



# Happiness

UNIT

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We have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it.

—George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), Irish dramatist and critic

Being happy doesn't mean that everything is perfect. It means that you've decided to look beyond the imperfections.

—Gerard Arthur Way (1977–), American musician and comic book writer

## Warm-up

### Happiness and a long life



1 Work in pairs and answer the questions.

- 1) What makes you feel happy in your life?
- 2) Do you think money is an important criterion for measuring happiness? Why or why not?



2 Read the following passage and discuss with your partner the questions after it.

Everyone can live longer by allowing himself a little fun, according to research published in London. Two independent scientific studies found that, regardless of background and circumstances, everyone tends to have the same “pleasure quota<sup>1</sup>”. However, different groups of people get their pleasure in different ways. Researchers from ARISE (Associates for Research into the Science of Enjoyment) asked over 4,000 people in eight countries to assess their level of enjoyment from 13 everyday activities including smoking a cigarette, eating a piece of chocolate, drinking a cup of tea or coffee and watching TV. “There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that the cumulative<sup>2</sup> effect of these little pleasures and happy moments can make us all live longer,” they said. People on



1 quota: *n.* 限额; 配额

2 cumulative: *adj.* 渐增的; 累积的

low incomes get more fun out of simple everyday pleasures such as eating a chocolate bar or watching television than those who earn over \$100,000 a year. Researchers advise us that no matter what our personal circumstances are, we can and should try to experience as many happy moments as possible in our lives.

- 1) How can people be happy according to the passage?
- 2) Do you know someone who lives a long life? If yes, what do you think makes him / her achieve it? Is he / she happy for most of the time?
- 3) A study published in the *New Scientist* magazine summarizes the rules of longevity. The rules on the list are as follows:
  - a. You should enjoy yourself.
  - b. Remaining sociable and keeping a happy marriage and a good family are essential for health.
  - c. Where you live has a huge effect on your health.
  - d. A little of what you fancy such as wine, partying, and chocolate does you good rather than harm.
  - e. You should exercise your brain to stay active.
  - f. If you're sick, get treatment fast.
  - g. You are what you eat.
  - h. You should pursue a long life to embrace new technologies.
  - i. You should smile and feel happier in life.

How many rules mentioned above do you agree with? Except for these rules, are there other prerequisites to longevity? Present your thoughts in detail to your partner.

## Listening

### How “having a mission” can make you happier

-  Listen to the recording three times. For the first time, listen and get the general idea. For the second time, fill in the blanks with the exact words you hear from the recording. For the third time, check your answers.

Writer Jean Stafford scoffed, “Happy people don’t need to 1) \_\_\_\_\_.” But studies show that the absence of feeling bad isn’t enough to make you feel good; you must 2) \_\_\_\_\_ find sources of feeling good. Research shows that regularly having fun is 3) \_\_\_\_\_ in having a happy life; people who have fun



# Reading

## Passage 1

1 Read the following passage.

### Do you feel happy?

People in most countries around the world are happier these days, according to new data released by the World Values Survey (WVS)<sup>1</sup>. Data from representative national surveys conducted from 1981 to 2007 show the happiness index rose in an overwhelming majority of nations studied, according to WVS. The 2007 wave of the surveys provides a ranking of 97 nations containing 90 percent of the world's population. The results indicate that Denmark<sup>2</sup> is the happiest nation in the world and Zimbabwe<sup>3</sup> the unhappiest.

A poll of nearly 150,000 people around the world found that seven of the world's 10 countries with the most upbeat attitudes are in Latin America. Gallup<sup>4</sup> asked about 1,000 people in each of 148 countries and regions if they were well-rested, had been treated with respect, smiled or laughed a lot, learned or did something interesting, and felt feelings of

enjoyment the previous day. In Panama and Paraguay<sup>5</sup>, 85 percent of those polled said yes to all five, putting those countries at the top of the list. They were followed closely by Venezuela<sup>6</sup>, Trinidad and Tobago<sup>7</sup>, Thailand, Guatemala<sup>8</sup>, the Philippines, Ecuador<sup>9</sup> and Costa Rica<sup>10</sup>. The people least likely to report positive emotions lived in Singapore, the wealthy and orderly city-state that ranks among the most developed in the world. Other wealthy countries like Germany and France also sat surprisingly low on the list. Some countries which were among the most positive do poorly in traditional measures of well-being, like Guatemala, a country torn by decades of civil war followed by waves of gang-driven criminality that give it one of the highest homicide<sup>11</sup> rates in the world. Guatemala sits just above Iraq on the United Nations' Human Development Index<sup>12</sup>, a composite of life expectancy, education, and per capita

- 1 World Values Survey (WVS): 全球价值调查
- 2 Denmark: 丹麦 (北欧国家)
- 3 Zimbabwe: 津巴布韦 (非洲国家)
- 4 Gallup: 盖洛普民意测验中心
- 5 Paraguay: 巴拉圭 (南美洲中南部国家)
- 6 Venezuela: 委内瑞拉 (南美洲北部国家)
- 7 Trinidad and Tobago: 特立尼达和多巴哥 (拉丁美洲岛国)
- 8 Guatemala: 危地马拉 (拉丁美洲国家)
- 9 Ecuador: 厄瓜多尔 (南美洲西北部国家)
- 10 Costa Rica: 哥斯达黎加 (拉丁美洲国家)
- 11 homicide: *n.* 谋杀罪
- 12 Human Development Index: 人类发展指数

income. But it ranks seventh in positive emotions. The poll shows that prosperous nations can also be deeply unhappy ones. Poverty-stricken ones are often awash<sup>1</sup> with positivity, or at least a close approximation of it.

Similarly, rather than measure Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the Happy Planet Index (HPI) measures life expectancy, happiness, and the environmental impact of different nations. The top 10 countries are not the richest nations but middle income countries in Latin America, Asia, or the Caribbean where there is a high level of life satisfaction and a low carbon footprint<sup>2</sup>. Meantime, according to the

rankings developed by the New Economics Foundation, an independent British think tank<sup>3</sup>, Costa Rica is the greenest and happiest country on the planet, followed by the Dominican Republic<sup>4</sup> and Jamaica<sup>5</sup>. The U.K. comes in at 74th out of 143 countries behind Georgia at 72nd. The highest ranking country in the EU was the Netherlands at 43rd, followed by France at 71st and Germany at 51st. The United States was ranked at 114th, Canada at 89th, and Australia at 102nd. Zimbabwe and other poor African nations, where life expectancy and happiness is low, were at the bottom of the table.



**2 Work in pairs and answer the questions.**

- 1) What were the five questions asked by Gallup in order to judge whether people were happy or not?
- 2) How many surveys related to happiness are mentioned in this passage? Please summarize the results of each survey. Do you see any similarities among the results?



**3 Work in groups and discuss the questions.**

- 1) Based on this passage, does happiness have more to do with wealth or other factors? Why?
- 2) What do you think the ranking of China would be in each survey?

## Passage 2



**1 Read the following passage.**

### Positive thinking and negative thinking

You would have to be a fool to overlook the importance of using positive thinking rather than allowing negative thinking to work against you. In recent years, research in

- 1 awash: *adj.* 充满的
- 2 carbon footprint: *n.* 碳足迹; 碳耗用量
- 3 think tank: *n.* 智囊团
- 4 Dominican Republic: 多米尼加共和国 (拉丁美洲国家)
- 5 Jamaica: 牙买加 (拉丁美洲岛国)



psychopharmacology<sup>1</sup> has proven what many people have known over the centuries: A positive attitude is good for you, good for your health, good for your wealth, and good for everything. Researchers found that a positive attitude produces a specific chemical reaction which makes people feel better, while negative thinking results in a decline of endorphins<sup>2</sup> and shuts down your immune system<sup>3</sup>. This might lead to illness and depression. Positive thoughts will make you feel better. Even if you must begin by literally forcing yourself to be positive (faking it, so to speak), it will become contagious and the positive thoughts will generate good feelings, which will reinforce the positive thoughts.

For example, if you force yourself to smile or laugh for a few minutes, even when

you don't feel like smiling or laughing, you will soon feel like it. Feelings can generate thoughts, and vice versa. Control your thoughts and you can control your feelings. Positive thinking is important in all aspects of our lives. There is probably no single factor which can be more important in determining your success in achieving your career objectives than your own attitude.

It's often been said that in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. You cannot control external events, but you can learn to control your reaction to those events and thereby have a positive attitude and be happy. This vital key to success is completely within your control. Use it.

- 1 psychopharmacology: *n.* 精神（病）药理学
- 2 endorphin: *n.* 内啡肽（体内产生的一种有镇痛作用的荷尔蒙）
- 3 immune system: *n.* 免疫系统



2 Work in pairs and answer the questions.

- 1) What has research in psychopharmacology proven according to the passage?
- 2) How can people control their feelings?



3 Work in groups and discuss the questions.

- 1) What does the saying “in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king” suggest?
- 2) How can people maintain a positive attitude? Explain with your own experience.

## Passage 3



1 Read the following passage.

### Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?

A daughter complained to her father about her life and how things have been so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and she wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed that just as one problem was solved another arose.

Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen, filled three pots with water, and placed the fire on high. Soon the three pots came to boil. In one he placed carrots, in another he placed eggs, and in the last one he placed coffee beans. He let them sit and boil, without saying a word.

The daughter sucked her teeth and impatiently wondered what he was trying to do. She had problems, and he was making this strange concoction<sup>1</sup>. In half an hour, he walked over to the stove and turned down the fire. He pulled the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. He pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then he ladled<sup>2</sup> the

coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her he asked, “Darling, what do you see?”

“Carrots, eggs, and coffee,” she replied.



1 concoction: *n.* 调制品; 配制物  
2 ladle: *v.* (尤指用长柄勺) 舀, 盛

He brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. Her face frowned from the strength of the coffee.

Humbly<sup>1</sup>, she asked, “What does it mean, Dad?”

He explained, “Each of them faced the same adversity: 212 degrees<sup>2</sup> of boiling water. However, each reacted differently.

The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. But after going through boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg was fragile. A thin outer shell protected a liquid center. But after sitting through the boiling water, its inside hardened. The coffee beans are unique, however. After the beans were in the boiling water, the water became stronger and richer.”

“When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond?” He then asked his daughter. “Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?”

 2 Retell the short story and summarize the main idea.

 3 Work in groups and discuss the questions.

If you were the girl in the passage, which one would you choose to be? A carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean? Why?

## Communication activities

### 1 Finding out the bright side

 Work in groups of five. Read the information and discuss the questions after it.

Life certainly has its fair share of ups and downs, but if you tend to focus too much on the negative things, they can affect everything you do. However, if you tend to focus on the positive sides, you'll not only make your day-to-day experiences more enjoyable, but also improve your health (a recent Harvard study found that optimists have lower blood pressure levels, heart disease rates, etc.). Luckily, you're not doomed to a life of gloom – you can actually change your outlook for the better.

- 1) Do you have a thing that is bothering you now? If yes, share it with your group members.
- 2) Have a group discussion on the bright side of the thing. What can you learn from other group members' viewpoints?

1 humbly: *adv.* 谦卑地; 谦逊地

2 212 degrees: 这里指 212 华氏度 (水的沸点为 212 华氏度)

## 2 A guessing game

 The whole class work together and follow the steps below.

### Step one

One student voluntarily stands in the front of the class, and makes a facial expression showing a kind of emotion.

### Step two

The student who makes the facial expression asks a student to describe the expression with a key word in English (such as “happy”) and make a compound or sentence containing the key word. If the student guesses it right, the student who makes the facial expression will say “Yes, you are right.” or “Yes, you got it.” If the student guesses it wrong, he / she can find another one to guess until someone gets the right answer.

### Step three

The student who guesses it right makes another facial expression and the game goes on.

## Writing

### What is a happy life?

In our life, everybody is likely to meet various difficulties or troubles at different times. Some people are optimistic, while some others are pessimistic. “Gloomy Club” has invited you to give a speech to its gloomy members on “What is a happy life?”. Write a draft about 300 words for your speech.

## Song for the unit

### *Life for Rent*

#### 1 Background information



“Life for Rent” is a song sung by Dido, a British singer-songwriter. Dido attained international success with her debut album *No Angel*. “Life for Rent” was released from Dido’s second album, *Life for Rent*, in 2003. In the song, Dido says that she is just an ordinary person, but a stray imbued with confusion. She also tells people that you shouldn’t be afraid to take a risk and try your best to pursue the life which you want most.

#### 2 Enjoying the song

-  Listen to the song and discuss the questions with your partner.
- 1) How does the song make you feel? Why?
  - 2) What message(s) does the song try to convey?

#### 3 Blank filling

-  Listen to the song again and fill in the blanks. Then check your answers with your partner.

