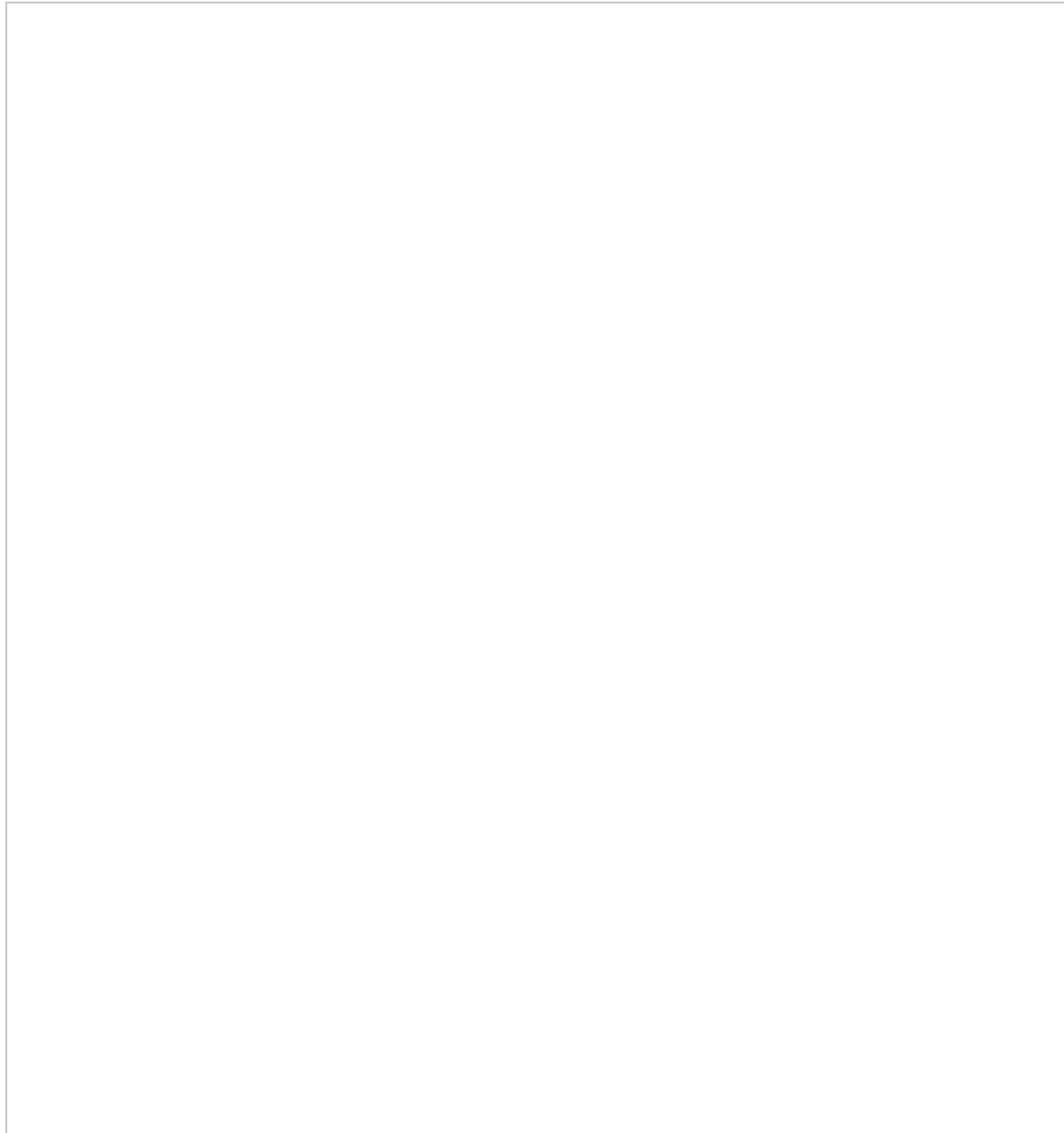


The Happiness Advantage Summary | Download PDF

2016-03-06 23:03:02 Soledad I.



The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work by Shawn Achor – Book Summary

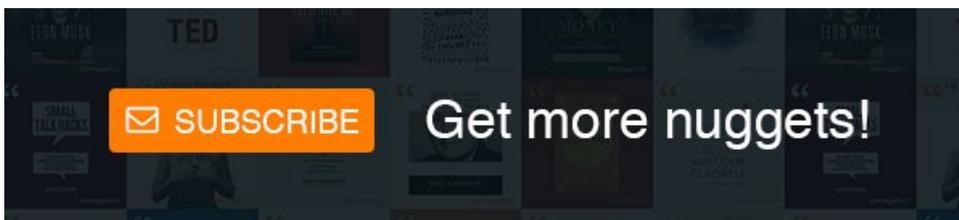
In *The Happiness Advantage*, Shawn Achor describes how happiness represents an advantage in every major aspect of our lives. According to psychology studies, positive brains have a biological advantage over brains that are neutral or negative.

Shawn Achor is an American happiness researcher, author, and speaker, known for his advocacy of positive psychology.

7 SECRETS OF HAPPINESS / THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE – Book Summary

'We tend to miss what we're not looking for.' @shawnachor [Click To Tweet](#)

He authored the *Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work*.



As a proponent of positive psychology, Shawn Achor proves that the happier we are the more productive we'll be, through extensive research consisting of an empirical survey of 1,600 high-achieving undergraduates at Harvard. I totally agree with his view.

“The Happiness Advantage Summary”

The Happiness Advantage teaches us how to control our brains in order to capitalize on positivity and improve our productivity and performance. It addresses important topics and concepts, all related to performance, success, and productivity.

What I truly liked about this book is the fact that Shawn Achor provides a list of principles we need to follow in order to rewire our brains and turn happiness into an everlasting behavior.

“One of the biggest drivers of success is the belief that our behavior matters; that we have control over our future.”

The main concepts found in the book are the fulcrum and the lever; the Tetris Effect; Falling up; the Zorro circle; the 20-second rule; social investment; the ripple effect; and much more. We will talk more about these concepts as we go further into this summary.



The Happiness Advantage is divided into three parts, each containing essential subsections:

Part one – Positive Psychology at work

- Introduction
- Discovering the Happiness Advantage
- The Happiness Advantage at work
- Change is Possible

Part two – Seven principles

- **Principle #1: The Happiness Advantage**
- **Principle #2: The Fulcrum and the Lever**
- **Principle #3: The Tetris Effect**
- **Principle #4: Falling up**
- **Principle #5: The Zorro Circle**
- **Principle #6: The 20-Second Rule**
- **Principle #7: Social Investment**

Part three – The Ripple Effect

- Spreading the Happiness Advantage at work, home, and beyond

Let's take a look at the first part of the book, entitled “Positive Psychology at work”.

Shawn Achor is a firm believer in Positive Psychology. That being said, he makes a comparison between traditional psychology and positive psychology in order to prove a point: happiness is the precursor to success and not merely the result, as it's considered by traditional psychology.

Are you hooked, or shall I offer you more details?

Achor argues that the traditional psychology pattern isn't actually helpful. The traditional formula is broken, and most people don't realize it. They think that if you work harder you will become successful, and once you're successful you're happy. It seems wrong to think this way, don't you think? Achor believes that we tend to put success first and happiness second.



So what are we supposed to do, if this is our mindset? The answer can be found in the positive psychology principles.

Allow me to provide a few examples from *The Happiness Advantage*.

Many people consider happiness as any other secondary concept. Optimism and satisfaction are not relative phenomena – result of good decision and performances. Happiness is not an embedded essential attribute which leads to acquiring a competitive edge called the happiness advantage. Achor discovered the happiness advantage during his 12 years spent at Harvard, where he worked as a freshman proctor and teaching assistant. He helped the students he oversaw to acquire success, GetNugget's book summary co-joins the same mission.

During his years at Harvard, he first noticed the difference between successful students and the not-so-successful ones. So, why were some students succeed while others seemed to struggle? "The Happiness Advantage" explain the correlation between successful students and the happy people. The others felt overwhelmed by every minor setback, instead of feeling energized by the vast possibilities ahead.

Being resistant is not good either. A person who always strives to reduce the risks will find itself stuck in averageness for "eternity". "The Happiness Advantage" encourages you to exceed mediocrity and exploit every opportunity that presents itself.

Countless studies have shown that socialization is the perfect remedy for anxiety, stress, and depression. It is a guarantee for improving productivity and becoming more efficient. It seems that the students that considered studying at Harvard a privilege were the ones that excelled. The reason for that is that they escaped the cult of average.

The second part of the book contains 7 principles that will help us improve productivity and performance.

Principle #1: The Happiness Advantage

"Happiness is the center, and success revolves around it."

This principle shows us why the happiness advantage works if applied properly in our daily lives. Pretty practical, don't you think?

It's true that happiness is relative; everyone perceives differently, and that's why it's important to learn how to improve our mood and raise our level of happiness throughout the day.

Because happiness can be different things to different people, Shawn Achor provides various boosters that will help us benefit from the happiness advantage.

Here are a few:

- Meditation. Studies show that after meditation you experience feelings of calm and contentment. 5 minutes of meditation is enough. So why not try it?
- Find something to look forward to.
- Commit conscious acts of kindness.
- Infuse positivity into your surroundings.
- Exercise.
- Spend money (but not on stuff).
- Exercise a signature strength.

Principle #2: The Fulcrum and the Lever

According to *The Happiness Advantage*, the fulcrum is actually our mindset and the lever is the power. This principle teaches us how to adjust our way of thinking in such a way that it offers us the power to be more fulfilled and successful.

Principle #3: The Tetris Effect

This allows us to identify patterns of options, so that we may take advantage of each opportunity we face.

Principle #4: Falling up

Achor uses the concept of falling up in order to describe the mental path that we need to find, so that we may be able to avoid failure and find the way towards happiness and success.

Principle #5: The Zorro Circle

There are moments when we feel overwhelmed by different events and situations, and we may lose our balance. This is where Achor intervenes by showing us how to regain control.

He suggests focusing on small steps and gradually expanding our circle in order to obtain bigger one.

Principle #6: The 20-Second Rule

“Habits form because our brain actually changes in response to frequent practice.”

The 20-second rule teaches us how to replace bad habits with a good one.

Principle #7: Social Investment

“The most successful people invest in their friends, peers, and family members to propel themselves forward.”

Your social support system is the key to acquiring success and excellence. Don't you agree? What would you do without your social support system?

The last part of the book, “The Ripple Effect”, focuses on the importance of positive emotions. The happier we feel in a specific environment – let's say, the workplace — the happier the other employees will be. Why is it so?

Because positive emotions are contagious.

“Even the smallest moments of positivity in the workplace can enhance efficiency, motivation, creativity, and productivity.”

All in all, this is a great book to read, as it helps us be in control of every aspect of our lives simply by learning how to be happy.

Don't you want to take advantage of the happiness advantage?

I know I do!

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