**Quotes/Passages from Parts 1 and 2 of Happier**

**By Tal Ben-Shahar**

**Part 1 (Pages 3-82): What is Happiness?**

“Even though our generation---in most Western countries as well as in an increasing number of places in the East---is wealthier than previous generations, we are not happier for it.”

“…instead of focusing on cultivating self-discipline as a means towards change, we need to introduce rituals….Building rituals requires defining very precise behaviors and performing them at very specific times---motivated by deeply held values.”

“Initiating a ritual is often difficult, but maintaining it is relatively easy.”

“Incremental change is better than ambitious failure…Success feeds on itself.”

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

“Each night before going to sleep, write down at least five things that made or make you happy---things for which you are grateful.”

“Happy people live secure in the knowledge that the activities that bring them enjoyment in the present will also lead to a fulfilling future.”

“We learn to focus on the next goal rather than our present experience and chase the ever-elusive future our entire lives. We are not rewarded for enjoying the journey itself but for the successful completion of the journey…Once we arrive at our destination, once we attain our goal, we mistake the relief we feel for happiness…When we mistake these moments of relief for happiness, we reinforce the illusion that simply reaching our goals will make us happy…”

“Without a long-term purpose, devoid of challenge, life ceases to feel meaningful to us; we cannot find happiness if we exclusively seek pleasure and avoid pain.”

“…the best moments usually occur when a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.”

“When we fail to attain a desired outcome, we often extrapolate from that experience the belief that we have no control over our lives or over certain parts of it. Such thinking leads to despair.”

“Numerous studies show that happy individuals are successful across multiple life domains, including marriage, friendship, income, work performance, and health. The research illustrates that the relationship between happiness and success is reciprocal; not only can success—be it at work or love—contribute to happiness, but happiness also leads to more success.”

“A happy person enjoys positive emotions while perceiving her life as purposeful. The definition does not pertain to a single moment but to a generalized aggregate of one’s experiences: a person can endure emotional pain at times and still be happy overall.”

‘Emotions cause motion; they provide a motive that drives our action.”

“Happiness does not require a constant experience of ecstasy, nor does it require an unbroken chain of positive emotions…While the happy person experiences highs and lows, his overall state of being is positive.”

“Having goals or even reaching them does not guarantee that we are leading a purposeful existence. To experience a sense of purpose, the goals we set for ourselves need to be intrinsically meaningful.”

“The important thing is that we choose our purpose in accordance with our own values and passions rather than conforming to other’s expectations.”

“It is often difficult to sustain ourselves with the thought of a general purpose that lies far off in the horizon; we need a more specific and tangible sense that we are doing something meaningful next week, tomorrow, later today.”

“When thinking about the most meaningful life for ourselves, we must also consider our potential and how to make full use of our capacities.”

“The happy person defies the “no pain, no gain' formula: she enjoys the journey and dedicates herself to a purpose in which she believes attains a better outcome.”

“In order to be happy, having meaning in life is not enough. We need the experience of positive emotions; we need present and future benefit.”

“What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for some goal worthy of him. What he needs is not the discharge of tension at any cost, but the call of potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him.”

“Identifying the right activity, and then the right quantity for each activity, leads to the highest quality of life.”

“If we are always on the go, we are reacting to the exigencies of day-to-day life rather than allowing ourselves the space to create a happy life.”

“The least of things with meaning is worth more than the greatest of things without it (Carl Jung).”

“The belief that high income is associated with positive mood is widespread but illusory. People with above-average income are relatively satisfied with their lives but are barely happier than others in moment-to-moment experience, tend to be more tense, and do not spend more time in particularly enjoyable activities.”

“As larger numbers of people come to perceive material wealth as an end in itself, and, thus, as more individual members are unhappy, society as a whole nears a state of emotional bankruptcy.”

“People who set goals are more likely to succeed than people who do not. Having explicit objectives that are challenging and specific - with a clear timeline and performance criteria - leads to better performance.”

“Goals communicate to ourselves and to others the belief that we are capable of overcoming obstacles.”

“Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back; always ineffectiveness…the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would have not otherwise occurred…”

“The proper role of goals is to liberate us so that we can enjoy the here and now…If we do not know where we are going or even where we want to go, every fork in the road becomes a site of ambivalence…”

“People seeking greater well-being would be well advised to focus on the pursuit of (a) goals involving growth, connection, and contribution than goals involving money, beauty, and popularity and (b) goals that are interesting and personally important to them rather than goals they feel forced or pressured to pursue.”

“Self-concordant goals are those we pursue out of deep personal conviction and/or a strong interest…Generally, for goals to be self-concordant, the person has to feel that she chose them rather than they were imposed on her, that they stem from a desire to express part of herself rather than from the need to impress others.”

“Having sufficient money to provide for food, shelter, education, and other basic needs is essential to our well-being. However, beyond providing these basic needs, money or prestige need not---and if happiness is accepted as the ultimate currency, should not---be our central pursuits.”

“Have-tos given that they are not self-concordant, usually lack meaning or do not afford pleasure---they are often devoid of both. Want-tos, being self-concordant goals, often provide us with both meaning and pleasure.”

“The challenge is not to entirely get rid of have-tos but to reduce them and, as much as possible, replace them with want-tos. How happy I am depends to a large degree on the ratio between want-tos and have-tos in my life.”

“Life is short. In choosing a path, make sure you first identify those things you can do. Out of those, select the ones that you want to do. Then, reduce your choice further by zooming in on what you really want to do. Finally, select those things that you really, really want to do---and then do them.”

**Part 2 (Pages 83-124): Happiness Applied**

Two Models that illustrate how students are motivated:

1. Drowning model
   1. The desire to free ourselves of pain can be a strong motivator
   2. Once freed, we can easily mistake relief for happiness
2. Lovemaking model
   1. Both present and future benefits
      1. The many wonderful hours put into reading, researching, thinking, and writing can be looked upon as foreplay
   2. As in the drowning model, there is a desirable end goal, but you derive satisfaction from everything along the way

“In emphasizing achievements (which are tangible) over the cultivation of the love of learning (which is intangible), schools simultaneously reinforce the rat race mentality and stifle children’s emotional development. The rat racer learns that emotional gratification is secondary to the kind of achievements that others recognize and validate, that emotions only get in the way of success and are best ignored or suppressed.”

“Psychologists agree that IQ contributes only about 20% of the factors that determine success. A full 80% comes from other factors, including what is called emotional intelligence.”

“Flow…is a state in which one is immersed in an experience that is rewarding in and of itself, a state in which we feel we are one with the experience, in which action and awareness are merged…when in flow we enjoy both peak experience and peak performance.”

“When we are not distracted by all the other possible things we could be doing when we are wholeheartedly committed to our objective, we are free to devote ourselves fully to the task at hand.”

“There is a specific zone, the line between overexertion and under-exertion, where we not only perform at our best but also enjoy what we are doing. We reach this zone when our activities provide the appropriate level of challenge when the task at hand is neither too difficult nor too easy.”

“The consequences of too little struggle are no less detrimental than too much struggle…educators, especially parents, confuse struggle with pain; wanting to protect their children from pain, they cater to their children’s every wish and rescue them from every challenge.”

“When parents “help” their children circumvent hard work, it can lead to much unhappiness in the long run...”

“Unhappiness is also common among the rich because they are under increased pressure to feel happy…emotions are largely indifferent to material wealth.”

“Once basic needs – food, shelter, and adequate education – are met, not much distinguishes among different income groups in the realm of emotions.”

“When our vision of happiness is rigid – when it precludes the possibility that effort and struggle can be sources of the ultimate currency – we overlook some of the best prospects we have to create a fulfilling life.”

“We experience freedom when we choose a path that provides us both meaning and pleasure…”

“The right employer can create conditions that are conducive to happiness…First, the work should draw out a variety of talents and skills; second, the employee should complete the whole task, from beginning to end, rather than play a minor role in the big picture; finally, the employee should feel that his/her work has a significant impact on other…”

“…Courage is not about not having fear, but about having fear and going ahead anyway.”

‘Finding the right work – work that corresponds to both our passions and our strengths – can be challenging. We can begin the process by asking these three crucial questions – “What gives me meaning? What gives me pleasure? What are my strengths? – and noting the trends that emerge…”

“It is important for the manager to create, from the outset, a fit between those he/she hires and what the workplace has to offer.”

“When it comes to generating the ultimate currency, how we perceive the work can matter more than the work itself…”

“…what we choose to focus on largely determines whether or not we enjoy what we do – within a relationship, at school, and in the workplace…”

“Instead of focusing on what we can ‘live with,’ we should be thinking about what we can’t live without…”

“Having people about whom we care and who care about us to share our lives with – to share the events and thoughts and feelings in our lives – intensifies our experience of meaning, consoles us in our pain, deepens our sense of delight in the world…”

“…there are few stronger predictions of happiness than a close, nurturing, equitable, intimate, lifelong companionship with one’s best friend…”

“Talking about love simply as a feeling, as an emotion or a state of independent of reason, is reductive. Love cannot last without a rational foundation; just as positive emotions are insufficient for lasting happiness, so strong feelings, in and of themselves, are insufficient to sustain love…”

“…the only way to observe a person’s character is through its manifestations, through the person’s behavior, which is observable.”

“To be loved for our wealth, power, or fame is to be loved conditionally; to be loved for steadfastness, intensity, or warmth is to be loved unconditionally.”

“If someone truly loves me, he or she, more than anything else, would want me to express my core self and would draw out those qualities that make me who I really am.”

“While it is sometimes necessary to forgo present benefit for the sake of future goals, spending too much time living for the future will ultimately lead to a relationship’s failure.”

“Even within a relationship in which partners love each other and want to be together, happiness can be undermined by the belief that sacrifice is synonymous with love – that the greater the sacrifice, the deeper the love…It is important to note that standing by one’s partner in a time of need is not sacrifice; when we love someone, we often feel that helping that person is helping ourselves…this is the great complement of love: that our self-interest expands to encompass our partner.”

“When one of the partners is shortchanged in the ultimate currency – when she is constantly giving up meaning and pleasure so that he can have more of it – both partners end up less happy in the long run. In order to feel satisfied within a relationship, we have to feel the transaction is equitable.”

“…to cultivate genuine intimacy, the focus in a relationship must be a shift from the desire to be *validated* – seeking approval and praise – to the desire to be *known*…both partners must be willing to be known, and this means gradually disclosing their innermost selves – their desires, fears, fantasies, dreams – even when those do not show them in the most favorable light.”

“…the most important and challenging component of a happy relationship is not finding the one right person…but rather *cultivating the one chosen relationship*.”

Relationship expert John Gottman is able to predict the success of a relationship based on how partners describe their past. If partners focus on the happy aspects of their time together, if they remember the past fondly, the relationship is much more likely to thrive. Focusing on meaningful and pleasurable experiences – in the past and the present – fortifies the connection and improves the relationship overall…”