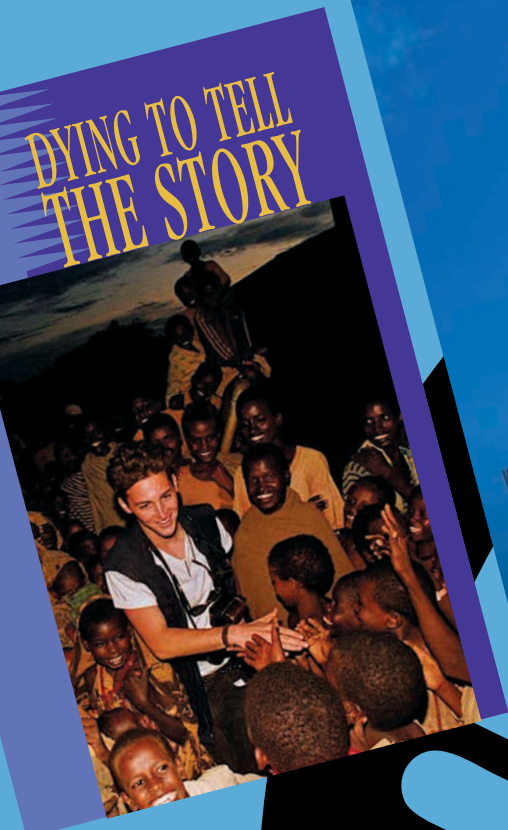
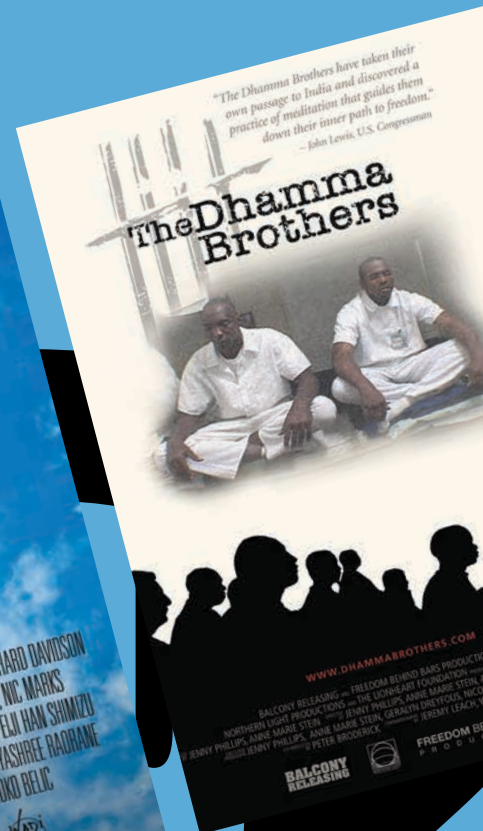




# JOURNEYS IN FILM

educating for global understanding

Teaching the Film happy



Practicing Happiness

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## About *Journeys in Film*

Founded in 2003, *Journeys in Film* operates on the belief that teaching with film has the power to prepare students to live and work more successfully in the 21st century as informed and globally competent citizens. Our core mission is to advance global understanding among youth through the combination of age-appropriate films from around the world, interdisciplinary classroom materials, and teachers' professional-development offerings. This comprehensive curriculum model promotes widespread use of film as a window to the world to help students to mitigate existing attitudes of cultural bias, cultivate empathy, develop a richer understanding of global issues, and prepare for effective participation in an increasingly interdependent world. Our standards-based lesson plans support various learning styles, promote literacy, transport students across the globe, and foster learning that meets core academic objectives.

Selected films act as springboards for lesson plans in subjects ranging from math, science, language arts, and social studies to topics that have become critical for students to learn more about—like environmental sustainability, poverty and hunger, global health, diversity, and immigration. Our core team of prominent educators consults with filmmakers and cultural specialists in the creation of the curriculum guides. The guides merge effectively into teachers' existing lesson plans and mandated curricular requirements. They provide teachers an innovative way to fulfill their school districts' standards-based goals.

### Why use this program?

To prepare to participate in tomorrow's global arena,

students need to gain a deeper understanding of the world beyond their own borders. *Journeys in Film* offers innovative and engaging tools to explore other cultures and social issues, beyond the often negative images seen in print, television, and film media.

For today's media-centric youth, film is an appropriate and effective teaching tool. *Journeys in Film* has carefully selected quality films telling the stories of young people living in locations that may otherwise never be experienced by your students. They travel through these characters and their stories: They drink tea with an Iranian family in *Children of Heaven*, play soccer in a Tibetan monastery in *The Cup*, find themselves in the conflict between urban grandson and rural grandmother in South Korea in *The Way Home*, and watch modern ways challenge Maori traditions in New Zealand in *Whale Rider*.

In addition to our ongoing development of teaching guides for culturally sensitive foreign films, *Journeys in Film* has begun a curricular initiative to bring outstanding documentary films to the classroom. Working with the Norman Lear Center at USC's Annenberg School, *Journeys in Film* has identified exceptional narrative and documentary films that teach about a broad range of social issues, in real-life settings such as an AIDS-stricken township in Africa, a maximum-security prison in Alabama, and a concentration camp near Prague. *Journeys* guides help teachers integrate these films into their classrooms, examining complex issues, encouraging students to be active rather than passive viewers, and maximizing the power of film to enhance critical thinking skills and to meet the Common Core standards.

*Journeys in Film* is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and is a project of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center, a non-partisan research and public policy center that studies the social, political, economic, and cultural impact of entertainment on the world—and translates its findings into action.



# Introducing *HAPPY*

*HAPPY* is an award-winning feature-length documentary that takes us on a journey from the swamps of Louisiana to the slums of Kolkata, India, in search of what really makes people happy. Combining real-life stories of people from around the world and insightful interviews with the leading scientists in happiness research, *HAPPY* explores the secrets behind one of our most valued emotions.

This companion guide to the film *HAPPY* is designed to help 6th- through 12th-grade educators and their students get the most out of the film. Organized around the five film chapters, it provides activity ideas for exploring happiness, as well as suggestions for focusing, discussing, and reflecting on the topics presented in the film. In addition, the guide includes background information for educators, relevant national content standards, a glossary, and resources.

## What Is Positive Psychology?

In the film *HAPPY*, viewers are introduced to the topic of positive psychology. This is a relatively new field of science that studies happiness and well-being. Positive psychology looks at how people can become happier and more fulfilled, and what happens when they do. It is an applied science that examines optimal human functioning and creates interventions for developing positive, healthy, thriving individuals, relationships, and institutions.

As described in the film, psychologists have traditionally focused on people with mental illness or other psychological problems, and on how to care for them. These efforts have led to great advancements in the treatment of psychological disorders, but have done little to help us understand psychological wellness. Positive psychology

aims to complement traditional psychology by focusing on mental wellness and strengths rather than only on mental illness. It asserts that human goodness and excellence are as much a part of the human condition as distress and disorder. It is concerned with making people's lives more fulfilling, and encourages practices that can increase happiness and satisfaction.

## Practices highlighted in the film include:

**Expressing Your Gratitude.** Feeling thankful and expressing thanks can make a person both happier and healthier. Studies have shown that people who cultivate gratitude sleep better, exercise more, and experience less stress, all of which contribute to overall health. Being grateful helps turn the focus from what people don't have to what they do have, and helps them feel that they are loved and cared for.

**Doing Something Kind.** It turns out that being kind to someone else helps both the recipient and the giver. People who regularly practice kindness experience increased happiness, and also benefit from more self-acceptance and positive relationships. Research indicates kindness is valuable because it helps people feel that they are taking part in something that matters.

**Connecting to Your Community.** Having positive relationships and experiences with others in your community is an important element of happiness. Community connections contribute to peoples' sense of self and psychological well-being. For young people, these connections also enhance academic performance and social competence.



**Playing.** Adding more play and laughter in your life can make you happier. Studies have shown that play has many additional benefits, including helping you think more creatively; reducing stress, struggle, and worry; stimulating imagination and curiosity; and making you feel more energized.

**Getting in the Flow.** Flow is the experience of being so absorbed in a challenging and enjoyable activity that you lose track of time and lose self-awareness. People who regularly experience flow report greater happiness, motivation, and life satisfaction, as well as less stress and anxiety. Depending on a person's skills and interest, flow can come from physical activities, hobbies, or work.

**Trying Something New.** People who regularly seek new experiences are happier and more fulfilled than those who don't. Novelty challenges our views of ourselves, others, and the world, and stretches our knowledge and skills. Experiencing new things also helps us focus on the present, which enhances everyday life.

As the film explains, happiness is a skill that can be learned and practiced. By helping students recognize their potential for happiness, and giving them opportunities to cultivate and practice this skill, you will help them develop habits that can sustain them throughout their lives.





# Practicing Happiness

## Enduring Understandings:

- Happiness is a skill that can be learned and developed through practice.
- Practicing activities that increase happiness can actually transform the brain.

## Essential Questions:

- How can one increase happiness?
- How does practicing activities to achieve happiness alter the brain?

## Duration of Lesson:

One or two class periods, plus time for making optional collages

## Assessment:

Class discussions

Journal entries

Happiness inventories

## Notes to the Teacher:

This chapter focuses on things that individuals can do to become happier. The Dalai Lama speaks in the film about compassion, and research shows that people who perform meditations on compassion and loving kindness can significantly increase their happiness levels. Counting your blessings and committing acts of kindness are also effective ways to build happiness.

Showing compassion for others gives life meaning, as exemplified in the film by Andy Wimmer, a long-time volunteer at Mother Teresa's Home for the Dying and Destitute in Kolkata, India. Experiencing what may be called "spiritual" emotions—gratitude, compassion, caring, and love—can help people care about, and feel connected with, things bigger than themselves.

As the film explains, happiness is a skill that can be learned, and there are practices we can undertake that not only make the world a better place, but transform our brains in positive ways. While the formula for happiness is not the same for everyone, the things we love to do—like playing, having new experiences, being with friends and family, and doing things that are meaningful—are the building blocks of a happy life.

Before conducting the activity, read over "What Is Positive Psychology?" on page 8, which explains the six



practices students will explore.

The lesson begins with a journal entry defining happiness. After viewing the film (run time: 12:25 minutes), students discuss the definition of happiness and practices that increase happiness for the individual as well as for people around him or her. Students take stock of their own practices by filling out **Handout 4: Happiness Inventory**. (For younger students, you may prefer to ask students to create a collage or poster that depicts what makes them happy. If you wish them to do so in class, be sure to have a good supply of old magazines on hand. Collages may also be created at home, using magazines or computer printouts.) The lesson concludes with a journal entry assignment that requires both an action and commentary.

#### Standards addressed by the lesson:

##### Health Standards

- Standard 2:** Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.
- Standard 4:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Standard 6:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

#### Common Core English Language Arts College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

**Writing Standard 4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Writing Standard 7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**Listening and Speaking Standard 1.** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Listening and Speaking Standard 2.** Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

**Listening and Speaking Standard 5.** Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

#### Psychology Curriculum Standards

**Scientific Inquiry Domain, 1.3:** Describe perspectives employed to understand behavior and mental processes.

**Individual Variation Domain, 3.2:** Identify biological and environmental influences on the expression and experience of positive emotions, such as happiness.



## Materials:

Film, *HAPPY*

Method of projection

Student journals

Photocopies of **Handout 4**

## Procedure:

1. Before showing the film chapter, have students write a journal entry defining the term “happiness.” Write the following questions on the board to help them start:
  - a. What is happiness? What does happiness feel like?
  - b. How do we know when we are happy?
2. After they have completed their journal entries, have students work in small groups or pairs to come up with a definition for happiness, and then ask a few groups to share their definitions.
3. Show Chapter 5 of the film. (Run time is 12:25 minutes.)
4. Hold a classroom discussion using the following questions:
  - a. Although happiness is not explicitly defined in the film, how do you think the different individuals in the film would define it? Would their definition be the same as yours? Has your idea of happiness changed after watching the film?
  - b. What practices described in this chapter increase happiness? (Answers may include—but are not limited to—counting your blessings, being kind, showing compassion, playing, having new experiences.)
  - c. Have you, or someone you know, ever tried meditation? Why might the simple act of meditating on compassion and loving kindness increase happiness levels?
  - d. Being around poor or sick people may not seem like a happy experience, but Andy Wimmer, shown in the film, has been volunteering to do just that for 17 years. What do you think he gains from the experience? What do the people he cares for gain? Why do you suppose volunteering for these people makes him feel happy?
  - e. The film asserts that happiness is a skill that can be practiced. Do you think that’s true? What can you or others do to practice happiness?





5. Remind students how the film talked about happiness being a skill that can be learned and practiced. Point out that one tool for practicing happiness is an inventory that helps people “take stock” of what they are doing to increase their level of happiness.
6. Give each student a copy of **Handout 4: Happiness Inventory** and discuss with the class the six practices listed, using information from “What Is Positive Psychology?” as appropriate. If you prefer, provide students with markers, magazines, and paper to make a collage about what makes them happy.
7. Allow time for students to complete the inventory. Then lead a discussion about the process, with questions such as the following:
  - How did the act of completing the inventory help you—or not help you—think about happiness in your life?
  - For which of the practices did you find it easiest to find items?
  - Which were most challenging?
  - How might you share with others what you have learned through this process?
8. For homework, have students write a journal entry on the following prompt:

Studies have found that doing “random acts of kindness” not only makes the recipient of the kindness happier, but the doer as well. In the next 24 hours, do something kind for someone—with or without the person knowing. (It can be more effective if the person knows.) Reflect on what you did and how it made you feel.



## Handout 1 — p. 1 Happiness Inventory

**Directions:** For each practice below, consider the things you have experienced recently that are related to the practice. Be mindful of the areas that are particularly easy to complete and those for which nothing comes to mind. Fill in any blank spaces with additional things you could do to develop that practice. It's OK if you don't complete every blank or have more than three for others.

### Expressing Your Gratitude

Things or people you are grateful for:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Doing Something Kind

Kind things you have done for someone else, or that someone else has done for you:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Connecting With Your Community

People you can always rely on, or other connections with your community:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## Handout 1 — p. 2 Happiness Inventory

### Playing

Things that bring play, joy, and laughter in your life:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Getting in the Flow

Activities that absorb your attention so completely that you lose track of time:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### Trying Something New

New experiences you have had recently, or that you would like to try:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX I

# *HAPPY* Stories: An Alternative Approach

The following stories are featured in *HAPPY* and are listed with their corresponding chapter. You may use them to highlight your class discussion on a particular chapter, or to illustrate one of the six positive psychology practices featured in this guide.

See below for more suggestions for using them with the six practices.

### **The Study of Happiness**

- Manoj Singh—Rickshaw driver
- Roy Blanchard, Sr.—Fisherman
- Ronaldo Fadul—Surfer
- Jamal—Diner cook

### ***HAPPY* Stories and Positive Psychology Practices**

Whether or not you choose to show the entire film—or chapters of it—to your students, you may use the *HAPPY* stories to explore the six positive psychology practices featured in this guide. We offer a few suggestions for making the most of these stories. First, you may want to read the section “What Is Positive Psychology?” on pages 8 and 9, which describes the benefits of each of the practices. Then, choose one of the practices for your focus of study. Describe the practice to your students, and then present one or more of the stories, shown in the box on the next page.

After presenting the story clip, pose the questions and actions listed in the box to explore that practice with your students. You may also use the handouts and journal entries throughout this guide to deepen their thinking about the practice.



## Using *HAPPY* Stories to Explore Positive Psychology Practices

Positive Psychology Practice	<i>HAPPY</i> Stories That Reflect Practice	Ways to Explore Practice
<b>Expressing Your Gratitude</b>	Manoj Ingh—Rickshaw Driver Melissa Moody—Accident Survivor Anne Bechsgaard—Co-Housing Resident	In what ways does the person in the story express gratitude? Think of someone you are grateful for, and write a letter to that person, expressing your gratitude.
<b>Doing Something Kind</b>	Michael Pritchard—Comedian Andy Wimmer—Volunteer	In what ways does the person in the story express kindness or compassion? How does kindness help the giver and the receiver? Think of someone you will see today for whom you could do something kind—and do it.
<b>Connecting With Your Community</b>	Blanchard Family Hiroko Uchino—Widow Anne Bechsgaard—Co-Housing Resident People Of Okinawa Michael Pritchard—Comedian Dalai Lama Andy Wimmer—Volunteer	In what ways does this story show the importance of community? How much time do you spend with people you feel close to? How could you make that time more meaningful? How can you build friendships at school or within your community? What group in your community could use a helping hand?
<b>Playing</b>	Ronaldo Fadul—Surfer Blanchard Family Hiroko Uchino—Widow People of Okinawa San Bushmen—Namibia	In what ways does this story reflect play? What were your favorite games when you were young? What are your favorite ways to play now? Think of a playful activity and arrange to do it this week.
<b>Getting in the Flow</b>	Ronaldo Fadul—Surfer Roy Blanchard—Fisherman Jamal—Diner cook	In what ways do the people in the story benefit from flow? When was the last time you were lost in an activity, unaware of time passing? What were you doing? What are three possible activities that would put you into a state of flow? Try one this week.
<b>Trying Something New</b>	Andy Wimmer—Volunteer Roy Blanchard—Fisherman	How might novelty fuel happiness? What surprising thing caught your eye recently that made you laugh or smile? Think of a new activity that you would like to try—and then go out and do it this week.



# Glossary

## Terms used in the film and this guide

**Compassion** – a feeling of deep empathy for others; a desire to relieve others' suffering.

**Community** – a group of people who reside in the same particular locale or who share common cultures, interests, or concerns.

**Co-Housing** – an intentional community with common areas that facilitate interactions among neighbors who share certain responsibilities and experiences.

**Culture** – the behaviors, beliefs, language, and values characteristic of a specific group of people.

**Extrinsic** – coming from an external source.

**Flow** – the mental state in which a person is fully immersed with energized focus in an activity.

**Genetic Set Point or Set Range** – a genetically determined level of happiness, to which one generally returns after positive or negative emotional experiences.

**Happiness** – state of well-being characterized by feelings of contentment and joy.

**Hedonics** – the study of pleasure and of pleasant and unpleasant sensations.

**Hedonic Treadmill (or Hedonic Adaptation)** – the tendency of a person to remain at a relatively stable level of happiness, even with changes in fortune or the attainment of major life goals.

**Intrinsic** – coming from within.

**Karoshi (Japanese)** – death by overwork.

**Kindness** – the quality of being friendly and considerate.

**Meditation** – a practice of concentrated focus on a sound, phrase, idea, sensation, intention, object, or breath.

**Novelty** – the quality of being new or unfamiliar.

**Ichariba Chode (Okinawan)** – an expression meaning “though we have just met, we are family.”

**Positive Psychology** – the scientific study of what enables individuals and communities to thrive.

**Value** – something regarded as worthy or important; also, the measure of something regarded as worthy or important.





## Suggested Resources

### Books

Berns, Gregory. *Satisfaction*

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow*

Dalai Lama. *The Essence of Happiness*

Davidson, Richard. *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*

Diener, Ed, and Robert Diener. *Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth*

Gilbert, Daniel. *Stumbling on Happiness*

Lyubomirsky, Sonja. *The How of Happiness*

Ricard, Matthieu. *Happiness: A Guide to Developing Life's Most Important Skill*

Shimoff, Marci. *Happy for No Reason*

### Websites

HAPPY – [www.TheHappyMovie.com](http://www.TheHappyMovie.com)

Action for Happiness – [www.actionforhappiness.org](http://www.actionforhappiness.org)

Center for Consciousness and Transformation – <https://masonleads.gmu.edu/faculty/the-center-for-consciousness-and-transformation/>

Center for Positive Psychology – [www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu](http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu)

Positive Psychology News Daily – <https://positivepsychologynews.com/>

Psychology Today Blogs (Find happiness-related blogs) – [www.psychologytoday.com/blog/index](http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/index)

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