

## October 16, 2018 — Happiness & Mindfulness

A very special thanks to **Karen Guggenheim (Founder and CEO of World Happiness Summit)** and **Scott Rogers (Founder and Director of the Mindfulness and Law Program at UM Law)**. You taught us so much about the science of happiness and mindfulness. For those who missed this meeting I apologize in advance. There is so much of the essence of the meeting and the discussion that cannot be captured in the notes.

### Happiness:

- Positive psychology is the “study of positive emotions and the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive.”
- The Science of Happiness is the scientific study of “what makes happy people happy.”
- Happiness is having satisfaction and meaning in your life. It is being able to feel positive emotions, to recover from negative emotions quickly, and holding a sense of purpose. It incorporates mental and physical well-being, meaningful relationships, positivity, and low stress.
- Scientific research has shown that focusing on happiness has the opposite effect. It increases anxiety. Happiness is something to look at indirectly.
- **The World Happiness Summit** is an event that gathers experts in the field and exposes individuals to the practical implementations of the science of happiness. It includes mindfulness, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical tools.
- Mindfulness and meditation are tools. So is exercise!
- When stressed, a brain imaging scan will show compromise. This same area of the brain is responsible for learning, which explains why learning and focusing is so difficult when stressed.
- Exercising outdoors is more effective than exercising indoors.
- We need to live in a society that values “happiness fueling success” rather than “success at the root of happiness.”
- Happiness is having more positive moments closer together.
- The stories we tell ourselves and others can be particularly helpful or damaging.
- Before you feel something, you have to make a choice.
- **21-day gratitude challenge** --every night, write down 3 things you are grateful for.
- The brain can create new connections as you make new habits. Repetition makes it work.
- There is a great TED talk -- the **Stanford Forgiveness Project (Dr. Fred Luskin)**.
- Financial well-being correlates directly with security. It is very difficult not to be stressed when dealing with poverty
- Yoga/mindful breathing -- take 5 deep breaths prior to entering a stressful situation. (You can even work on this w/your GAL kids.)
- Send a text or email to someone telling them what they did really well. It will make them happy and will make you happy, as well.
- We have control over our behavior.
- **Things don't always happen for the best, but we can choose to make the best of things that happen.**
- 2 good book recommendations: ***Power of Now (Eckhart Tolle)*** and ***Solve for Happy (Mo Gawdat)***
- Sometimes you need to create a new narrative.

- The science of happiness is based on reality -- unacceptable situations, behaviors, and circumstances cause you to move away from those situations.
- The mind naturally wanders -- sometimes counting backwards helps you refocus.
- Studies have shown that students who are taught the tools for happiness (a 20-minute intervention daily) improve a full year academically versus those students with no training.
- Our brains are prewired for negativity and danger. You don't need happiness for survival.
- "Mattering" is a huge part of happiness, and it is reciprocal.

### **Mindfulness:**

- Mindfulness is about "being here." It is the state of being conscious or aware of something.
- Mind wandering (about 47% of the time!) is an opportunity. When we focus, we have less distraction.
- Mindfulness maintains the integrity of our intentions.
- We are always coming and going -- so are our minds.
- Paying attention on purpose and being in the present in a particular way is mindfulness. We start to catch ourselves when we veer off. It is acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations.
- It is being aware of what is happening in our life and the story we are telling ourselves.
- Mindfulness is becoming aware when the mind wanders.
- There is a space between stimulus and response. That space is our ability to choose.
- UM offers an 8-week **mindfulness-for-stress-reduction program**.

### **Info on the World Happiness Summit:**

- **The World Happiness Summit** is being held at **UM** this year from **March 15-17 (Shalala Center)**. **GALS have been offered a 20% discount (code Guardians)**. I am attaching the information from Karen below. You can find more information about the summit at:

[www.worldhappiness.com](http://www.worldhappiness.com). For tickets <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/world-happiness-summittm-2019-wohasutm-tickets-36147994625>

- **Shawn Achor**, one of the world's leading happiness experts at the World Happiness Summit, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZvKmmknT68>
- **Happiness confessions series filmed at the summit:**
  - Episode 1 **Vicente Fox**, former President of Mexico [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=18&v=M7UGXLWDzcU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=18&v=M7UGXLWDzcU)
  - Episode 2, **Tal Ben Shahr** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ySGZ5w3FvU>
  - Episode 3, **Isaac Prilleltensky**, PHD <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bw5i3UeiUhc>
  - Episode 4, **Sandro Formica**, PhD <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwJwQawUaUc&t=13s>
  - Episode 5, **Giancarlo Molero**, Founder Toy Feliz <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zAgrmMuTnqQ>

- Episode 6, **Mo Gawdat** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZ6gEs6FKn4>
- Episode 7, **Allison Wagner**, Olympic Swimmer Medalist  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4nSolRSqOc>
- ○ Episode 8, **Chude Jideonwo**, founder Joy, Inc  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k74N27PLU50&feature=youtu.be>
- Episode 9, **Alina Villasante**, CEO World Love Peace  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDVxl-fgIYA>
- Episode 10, **Stefan Sagmeister**, Designer & Art Director  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5upKvXQz5Qk>