



Pharrel Williams' hit song [Happy](#) has people around the world clapping their hands and dancing to the beat. Many of the people who come to me for [coaching](#) struggle with creating habits that have them “feel” happy. What I have discovered through the awakenings of my clients, is that people just want to “feel” more happiness - whether at work, in a relationship or alone on a beach.

Yet, individuals are stuck on how to take that first step to “happiness habits”. And, choosing a first step toward happiness is not easy, especially for very IQ smart, high achieving people. Sometimes when you begin to climb that mountain to happiness, you may find yourself slipping back to unhealthy habits. Why? Because we get comfortable feeling like we do not deserve to be happy!

### **Here are a few things I've learned along the way about emotions and happiness.**

As modern brain scientists study human behavior, they find that we [make decisions](#) and operate more unconsciously than previously assumed. It's not that we're automated robots without free will or that we lack rationality and refined decision-making skills. Our brains [\(specifically, the limbic system\)](#) simply drive us to react without conscious choice. By reacting, you bypass the pre frontal cortex thought processes—and much more often than we'd like to admit.

Our limbic system is primal and exists to help us survive. The limbic system's primary role is detecting danger and then reacts with a fight, flight or flock response. And often the easiest, primal response is to “numb” the fear.

Numbing is really about a choice to ignore what is distracting from your happiness. This also explains the increase in stressed-out and unhealthy addicted people, despite our vast knowledge of health, nutrition and fitness. We devote a lot of money and study to curing disease, and very little to encourage [emotional and social wellbeing](#) that leads to happiness.

Apparently, the more our standard of living improves the less life satisfaction we report. Countries track their [Gross National Product \(GNP\)](#) and education levels to measure citizens' quality of life. In addition, Great Britain recently decided to track its population's health and [well-being](#). The latter are now considered as essential to life satisfaction as money or education.

Most recently, [The World's Happiness Report](#) strengthens the case that well-being should be a critical component of how the world measures its economic and social development. The report published by the [Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\)](#), unites experts from economics, psychology, survey analysis, national statistics to describe how measurements of well-being can be used effectively to assess the progress of nations. The 2013 World Happiness Report displayed the rankings of the happiest countries around the globe, with Denmark, Norway and Switzerland leading the pack. Among North American countries, Canada took sixth place, while Mexico (16) slightly outranked the U.S. (17).

How many companies evaluate or train their leaders on happiness, and if they do, does it matter? Well, have you ever worked for a crazy busy and chaos addicted boss? Besides the stress that accompanies unhealthy habits, there's evidence that [mindfulness of good habits](#) leads to success in other areas, such as “feelings of happiness and significance” in your career and relationships.

If you treat yourself poorly, and choose unhealthy habits, you are more likely to treat others poorly. My next article will explore the link between one's positive wellbeing and leadership.

**Bonus: So What Brings You Joy? [Listen to this 90 second audio!](#)**

***I'm very interested in learning more about the link between healthy happiness habits and effectiveness as a leader. What's been your experience? [Leave a comment.](#)***