

Happiness at **WORK**

Maximizing your
Psychological
Capital for
SUCCESS

Jessica Pryce-Jones

"Jessica Pryce-Jones brings her years of experience to bear on this important topic and provides practical tools for achieving more happiness at work. The book is wonderfully written."

Robert Biswas-Diener

Contents

Prologue

In the Beginning was the H Word

Who's This Book For?

What's Its Underlying Approach?

What Was My Aim?

What's It All About?

What Are the Case Studies?

Who Are the Interviewees?

And Finally ... How Happy Are You?

Acknowledgments

1: Why Happiness at Work? Why Now?

It Started for Me When ...

Why Happiness at Work Matters

What Is Happiness at Work?

Happiness at Work: A Definition

Now's the Time for a New Approach

Understanding Real Value

Myth 1: Financial Capital Is All That Counts

Myth 2: Happiness is Job Satisfaction or Engagement in Another Guise

Myth 3: You're Born Happy or Sad and There's Nothing You Can Do

Are You Leading the Life You Choose or Managing the One You've Got?

2: The Research Journey

The Initial Seeds

First of All, Focus Groups ...

... Then One-to-One Interviews

And Hey Presto, the First Set of Findings

The Cold Hard Truth

Lose It or Use It

Building the Next Steps

Developing Outcome Measures

Launching the First iOpener People and

Performance Questionnaire: The iPPQ

The 5Cs

And the Happiness-Productivity Link

Ten Top Findings That Really Matter

Concluding the End of the Beginning

3: Contribution from the Inside-Out

Introduction to Contribution

Contribution: Inside-Out and Outside-In

Achieving Your Goals

Having Clear Objectives

Raising Issues That Are Important to You

Feeling Secure in Your Job

Conclusion to the Four Inside-Out Elements

4: Contribution from the Outside-In

Introduction

Being Listened To

Receiving Positive Feedback

Feeling Appreciated at Work
Being Respected by Your Boss
Concluding the Outside-In Elements
Concluding Contribution

5: Conviction

Introduction to Conviction
Being Motivated
Believing You're Efficient and Effective
Feeling Resilient When Times Are Tough
Perceiving That Your Work Has a Positive Impact on the World
Concluding Conviction

6: Culture

Introduction to Culture
Identifying Culture
Understanding Cultural Preference
Understanding the Elements of Culture
Relishing Your Job
Liking Your Colleagues
Appreciating the Values Your Organization Stands For
Having a Fair Ethos at Work
Being in Control of Your Daily Activities
Concluding Culture

7: Commitment

Introduction to Commitment

The Elements of Commitment
Doing Something Worthwhile
Being Interested in Your Job
Believing in the Vision of Your Organization
Feeling Strong Bursts of Positive Emotion
Concluding Commitment

8: Confidence

Introduction to Confidence
What Does Confidence Consist Of?
The Effects of Lack of Confidence ...
... and Excessive Confidence
Getting Things Done
Having High Self-Belief
Understanding Your Role Backwards and
Forwards
Concluding Confidence

9: Pride, Trust, and Recognition

Introduction to Pride, Trust, and
Recognition
How Pride and Trust Work Together But
Recognition is Separate
What is Pride?
Trust in Your Organization
Recognition for Your Achievements
Concluding Pride, Trust, and Recognition

10: Achieving Your Potential

Introduction to Achieving Your Potential
Feeling Energized
Using Your Strengths
Using Your Skills
Learning New Skills
Overcoming Challenges at Work
Concluding Achieving Your Potential

Happiness at Work A Conclusion

What Next?

References

1 Why Happiness at Work? Why Now?
2 The Research Journey
3 Contribution from the Inside-Out
4 Contribution from the Outside-In
5 Conviction
6 Culture
7 Commitment
8 Confidence
9 Pride, Trust, and Recognition
10 Achieving Your Potential
Happiness at Work: A Conclusion

Dramatis Personae

Index

Praise for *Happiness at Work*

"Jessica Pryce-Jones establishes happiness as more than a fleeting feeling; she argues that it is a critical resource for successful work and a good life. She brings her years of experience to bear on this important topic and provides practical tools for achieving more happiness at work. The book is wonderfully written."

*Robert Biswas-Diener, author of Positive Psychology
Coaching*

"We all want to be happy in every area of our lives, including work. This book offers the secret of finding happiness at work for us all, which in turn helps us to experience a more meaningful and healthy life."

*Lynne Franks, businesswoman and author of The Seed
Handbook*

"Illustrated with fascinating and diverse interviews, this book is understandable and easy to read. Jess Pryce-Jones has definitely created a great guide for anyone who wants to improve their working life."

*Cathy L. Greenberg, PhD, New York Times Best Selling
author of What Happy Working Mothers Know, and
Managing Partner of h2c Happy Companies Healthy People*

For David, Jack, Harry, and Kitty – with love and thanks

Happiness at Work

Maximizing Your Psychological
Capital For Success

Jessica Pryce-Jones

 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**
A John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., Publication

This edition first published 2010

© 2010 Jessica Pryce-Jones

Wiley-Blackwell is an imprint of John Wiley & Sons, formed by the merger of Wiley's global Scientific, Technical, and Medical business with Blackwell Publishing.

Registered Office

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate,
Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Offices

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19
8SQ, UK

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at <http://www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell>.

The right of Jessica Pryce-Jones to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book. This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available for this title

HB: 978-0-470-68942-4

PB: 978-0-470-74946-3

γνώθι σεαυτόν

Prologue

In the Beginning was the H Word

I am in a wood-paneled boardroom of a large multinational waiting to make a pitch. The coffee's delicious but I can't swallow a single mouthful: I'm too nervous. I'm waiting for the Chief Executive Officer and his acolytes to appear. They're late. My stomach lurches as I anticipate having to use the "H" word. It just feels too New-Agey to associate with the hardnumbered world of business.

Right now I know that the easier option facing me would be to talk about morale. But I also know both from my experience and our research that morale is not the right word for the issue we're there to address.

My mind flashes back to lots of conversations with executives, friends, and acquaintances, several of whom had roared with laughter when we'd talked about what we were doing. I'll never forget one Senior Vice-President putting his arm around my shoulder in a bar and saying condescendingly, "It will never catch on - don't waste your time, sweetie. It's a joke, an idea without a future."

Across the polished table the executives are now waiting. I take a deep breath and, going with it, I say, "We're here today to talk about happiness. Happiness at work." The words sound so flaky: "happy clappy" and "happy hippy" ping into my mind even though the numbers tell their own powerful story. I explain how people who are really happy at work are nearly twice as productive as those who are not, and what that might mean for this organization.

I glance at one of my colleagues nodding with encouragement. No-one else is. Everyone is polite but non-

committal as I end my pitch. And then the CEO asks everyone to leave but indicates that I should stay behind. The palms of my hands start to sweat gently and I'm expecting an ear-bashing for wasting his time. I try to breathe deeply and marshal my thoughts. I think to myself, "I'll just be polite and pretend to scribble down some comments he makes."

The heavy mahogany door shuts behind the last person and I am completely gobsmacked as he says, "When you said that word, 'happiness,' it really resonated with me. I'm so unhappy in my job, I hate what I do and I can barely bring myself to come in every day. Every time I see my Chairman I think about resigning. I really need to talk to you about all this."

This was the first sign that happiness mattered as a concept to be talked about in boardrooms, even when times were good. If he got it, offices, institutions, and businesses everywhere would too.

That was the start of the journey. You are the next part.

Who's This Book For?

This book is for you. If you've picked it up, maybe you'd like things to be better in some way at work. Perhaps you're looking for a starting point. Or wondering about a change of direction. It's written for you whatever kind of job you're in, and whatever level of seniority you're at. And it will help you if you are supporting other people who are not happy at work.

Reading this will tell you what happiness at work is, why it matters, and how you go about getting more of it. Plus it will explain what that means in terms of what we call psychological capital.

What's Its Underlying Approach?

The fundamental point of being happy at work is to enable you to achieve your full potential and to make the most of the highs and manage the lows on the way. There are some basic principles on which this book is based:

- You are responsible for your own levels of happiness.
- You have much more room for maneuver than you think.
- There is always a choice.
- Self-awareness is an essential first step.

What Was My Aim?

I wanted to write something based in recent research but that's practical and accessible too. Often research psychology takes 10-20 years to become mainstream, by which time things have changed and it's not as useful as it could have been. This book is based on up-to-the-minute findings, including ours.

It's written in a way that should work for any reader, whether you like to dip in and out, read end-to-end, or want to flick through for the stories and case studies. If you like lots of facts and references, you'll find the sources all in the back.

What's It All About?

Chapter 1 sets the scene with some key research findings; Chapter 2 outlines what we set out to do and explains the research journey; Chapters 3-8 tell you about the core of happiness at work – what we call the five components, or 5Cs: Contribution, Conviction, Culture, Commitment, and Confidence. Pride, Trust, and Recognition underpin all the

5Cs and you'll read about them in Chapter 9. Chapter 10 investigates achieving your potential.

You'll have noticed already that I'm using capital letters to describe, for example, each of the 5Cs. This is to highlight the fact that when I use these terms I'm using them not in a lay sense but specifically in the context of happiness at work interpreted through our research. So if you read them and think, "That's not precisely what I understand that word to mean," I'd agree with you. Meanwhile, in terms of happiness at work, I hope you'll agree with me.

What Are the Case Studies?

Chapters 3–8 contain mini-case studies to illustrate issues and how they play out in the real world. These case studies are real, come from our consulting and coaching practice, and, although identities are altered and businesses changed, they illustrate issues that we have helped others work through.

Who Are the Interviewees?

Over 80 people were interviewed for this book; from lawyers through to lamas their stories, observations, and experience will give you deeper insights than I ever could. For a little more about them take a look at the *dramatis personae* at the end.

And Finally ... How Happy Are You?

If you would like to find out exactly how happy you are at work before you start reading this book, complete our

questionnaire by going to www.iopener.com/ippqreport.
Within 24 hours you'll have received your free report.

I hope you enjoy what you read and, most importantly,
that it enables you to be happier at work.

Jessica Pryce-Jones
Oxford, October 2009

Acknowledgments

First I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my interviewees. It was a real privilege and a delight talking to all of them. Diane Scott, Barbara Fölscher, Kalpana Morris, Gulrez and Sarah Arshad, Nathaniel de Rothschild, Zvi Limon, and Boaz Keysar and Linda Ginzel variously opened their homes, contact books, and many doors for me: this book would have been very different without their help.

Stephan Chambers at Oxford (Saïd) Business School helped me move the project from an idea into a proposal; Claire Andrews's patient and supportive guidance saw it to fruition. Antony Read at Jaine J Brent Personal Management and Casting as well as Andy Peart, my agent and publisher, need a particular mention for taking me on; so does Brigitte Lee Messenger for holding my hand through the production process.

Meanwhile at iOpener, Julia Lindsay and David Solomon were wonderful listeners, thought clarifiers, and debaters. Dr. Laurel Edmunds, Simon Lutterbie, and Lucia Nyiriova crunched the numbers and helped me stay on track; Philippa Chapman, Melissa Sharp, Diane Lytollis, Ben Woodgates and Ian Hitchcock found time to offer invaluable input and help.

Nisha Pillai and Andrew Robshaw gave me really useful feedback especially in the early stages; Michael Gilson helped with reference checking at the end. I am also immensely grateful to Ciaron Murphy and Alan Kemp, both of whom sharpened up my thinking at exactly the right moments.

I'd also like to thank friends and colleagues at London Business School over many years, especially Michael Hay, Lynn Hoffman, JoEllyn Prouty McLaren, Mike Nowlis, and

Lorraine Vaun Davis. Test-driving ideas on participants and students has been more helpful than they'll ever know.

I do want to make one thing plain: although this book was a big collaborative effort, any mistakes are of course mine and mine alone.

Finally, I'd like to dedicate this to my husband David and children Jack, Harry, and Kitty: without your love, teasing, cooking, and back-up I'd still be stuck in the prologue.

1

Why Happiness at Work? Why Now?

It Started for Me When ...

I was in my early twenties and I'd landed what I thought was a dream job. An interesting financial institution, well-paid and in a prestigious location.

I hated every minute of it.

As I walked up the marble staircase on the first day, I knew I should have been excited. Thrilled to be there, expecting to grab the world and launch a successful career. But my head, heart, and guts were all screaming that I was doing the wrong thing.

Every day my stomach lurched with the dread of going into work. My office was located in a small basement with no windows. My boss didn't know what he wanted and would tell me to do something only to contradict himself a few hours later. One day his boss sent us all a memo which said, "When I come out of my office I expect to see your heads bent. When your heads are bent you're working and when they are not, you're not. This is not a holiday camp." For the 11 months that I lasted in that role, I was miserable.

My unhappiness at work spilt over into my personal life too. I was permanently exhausted and moody. One day trying to keep a cool head, I went for a run at lunchtime. As I pounded round the square under the lime trees, this thought popped into my head. "I wonder if I could get a little bit run over by a bus? Because if I could get a little bit run over, I

could take three weeks out and not have to be here.” Once I’d had that revelation I knew I had no option. I had to find something else to do.

Hunting for the next job, reality set in. I wondered if it was ever possible to achieve happiness at work. I’d had an education I hadn’t much enjoyed, so didn’t really see why a job should be any different. Then I thought about what it might be like to hate most of my daytime hours for the next 45 years of my life. It was too ghastly to contemplate.

But were my expectations unreasonable? Was it possible to be happy at work?

Why Happiness at Work Matters

If you’re not concerned about happiness at work, you should be. Because there are huge downsides when you don’t have it and upsides when you do: you know that without me telling you. If you’ve ever hated your job I’d put hot money that you knew what the negative effects were in terms of your effort, energy, and enthusiasm. But what about the upsides of being happy?

If you’re happy at work you:

- Get promoted faster.
- Earn more.
- Get more support.
- Generate better and more creative ideas.
- Achieve your goals faster.
- Interact better with colleagues and bosses.
- Receive superior reviews.
- Learn more.
- Achieve greater success.
- Are healthier.

This last benefit is a big one. The higher your happiness levels, the stronger your immune system. You’ll be less

affected by stress hormones, develop 50 percent more antibodies to flu vaccines, be less likely to get heart disease, diabetes or have lung problems. In fact happiness looks as if it makes the same difference to your health as smoking or not smoking does. And that may add more than a decade to your overall life span.

And here's what our research has found. When we compare the unhappiest and happiest people at work, we've found that if you're really happy, you:

- Are 180 percent more energized.
- Are 180 percent happier with life.
- Are 155 percent happier in your job.
- Are 108 percent more engaged at work.
- Love your job 79 percent more.
- Are 50 percent more motivated.
- Have 40 percent more confidence.
- Achieve your goals 30 percent more.
- Contribute 25 percent more.

Too good to be true? Got it all back-to-front? Maybe you're thinking that all these marvelous things lead to happiness at work. Not so. Happiness leads to all these positive outcomes, not the other way round.

Happiness pays especially when you're under pressure. It's a valuable resource which not only generates career success but differentiates you from your colleagues too.

Now you know why it's so vital.

What Is Happiness at Work?

Philosophers, commentators, and religious leaders have been arguing for millennia about what happiness actually is. Is it an end in itself or a byproduct of what you do? Does it disappear if you focus on it? Is it part of who you are, what you do, or where you find yourself in life? Is it about the

journey and the goal, as Aristotle says, or the high points on the way, as Epicureans argue? Or perhaps it's using reasoning to overcome negative emotions like the Stoics believed? Maybe it's the more Buddhist way of detaching and getting over it?

There's one thing that happiness at work absolutely isn't – as pop psychology has it. It isn't about always smiling, thinking positively, or about being in a permanently sunny mood: that's patently absurd. Nor does it work.

Based on our research as well as years of consulting and coaching inside large and small organizations, we've found that happiness at work can't be tied to any one single approach. It incorporates everything I've just mentioned. And it's not something you do on your own, you need others to help you achieve it.

It involves a mix of high moments accompanied by some low ones, a journey in which you grow and flourish, and at the same time overcome your negative emotions. And you can do that best when you use insight and reason to help you. Sometimes the tasks, resources, outcomes, and time-frames are clear and comfortable, sometimes they're not. But the tough stuff results in learning. Because that's when you have to struggle to perform at your best, or make a breakthrough in what you're doing. So you extend yourself and fulfill your potential. It's hard and takes time. But moving from struggle to success – and repeating that cycle – is how you grow, develop, and achieve more.

It's how you become happy at work.

Happiness at Work: A Definition

Here's what we think it is.

Happiness at work is a mindset which allows you to maximize performance and achieve your potential. You do

this by being mindful of the highs and lows when working alone or with others.

There are three important points to this definition of happiness at work.

The first key to happiness at work is your approach and being aware of it. And that awareness needs to extend not just to the lows, which are obvious, but to the highs as well. Being mindful allows you to have perspective on a situation, which means you'll manage it better.

Secondly, broadly speaking the "Western" cultural approach holds that life and work are all about the individual not the group, while the "Eastern" approach is exactly the opposite. Our definition of happiness focuses not only on the individual but also on their role within a group because that's where most work takes place.

Thirdly, it's important to recognize the "yin and yang" effect. Growth of any sort involves accepting that discomfort and difficulty are part of the process. Happiness at work doesn't mean that you have to feel good 100 percent of the time. Or that you shouldn't feel the usual negative emotions you do at work. Like anger, frustration, disappointment, failure, jealousy, or shock. Those are the emotions that will propel you to take different actions to get back on your happiness track. They're not to be avoided but actively explored on your career journey. Just like the times when you feel so stretched that you aren't sure how you'll cope. Those are the moments that help you achieve your potential. The times that you look back at with a sense of accomplishment and achievement because you know you can deliver.

For example, I took part as an expert in a BBC TV series called "Making Slough Happy." Our aim was to see if we could improve the happiness levels of a small industrial town just outside London. The town's only claim to fame was that a well-known comedy, *The Office*, was filmed there.

It was an awful project to deliver. The hours were immensely long and the pressure to perform was huge. Not to mention the tension both on and off camera. Yet on the last day, filming at the huge festival that everyone taking part had organized, I was really pleased I'd done it. I'd experienced the fact that happiness is about stretching yourself to achieve your potential and you only do that by doing difficult things.

So do the highs matter? Of course they do. The moments when you make a breakthrough, have a brainwave, connect with someone, or simply experience a strong positive emotion are important. These are the internal signals that you're doing the right thing. You're on track. And if you don't have enough of them, it's time to reconsider what you're doing. Right now. If you continue to put up with what you've always had, that's what you'll always get. And if we all do that, nothing will change.

And the world of work needs something different.

Now's the Time for a New Approach

Over the past few years a plethora of happiness books has burst on to the market. Psychologists, philosophers, and even the Dalai Lama have been adding to the literature. And although many of them disagree about how to build happiness, everyone agrees it's worth a go. But most of them were written when the world economy looked stable. When the money-go-round felt secure.

More recently confidence has been shaken and trust battered. Many of the global business values, theories, practices, and processes have been called into question. And more than ever leaders and employees are looking for answers to tough questions. Like: "What should our

organization stand for?” “How do we reward employees?” “How do we find clarity in the complexity?” “What does sustainable mean in the largest sense?” “How do we build a future?” “What are we expecting from our people?”

The answers to these questions will shape the organizations that survive and thrive over the next decade and more. They’ll affect our working practice and the global economy as a result.

So how do we find the answers? We need to make a fundamental shift to work that brings together some of the key recent findings in organizational research, psychology, neurology, behavioral economics, psycholinguistics, and anthropology. To create new models, new practices, and a new approach.

To bring that about everyone’s got to be involved. Regardless of sector, nationality, product, service, role, or status. The only way to do this is to galvanize people around something that’s practical, that’s compelling for individuals as well as organizations, and that produces real results. Results of real and long-lasting value.

Understanding Real Value

All organizations talk about “added value” and look for ways to measure it too. But when you hear this term the only aspect that’s being addressed is the financial one. It’s part of what’s been an obsessive focus on share-holder value. I know that executive directors have a fiduciary duty to deliver this. But it’s idiotic to suppose that it’s a strategy: it’s not. It’s the outcome of a strategy.

By the way, looking for value beyond financial value isn’t new thinking. Frederick Taylor, one of the first and toughest of management consultants who founded the Efficiency Movement, in his 1912 testimony before US Congress cautioned against putting financial objectives at the heart of

an organization's mission and purpose. He believed that sound financial performance is the consequence of good business. When even Jack Welch, the former General Electric Chief Executive who ushered in the reign of shareholder value, thinks that "shareholder value is the dumbest idea in the world," you know an era is under question.

Now of course capital matters. The question is what kind. Because the organizations and individuals who will be most successful over the next decade are people who'll be actively pursuing a new sort of capital. The kind of capital that has been overlooked in the past which benefits the many, not just the few: psychological and social capital.

Myth 1: Financial Capital Is All That Counts

I'd like to be really clear about one thing. Financial value is crucial to every organization. But driving any workplace from this standpoint alone is putting the cart before the horse. Look at it in simple accounting terms. If you've ever read a set of accounts, you'll know that goodwill is worth something. It's an asset. But the goodwill that's embedded within individuals and groups is also a valuable resource that needs to be accounted for too. And nurtured because it's precious. Financial value is reduced or increased as a direct consequence of the relationships that individuals have with themselves and with others at work. Moreover, it's something that every individual and their organization benefits from. People come first. For sound financial reasons: how they feel has a direct effect on the bottom line.

Here's how it works.



Human capital

Human capital isn't new; it's a term that was coined by Adam Smith in 1776. What it refers to is an individual's skills, talents, education, experience, and knowledge which in today's economy need constant upgrading. Human capital is an essential component for delivering financial value because the sum of it enables any organization to deliver on its strategy. That means it's important for every workplace to constantly think about how it manages its human capital.

But you can't optimize human capital without two other things first. Social and psychological capital. Social capital leads people to want to be in a group and learn from it, while psychological capital gives them the wherewithal to do so.

Social capital

Social capital is a multilayered and dynamic concept that takes time to build. It consists of:

- Relationships and connections you have with others.
- A group, community, or society that you belong to.
- Interactions that flow from all the various relationships.

High social capital means you have shared values, goals, aims, and aspirations which in turn lead to common ways of thinking, understanding, and acting. You know it's in place when you have good working relationships; that means you'll be willing to take a risk within a group, commit yourself to its members, and in turn you can rely on them for their support. And they on you.

But you'll only really contribute to that group when you have strong psychological capital.

Psychological capital

Psychological capital encompasses the mental resources that you build when things go well and draw on when things go badly. These resources include resilience, motivation, hope, optimism, self-belief, confidence, selfworth, and energy. All of which are key elements of happiness in a working context.

If you don't have a high level of psychological capital because you aren't happy at work, you'll only be going through the motions.

Yet very few people are aware of this.

In doing over 80 interviews for this book, I've found only two people who knew the term psychological capital. However, I'm certain that within the next ten years everyone will be talking about, measuring, and managing it too. Because it makes such an enormous difference not only to how you feel, but also to what you do.

Despite the fact that standard economic theory takes no account of feelings, emotions really do matter. They affect your personal investment, effort, and therefore your output too. And that of those around you. Psychological capital matters particularly in a pressured and stressed service economy which requires motivation, creative thinking, and perseverance, all of which happier employees have more of.

In other words, organizations do better when employees feel good about themselves and the colleagues they work with. Like financial capital this takes time, effort, and energy to build. Unlike financial capital it endures much better when institutions and markets crash and burn.