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TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF



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Hi Friends,

The first 3 months of the year breezed past us, and it is already April. The first 3 months of any year is often a busy time. Parents will be concerned about the new school year, offices reset the year's targets and scope, many resolutions were either put into motion or on the shelves. Perhaps as we sit in April, it is not that bad an idea to ask, *'are you happy?'* with how the last few months had been; and if we sought something different, what can we change?

In this edition of the newsletter, we ask a perennial question, 'what is happiness?', a question asked to different folks, garners different answers. We explore the theme of happiness, individually and between people, and examine it from both what experts say, and how we can apply it in our everyday life. Some quick updates at EMCC: the first 3 months are usually slower than the rest of the year for us. As everyone transits into the new year, and the festivities between Christmas and Chinese New Year, we also see a slowdown in both the

sessions, engagement and especially giving. What was most interesting for us was a spike in new cases. 20% of our cases in the first quarter were new. We work hard towards greater impact in the months to come.

Relevance is important. The next edition of our newsletter addresses an elephant in the room: burnout. Let us know if you have any specific psycho-emotional topics you may think is relevant that we can address, and if we have the expertise, we would be more than happy to do so. On this note, I thank you for your continued support to our work, by your prayers, gifts and even referrals. I look forward to hearing from you.

Lai Mun Loon
Head, Professional Services





THE PURSUIT OF Happiness

Have you ever found yourself reminiscing about your childhood? Amidst the feelings of nostalgia might be a mild sense of loss for a time where we had little to no care in the world. Thinking about our childhood and comparing it to our lives now, it is perhaps also amazing how far we have come. Gone are the days that we can sleep in until noon. Growing up has stripped away our rose-tinted view of the world; it has loaded onto our backs more responsibilities, concerns and even stresses. It is no wonder that we yearn for ways to be happy more than when we were children.

In this article, we explore the topic of happiness and what we can do to achieve it, as well as share some tips from our Head of Counselling on how to achieve happiness.

POSITIVE EMOTION: Good experiences can make one feel good, and one may derive a feeling of happiness from positive events. Positivity tends to give you a sense of hope and purpose. Effort must also be given to direct your focus away from negative events, before it manifests into an overwhelming sense of unhappiness. Dwelling on unhappiness may lead one down the slippery slope to depression. Therefore, it is important that you focus on the high and positive aspects of life in order to maintain a cheerful outlook on life.

MEANING: A purposeful existence, rather than the blind pursuit of pleasure and material wealth, can give you a real reason for living. By leading a purposeful life, it increases a person's sense of self-worth, infusing into one's mind the positivity that can henceforth influence our actions in life. Such a person is also more likely to be satisfied and therefore happier in life.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/ACHIEVEMENTS: Setting goals provides us with the positive energy that helps move us towards achieving our goals. It is a good reminder that we should all set realistic goals so that we can reasonably meet these goals. By achieving the set goals, you would gain the feeling of pride or fulfillment which are important in enhancing your mental well-being, which may in turn be converted into feelings of happiness.



ENGAGEMENT: Being engaged in life can help you to grow and nurture your happiness level (this may vary from individual to individual). We grow by learning in life and there are many ways to be engaged even outside of our daily routine at work or school. Be it trying a new instrument, playing a new sport or indulging in a new hobby. Each learning journey will allow you to focus on yourself and expand your learning capacity, thus creating a "flow" towards enhancing our intelligence, skills and emotional capabilities. Find your flow, and it shall lead you to a happy life.

RELATIONSHIPS: Humans are social creatures. Having positive relationships with your parents, siblings, peers and friends, and building authentic connections in your relationships is important, as a strong relationship will likely be able to withstand unhappiness (e.g. in conflicts) and give you support in difficult times. A strong relationship will be essential in order to sustain one's well-being in life.

The importance, or rather, the human innate need for happiness, has been studied by psychologists, as well as sociologists, neurologists and many more. Such is its significance that it is observed on International Day of Happiness (20 March) throughout the world by all United Nations Member States. The call for happiness has in fact been given greater priority by the United Nations through its adopted resolution that a “holistic approach” to “the pursuit of happiness is a fundamental human goal” which promotes the “happiness and well-being of all peoples”.

WHAT EXACTLY IS HAPPINESS?

Happiness is essentially the positive quality of the state of mind. Research in the fields of positive psychology defines a happy person as one that has frequent positive emotions including joy, interest and pride. However, happiness does not mean an absence of sadness, anger or anxiety. You are still going to experience negative emotions, but a happy person is one that is able to manage them healthily, and chooses to still have a positive outlook on life.

THE PERMA MODEL - *How we can achieve happiness and well-being*

In the study of Positive Psychology, one famous name is American Psychologist Martin Seligman. Professor Seligman worked with the American army, where his research found that long term modern warfare on the American soldiers has resulted in them experiencing Post Trauma Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental disorders.

Professor Seligman created the PERMA model (as seen on page 2) to allow the soldiers to familiarise themselves with the 5 keys to lasting well-being, thereby empowering them to eventually unlock the door to a happy life. Using these same keys, you too can take a step closer to a fulfilled, meaningful and happy life.

The PERMA model illustrates that attaining happiness all boils down to our thoughts and actions. By choosing to be positive, finding an activity we enjoy and can be fully engaged with, building strong relationships with our family and friends, finding something that gives us a sense of purpose and lastly, feeling a sense of accomplishment by setting and achieving realistic goals, we may finally be able to find lasting happiness.

Besides the PERMA model, here are 3 more tips on how to achieve happiness from our Head of Counselling, Diana Chandra:

♥ TIP 1 *Put a little gratitude into your daily life*

Giving thanks has been shown to be connected to one's happiness because it requires acknowledging the good and by being appreciative mentally, it can help spark off a feeling of positivity in you. You will be surprised how doing so will actually help you more than it does to the person receiving your show of gratitude.

♥ TIP 2 *Helping Others*

Helping others is a powerful way to boost our happiness level as it can give us a sense of meaning which lifts our mood by infecting a positive feeling of achievement within. Show a little kindness to others, be it small, unplanned gestures or doing volunteer work, it might make your day better as it did to someone else!

♥ TIP 3 *Get enough Sleep/Rest*

According to the US National Sleep Foundation, getting a good night's rest, at least eight hours or more, is probably the most important change you can make immediately in your life. Not getting enough sleep naturally increases stress levels, as well as the increased risk for depression. Given adequate sleep, your physical well-being improves, and also account for a mentally healthier state of mind for you.

RESEARCH SOURCE

<http://www.bbc.com/news/health-41666563>

Happiness Day

<http://www.dayofhappiness.net/about/>

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/65/309

Positive Psychology

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/who-is-martin-seligman/>

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/positive-psychology-us-army/>

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/perma-model/#positive-emotions>

WHAT MAKES A Happy RELATIONSHIP



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To answer simply, it perhaps is hard work. We have to work hard to not only achieve, but to also maintain, a happy relationship. Whilst it necessarily requires effort on everybody's part to make it work, conflict as we all would have experienced before in our relationships with family and friends, is bound to occur every now and then.

Recovering and repairing in conflict is key to a strong, healthy and enduring relationship. The Gottman Institute in Seattle, USA, through 40 years of research, has created the "Sound Relationship House" as a guide to creating a strong marriage. However, this house can also be applied to relationships with family and friends. Today we will look at how this house can be applied in our relationships in these aspects: Friendship, Conflict and Shared dreams.

STRENGTHENING FRIENDSHIP

Friendship forms the foundation in all strong and happy relationships, be it with our spouse, family and friends. Here are ways to strengthen your friendship with those around you.

LEVEL 1 Build Love Maps

A “Love Map”, a term coined by Drs John and Julie Gottman in their work (*The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work*), refers generally to knowing the other person in depth. The more you get to know about each other through asking crucial questions about each other, the more you get to understand each other, and hence deeper connections may be forged together.

LEVEL 2 Share Fondness and Admiration

Showing appreciation for each other helps to develop fondness, affection and respect towards the other person. For example, tell someone that you are thankful that they did something (e.g. washing the dishes) without you asking. Such acts of appreciation effectively strengthen your relationship over time.

LEVEL 3 Turn Towards Instead of Away

It is the little things that count. Be present, in the literal and figurative sense. This means giving your full physical and mental attention when you are with each other. For example, when conversing with the other person, it is good to turn yourself towards them and give them eye contact. This shows how much you prioritise the time that is spent together.

Make constant emotional connections with each other. This forms the intangible source of positivity for (in what Gottman calls) your Emotional Bank Accounts. The more positivity you deposit into your account, the more safeguard you have against future conflicts.

LEVEL 4 The Positive Perspective

A negative perspective of one’s partner is undesirable especially when faced with conflicting views about things. Negativity tends to negate all neutral or positive messages from a person as your already negative mindset blocks the neutrality and positivity out.

Instead, show less haste in criticising, and show more genuine concern towards the other person. Try practising the first three levels of the “Sound Relationship House” with your friends, family or colleagues in order to create a positive frame of mind, which will be much needed when it comes to resolving conflicts together.

MANAGING CONFLICTS

LEVEL 5 Manage Conflict

It is good to be open to other people’s perspective and take their feelings into consideration as both of you try to compromise. By holding dialogues about problems regularly, it will help alleviate any discernible trouble at its early stage and therefore helps you to make a mental adjustment quickly before it escalates into a fight.

Even if it escalated into a fight, practise the art of self-soothing. This is where you take a break away from your argument to do something that will relax and calm you down, thus helping you to better empathise with the other person’s reaction, in order to help alleviate the tension between you.

SHARED DREAMS

LEVEL 6 Make Life Dreams Come True

Explore and understand such areas with your friends, family members and colleagues, and extend support to their life dreams and goals as much as possible.

When in any relationship, treat each other with care and respect. Remember, there is no need to bring someone’s dreams down just because you do not share the same viewpoints.

LEVEL 7 Create Shared Meaning

Creating a shared meaning between the two of you brings one closer to the other. A common sense of purpose can be nurtured by participating in selected events together as friends, family at home or with colleagues at work. Every meaningful moment that you create will contribute towards strengthening your relationship.

And the two walls of the “*Sound Relationship House*”

The foundational walls of the house (i.e. trust and commitment) are important to the structural integrity of the House. Detect “cracks” in the walls of any relationship early. Sign post may include, among others, constant bickering which escalates into an intense quarrel.

This may indicate the need for an intervening neutral third party, e.g. a counsellor, to help reconcile the relationship, and eventually to help break any gridlocks so as to salvage the relationship before it is too late. Quick attention to mend the cracks that develop occasionally might enable the relationship to remain, if not, be made stronger.

RESEARCH SOURCE

Sound Relationship House

<http://rodhetzelphd.com/wp-content/uploads/tgi-sound-relationship-house-updated.pdf>

<http://www.gottmancouplesretreats.com/about/sound-relationship-house-theory.aspx>

<https://www.gottman.com/about/the-gottman-method/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knBJGNisJS0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F5-YwxIATA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rQGmmfkyf8>



JOIN US AT EMCC

(Eagles Mediation & Counselling Centre) for our Seven Principles Program (7PP)

where our certified 7PP facilitators will further assist you beyond the basics of Gottman's seven principles as embodied in the "Sound Relationship House" model. Through the workshop, you can learn more on how to improve the relational aspect in your life so as to achieve a happy and sound relationship.

APPEAL LETTER

Dear Friends,

The business of reconciliation and repair cannot be made universally accessible to everyone without the generous support of our donors.

We continue our fundraising efforts in 2018 to fund our means testing and outreach work so that more people who need mediation and counselling, who otherwise cannot afford it, can come and have their needs met.

A conversation with a client this year reminded me about the need to ensure EMCC remains sustainable. He shared that he was at his wits' end with his marriage, and would grab on to 'whatever straws he could find'; only to come for pre-mediation in our Centre, because when he enquired, the fees, after means testing, financially met him where he was at.

In that 2 hours, the couple sat down and talked, shared and realised the marriage was not over; in fact, both parties had wanted badly for things to work. The end of the mediation session was the beginning of their marriage therapy at our Counselling Department.

Happy stories do not come often enough. Each time it happens, we are deeply grateful for your generosity in enabling services to be manned by professionals, accessible, and affordable.

This year, we are still short of \$200,000 that will enable us to afford the cost of staff and facilities, so that we can provide the people and place to reach out, to reconcile and to repair.

I seek your generosity and favourable consideration.

Sincerely,

Lai Mun Loon
Head, Professional Services

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

This year, we will require \$200,000 to support our work in helping individuals, couples and families in crisis, through our integrative counselling and mediation services. We are constantly on the lookout for people who share the same passion as us and want to contribute in a tangible way.

If you would like to make a one-time or monthly donation, kindly fill up the form below and mail it back to us

1. CHEQUE

Please make your crossed cheque payable to "EMCC", indicate your full name, NRIC and contact details at the back of the cheque (for tax-deductible receipt), and mail it to our address.

2. ONLINE

Please go to <http://www.giving.sg/EMCC> and follow the instructions there.

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Contact(O): _____ (H): _____

Email: _____ (H/P): _____

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Name as on Credit Card: _____

Credit Card No: _____ Expiry Date: _____

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DONOR SIGNATURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I understand that by signing this Direct Debit Authorisation, I have read and understood the Terms and Conditions governing this authorisation as reflected overleaf. I also agree that my particulars can be used by EMCC (Eagles Mediation & Counselling Centre) and its appointed partners for the purpose of administration of this donation.

Donor's signature as in bank record

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Singapore 179030

Please fold along dotted area and seal securely before posting

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

DEAR DONOR,

Your commitment and support of EMCC through a regular donation will assist us in our mission to provide care and hope to the many families struggling to overcome difficulties and pain.

Please note that your full donation will be received directly by Eagles Mediation and Counselling Centre

DEDUCTION FREQUENCY

The first deduction will be made within 3 working days for credit cards and a month for GIRO upon signing of this Authorisation Form. Subsequently, your account will be debited in accordance with the frequency that you have chosen overleaf (Monthly/Half-yearly/Annually). On the 15th of every month, we will deduct your authorised donation. For unsuccessful transactions there will be a retry on the 28th of every month.

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE RECEIPT

You will receive your tax-deductible receipt at the beginning of every calendar year from us for all donations received in the previous calendar year. Monthly receipts will not be provided for your deductions. Please refer to your credit card statements from your issuing bank for confirmation of deductions made.

CASH DONATIONS

Those who wish to make a separate cash donation can contact EMCC at Tel 6788 8220 or email reachus@emcc.org.sg for details.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will keep all information (i) name, gender, nationality, date of birth; (ii) email address, postal address, telephone numbers; (iii) credit card number and expiry

date in this Direct Debit Donor Programme confidential. This Programme adheres to a very strict policy regarding donor privacy. We will use this information in order to: (i) administer your accounts with us; (ii) process donations made by you, orders or applications submitted by you; (iii) send you information and calling you in regards about our events, programmes, fund raising, products and services; (iv) verify your identity; (v) carry out donor profile analysis; and (vi) contact the winners of our competitions (if any) and to help us plan other fund raising and/or promotional activity. No information, in whole or in part, in its paper or electronic format, will be disclosed, used, modified or reproduced for any other person or organization, except in connection with these purposes stated.

Once again, thank you for your time and generosity in supporting EMCC.