

COACH *Notes*



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Newsletter

In Search of *The Good Life*

There are several roads to becoming happier. You can focus on increasing positive feelings, for example, by engaging in more pleasant activities. You can clear up negative emotions about the past.

You can make a concerted effort to increase your positive thinking, and develop an optimistic attitude. A simple step such as becoming more mindful of the small yet positive events that happen daily can contribute greatly to feeling happier.

Research indicates that there are five key strengths that lead to experiencing more happiness:

1. Gratitude
2. Optimism
3. Zest
4. Curiosity
5. The ability to love and be loved

There's evidence to suggest that counting your blessings, using your strengths regularly, and expressing gratitude can increase happiness (Seligman, 2004).

There are steps and actions that one can take to feel happier. But the question is, "Is happiness what one should aim for?" Or, should the real goal be to live *The Good Life*.

The pursuit of pleasure has not always led to a *good life*, and history is full of examples. Asking "How can I be happy?" is the wrong question because it ignores the distinctions between pleasure, gratification and fulfillment. A truly good life must have more than just pleasure and happiness. It should also include gratification and meaning.

It was Aristotle who asked, "What is the good life?"

Getting more gratification into your life is more difficult than getting more pleasure. It also involves some delaying of gratification and happiness, and building toleration for discomfort, fatigue, and sometimes pain. But people who take the time and effort to use their strengths to build satisfaction and meaning into their lives have greater ratings of happiness, life satisfaction, and live longer.

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"Turning potential into performance"

David Herdlinger, Herdlinger Associates

Dreamers Welcome

At Herdlinger Associates, I encourage people to dream. And the positive results have been astounding!

When individuals pursue their dreams, their lives percolate with purpose, passion, success, and fulfillment.

As a coach, I don't try to make my clients' dreams come true. That's their privilege...and responsibility.

My role – and my joy – is to stand by their side to encourage, guide, challenge, and cheer them on.

Are your dreams big enough? Let me help you unleash your potential and accomplish more than you ever dreamed possible.

...David Herdlinger

HERDLINGER ASSOCIATES has helped thousands of professionals at all levels in all types of organizations achieve extraordinary success and satisfaction.

We serve clients in North America, Europe, and Asia, ranging in size from individuals and very small businesses to corporations with annual sales in excess of \$40 billion.

Learn more about HerdlingerAssociates at our website:
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Knowing and Using Your Strengths

To obtain more gratification, you must identify and use your strengths. There are a number of online assessments. Two that are recommended are one sponsored by the leader of Positive Psychology, Martin E.P. Seligman, at www.authentic happiness.org, the other on the Gallup Organization site at www.gallup.com.

6 Basic Virtues

Are there universal strengths and virtues that contribute to having a good life? Researchers set out to catalogue which strengths and virtues appear over history as basic and essential – not an easy task, given the diversity of human cultures. The results were shocking in their simplicity and commonality.

A review of the literature of all the major religions and philosophies of the last 3,000 years reveals the same six major virtues.

There was one culture, the Ik, who apparently do not value kindness. Otherwise there is almost universal agreement on six virtues worldwide.

Here are the six universal virtues with their components (Seligman, *Authentic Happiness*, 2002):

Wisdom and Knowledge

1. Curiosity/ Interest in the World
2. Love of Learning
3. Judgment/ Critical Thinking/Open-Mindedness
4. Ingenuity/ Originality/ Practical Intelligence/ Street Smarts
5. Social Intelligence/ Personal Intelligence/ Emotional Intelligence
6. Perspective

Justice

7. Citizenship/ Duty/ Teamwork/ Loyalty
8. Fairness and Equity
9. Leadership

Courage

10. Valor and Bravery
11. Perseverance/ Industry/ Diligence
12. Integrity/ Genuineness/ Honesty

Temperance

13. Self-Control

14. Prudence/ Discretion/ Caution
15. Humility and Modesty

Love and Humanity

16. Kindness and Generosity
17. Loving and Allowing Oneself to be Loved

Spirituality and Transcendence

18. Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence
19. Gratitude
20. Hope/ Optimism/ Future-Mindedness
21. Spirituality/ Sense of Purpose/ Faith/ Religiousness
22. Forgiveness and Mercy
23. Playfulness and Humor
24. Zest/ Passion/ Enthusiasm

From a Pleasant Life... to *The Good Life*

Building strengths and virtues and using them in daily life means making choices. Knowing which virtues and strengths to build on is an important step towards becoming more authentic and happy.

It's not only about learning, training and conditioning, but also about discovery, creation and ownership.

The pleasant life is all about pursuing positive feelings and learning the skills to amplify those good emotions. Pleasures can be increased by savoring the little moments and by becoming more mindful.

Gratifications, on the other hand, are more difficult. They are characterized by absorption, engagement and being in the flow or "the zone." They may not have any positive emotions attached to them. Gratifications come about through the exercise of your strengths and virtues.

The good life consists in using your strengths as frequently as possible to obtain authentic happiness and gratification. It's not about maximizing positive emotions; on the contrary, this may involve less than pleasant feelings.

But using your strengths in the service of something larger than yourself leads to a truly meaningful and good life.

Working with your personal coach can help you to identify your strengths and develop an action learning plan.

You can have a happier, more meaningful life – one that is not only pleasant but that is a genuinely *good life*.
