objectives, she turned to The Happiness Advantage Orange Frog Workshop™ to guide this journey. “Student success is really all about building character, culture, and climate,” says Crigger.

Read: The Principles of Happiness: <https://bit.ly/3fUVj8F>

Watch: Spark The Orange Frog in Boone County: <https://youtu.be/gn-oWxBY8X4>

IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE WITH POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY



School District 54 in Schaumburg, IL has undergone a deep systemic implementation of The Happiness Advantage with a focus on sustainability. Superintendent Andy DuRoss had observed for many years that highly positive teachers and highly positive school cultures connected tightly to student success, but his district didn’t have a framework and common understanding or language to spread these practices across schools. The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog gave his organization the research behind the impact of positivity and happiness and the tactics to support optimistic cultures with research-based strategies that work. The district prioritized a deep understanding among staff of Achor’s research in positive psychology and its impact on their overall personal and

professional growth. Once they learned how to bring their best selves to work, they were empowered to create a school culture of positivity and interconnected happiness. The highlights of this systemic intervention had been featured by Good Morning America and in US News and World Report.

Read: How Positive Psychology Can Improve Student Success: <https://bit.ly/3yEqZGp>

Watch: Choosing Happiness in SD54: <https://youtu.be/KdajuJ7sbww>

Watch: The Happiness Summit: <https://youtu.be/SnuXnKAizkA>

INCREASING STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND SPREADING KINDNESS COMMUNITY-WIDE IN FLINT, MI



Genesee Intermediate School District (GISD) is located in Flint, Michigan with its primary service area consisting of 8,500 educators and 66,000 students in 21 counties and 14 charter schools. With a myriad of problems facing the districts they support in the region, First GISD significantly improved its own levels of happiness and engagement then set about bringing the community together around positivity. As Dr. Lisa Hagel, Superintendent states "Since we began The Happiness Advantage | Orange Frog Workshop in our district, we've not only increased engagement significantly but have also been able to spread hope and optimism throughout our community." Having trained thousands of faculty, staff and students, they have become a beacon for positivity in education and recently launched the first statewide Center of Excellence of its kind in the nation.

Read: Flint Strong: <https://bit.ly/3ABciEQ>

CHANGING SOCIAL SCRIPTS AND EMBEDDING POSITIVITY EARNS SUPERINTENDENT STATEWIDE HONOR



Cardinal Community School District was not just any small-town school system. Cardinal had previously been listed in the bottom 10 percent of schools nationwide. It had ACT scores six points below the state average, as well as dropping enrollment. Plus, Cardinal is located in Wapello County, reportedly the poorest county in Iowa. Since Superintendent Joel Pedersen introduced the Orange Frog as a means to change prevailing attitudes to positive and spark a culture shift, the district has raised engagement levels, reduced absenteeism, increased ACT scores and saw a 500% increase in open enrollment funding. Watch the video (Cardinal School Story) and read the featured article from AASA's School Administrator magazine.

Read: How Happiness Saved Out District: <https://bit.ly/3xCu48Q>

Read: Staying the Course: <https://bit.ly/3lUT4pF>

Watch: Cardinal School Story: <https://youtu.be/1J8EedcgPcc>

III. The Seven Principals from *The Happiness Advantage* — Supporting Research



CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

Happiness is a choice. Our external world only predicts 10% of long-term happiness.

In a seminal 2005 article, Sonja Lyubomirsky and her colleagues suggested that, according to prior research, there are three primary factors that influence people's long term happiness levels: Life circumstances (accounts for approximately 10% of long-term happiness), Genetic set point (50%), and Intentional activity (40%; the things in life we choose to do or think; pursuing happiness activities, choosing a positive mindset, etc.) Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 111-131.

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The Seven Principals from *The Happiness Advantage*



PRINCIPLE #1: THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

The research is conclusive. Positive brains consistently outperform negative or neutral brains. Positive emotions and a positive sense of urgency make people successful during periods of transition. We can retrain our brains to capitalize on positivity and improve our productivity, adaptability, and performance.

For an empirical study on these three distinct routes to happiness, see: Peterson, C., Park, N., & Seligman, M.E.P. (2005). Orientations to happiness and life satisfaction: The full life versus the empty life. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6, 25-41.

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The Seven Principals from *The Happiness Advantage*



PRINCIPLE #2: THE FULCRUM AND THE LEVER

Change presents stress and the brain increases its production of cortisol. This increase can have short term benefits but over time it degrades our ability to effectively deal with change. This principle teaches us the importance of infusing positive emotions into our daily lives - and reminds us to adjust our mindset in a way that reduces stress thus improving our performance and success.

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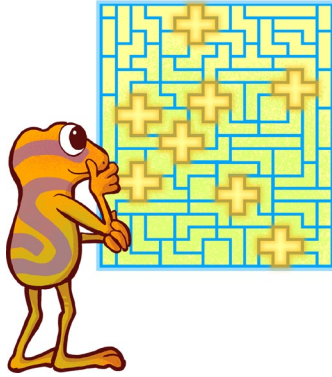
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The Seven Principals from *The Happiness Advantage*



PRINCIPLE #3: THE TETRIS EFFECT

When our brains get stuck in a pattern that focuses on stress, negativity, and failure, we set ourselves up to fail. This principle teaches us how to retrain our brains to spot patterns of possibility, so we can see – and seize – opportunity wherever we look.

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The Seven Principals from *The Happiness Advantage*



PRINCIPLE #4: FALLING UP

Change always presents more setbacks than business as usual because it is unfamiliar terrain. The principle of Falling Up teaches us to rewrite how we mentally address setbacks. Creating counterfactuals that leverage setbacks builds resilience and promotes positive change.

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PRINCIPLE #5: THE ZORRO CIRCLE

When challenges loom and we get overwhelmed, our rational brains can get hijacked by emotions. This principle teaches us how to regain control by focusing first on small, manageable goals, and then gradually expanding our circle to achieve bigger and bigger ones.

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The Seven Principals from *The Happiness Advantage*



PRINCIPLE #6: THE 20-SECOND RULE

Sustaining lasting change often feels impossible because our willpower is limited. And when willpower fails, we fall back on our old habits and succumb to the path of least resistance. This principle shows how, by making small energy adjustments, we can reroute the path of least resistance and replace bad habits with good ones.

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While the popular belief is that it takes anywhere from 21 to 30 days to make a habit, there has been little empirical testing on this subject; obviously, actual length of time depends on both the person and the action. Recently, Philippa Lally and her colleagues at the University College London conducted a study that found the average number of days ninety-six volunteers needed to turn an action (for instance, going for a 15-minute run every day) into an automatic habit was sixty-six, though people ranged from 18 to 254 days. The study's most reassuring news was that skipping one day did not derail eventual habit formation, which should encourage us not to abandon our progress should we get slightly off track. Lally, P., van Jaarsveld, C.H.M., Potts, H.W.W. & Wardle, J. (2009). How are habits formed: Modeling habit formation in the real world. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, (in press).

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While self-regulation tires after repeated use, the good news is that, like a muscle, it can be strengthened over time with practice. So, for instance, while willpower is not useful to sustain a restrictive diet, especially if someone has already experienced control-depleting tasks throughout the day, prolonged commitment to a task that requires self-regulation, like a two-month exercise program, can actually improve self-regulation. See Oaten, M. & Cheng, K. (2006). Longitudinal gains in self-regulation from regular physical exercise. *The British Psychological Society*, 11, 717 - 733; Oaten, M. & Cheng, K. (2007). Improvements in self-control from financial monitoring. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 28, 487 - 501.

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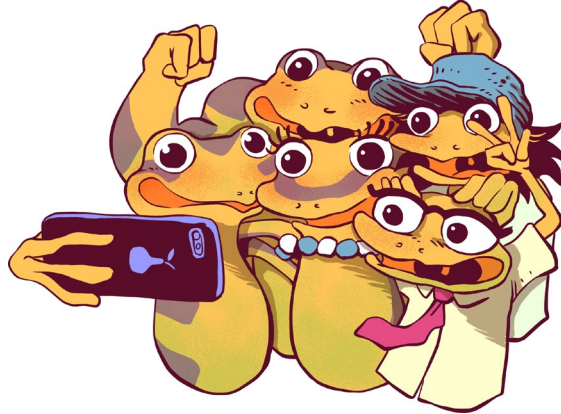
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The Seven Principals from *The Happiness Advantage*

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The Seven Principals from *The Happiness Advantage*



PRINCIPLE #7: SOCIAL INVESTMENT

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The Seven Principals from *The Happiness Advantage*



SPREADING THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

When you capitalize on The Happiness Advantage, you are doing far more than improving your own well-being and performance; the more you profit from the principles the more everyone around you profits.

A study by Shawn Achor found that individuals that give a lot of social support to others are 10 times more engaged at work and have a 40% higher likelihood of promotion over the next four years. Achor, S. (2011). What giving gets you at the office. *Harvard Business Review* blog.

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IV. The Five Tactics from *The Happiness Advantage* — Impact Studies and Example



**3 GRATITUDES: WRITING THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR EACH DAY WILL
MAKE YOU HAPPIER**

People who wrote in a journal once a day for two weeks, describing five things they were grateful for, experienced many benefits compared to two other groups that wrote about things unrelated to gratitude:

- They were more joyful, enthusiastic, interested, attentive, energetic, excited, and determined.
- They reported offering others more emotional support or help with a personal problem.

Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 377-389 (Study 2).

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The Five Tactics from *The Happiness Advantage*



THE DOUBLER: JOURNALING ABOUT A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE HELPS YOUR BRAIN “RELIVE” THE EXPERIENCE, THEREBY DOUBLING THE EFFECT OF THE EXPERIENCE.

For 20 minutes on 3 consecutive days, participants were assigned to write about either an intensely positive experience or a neutral topic. Compared to participants that wrote about a neutral topic, those that wrote about a positive experience were happier and had fewer health center visits.

Burton, C., & King, L. (2004). The health benefits of writing about intensely positive experiences. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 38, 150-163.

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THE FUN FIFTEEN: PHYSICAL EXERCISE MAKES PEOPLE HAPPIER.

Depressed adults were assigned to either take antidepressant medication, exercise 45 minutes three times a week, or do both of these things. After ten months, the relapse rate for the exercise group was only 9%, compared to the antidepressant group (38%) and the group that did both (31%). The result demonstrates the long-lasting effect of exercise in treating depression.

Babyak, M., Blumenthal, J., Herman, S., Khatri, P., Doraiswamy, P., Moore, K., Craighead, W., Baldewicz, T., & Krishnan, K. (2000). Exercise treatment for major depression: Maintenance of therapeutic benefit at ten months. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 62, 633-638.

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The Five Tactics from *The Happiness Advantage*



MEDITATION MAKES PEOPLE HAPPIER.

Participants with no meditation experience were taught mindfulness meditation over an 8-week period. Compared to a group of participants who were told to just relax, meditators experienced greater positive emotion and less depression, anxiety, and anger.

Anderson, N. D., Lau, M. A., Segal, Z. V., & Bishop, S. R. (2007). Mindfulness-based stress reduction and attentional control. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 14, 449-463.

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CONSCIENCE ACTS OF KINDNESS: STUDENTS THAT DO ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR OTHERS ARE HAPPIER.

Once a week for six weeks, college students were assigned to either do acts of kindness or complete a neutral activity. Compared to participants who did the neutral activity, participants who did acts of kindness were happier, were more satisfied with their overall lives, and experienced fewer negative emotions

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