

The Happiness Solution Newsletter

September 2007



Quote of the Month

"Life is just a bowl of cherries."
-Les Brown

"Life is just one damned thing after another."
-Elbert Hubbard

Hmmmm. Might they both be true?

A Bit of Humor/Wisdom?

"Life is a rollercoaster. Try to eat a light lunch."
-David Schmaltz

Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire

This is taken from page 15 of Martin Seligman's book, *Authentic Happiness*. Fill it in before you look at the average scores.

In general, how happy or unhappy do you usually feel? Check the *one* statement below that best describes your average happiness.

- _____ 10. Extremely happy (feeling ecstatic, joyous, fantastic)
- _____ 9. Very happy (feeling really good, elated)
- _____ 8. Pretty happy (spirits high, feeling good)
- _____ 7. Mildly happy (feeling fairly good and somewhat cheerful)
- _____ 6. Slightly happy (just a bit above normal)

- _____ 5. Neutral (not particularly happy or unhappy)
- _____ 4. Slightly unhappy (just a bit below neutral)
- _____ 3. Mildly unhappy (just a bit low)
- _____ 2. Pretty unhappy (somewhat "blue," spirits down)
- _____ 1. Very unhappy (depressed, spirits very low)
- _____ 0. Extremely unhappy (utterly depressed, completely down)

Consider your emotions a moment further. On average, what percentage of the time do you feel happy? What percentage of the time do you feel unhappy? What percentage of the time do you feel neutral (neither happy nor unhappy)? Write down your best estimates, as well as you can, in the spaces below. Make sure the three figures add up to 100 percent.

On average:

The percent of time I feel happy _____%

The percent of time I feel unhappy _____%

The percent of time I feel neutral _____%

Based on a sample of 3,050 American adults, the average score (out of 10) is 6.92. The average score on time is happy, 54.13 percent; unhappy, 20.44 percent; and neutral, 25.43 percent.

Story of the Month

"Who's Running the Show?"

The noted author, Sylvia Boorstein, was at a gathering of meditation teachers in which each of them took turns sharing how they were and what was happening in their lives. Here's her account:

As I listened to all of us speaking in turn, I was struck by one particular thing. As people spoke, they said things like, "I'm pretty content" or "I'm doing all right" or "I'm pretty

happy.” And yet, we all told regular stories. People had regular lives with regular Sturm und Drang. People had relationship problems, problems with aging parents; someone's child had a very serious illness; someone else was dealing with a difficult kind of loss. And yet everyone said some variation of “I'm pretty much all right” or “I'm pretty content.” And it didn't mean that they weren't struggling with what was happening to them. It did not mean that they had transcended their stories and that they were fine because they felt no pain from them. They *were* struggling and often in quite a lot of pain and concern, but still, they were all right. I thought to myself as I looked around, “What we're all doing is we're all managing gracefully.”

How are you managing? Give it some thought. We're all managing in some way. Are you managing angrily? How about fearfully? Might you be managing sadly? Bitterly? Resentfully? What about regretfully or half-heartedly? There are so many possible ways to manage.

Here's my suggestion. If you're not managing gracefully or you're nowhere near that neighborhood, consider firing the manager. When sports franchises or big businesses are suffering, it is not uncommon to fire the manager and bring in a new manager with a completely different style of management. If you're managing poorly, you may need to replace yourself with a new you who manages gracefully, thus increasing the likelihood of your being happier.

As I consider what it means to manage gracefully, here are some principles to keep in mind:

- 1) Try to take things less personally. It's not just you who's struggling. Life is hard and is full of challenges. Everyone is dealing with demons and fighting some kind of battle.
- 2) Remember the proverbial, “This too shall pass.”
- 3) Treat yourself and others with compassion and kindness.
- 4) Continue to value life and feel gratitude, even if circumstances are difficult.

You've heard of anger management and stress management. Adhering to the four principles outlined above is grace management. Life will never be "just a bowl of cherries." There will always be pits, a few rotten cherries and the like. This is not Shangra La, but you can practice managing gracefully right here and right now.

[Nutrition Corner](#)

If you have a specific question on nutrition, I'd be happy to answer it. Email me at DrGettis@aol.com.

[Closing Thoughts](#)

As summer draws to a close and the autumn colors and coolness arrive, I feel and appreciate the natural rhythms of the universe and the beauty of every stage of life (okay, maybe not adolescence). As you read this, I hope you are happy and well. If by some chance you're not, I hope you get happier and healthier. I wish all of you long and happy lives.

The stories on the website have been updated. Check them out at:

www.thehappinesssolution.com

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