

## How to be happy: advice from an 80 year old man

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You don't have to practice all of them at one go...

Pick up 3 at a time and practice them for a week and notice...

1. Have a firm handshake.
2. Look people in the eye.
3. Sing in the shower.
4. Own a great stereo system.
5. If in a fight, hit first and hit hard.
6. Keep secrets.
7. Never give up on anybody. Miracles happen everyday.
8. Always accept an outstretched hand.
9. Be brave. Even if you're not, pretend to be. No one can tell the difference.
10. Whistle.
11. Avoid sarcastic remarks.
12. Choose your life's mate carefully. From this one decision will come 90 per cent of all your happiness or misery.
13. Make it a habit to do nice things for people who will never find out.
14. Lend only those books you never care to see again.
15. Never deprive someone of hope; it might be all that they have.
16. When playing games with children, let them win.
17. Give people a second chance, but not a third.
18. Be romantic.
19. Become the most positive and enthusiastic person you know.
20. Loosen up. Relax. Except for rare life-and-death matters, nothing is as important as it first seems.
21. Don't allow the phone to interrupt important moments. It's there for our convenience, not the caller's.
22. Be a good loser.
23. Be a good winner.
24. Think twice before burdening a friend with a secret.
25. When someone hugs you, let them be the first to let go.
26. Be modest. A lot was accomplished before you were born.
27. Keep it simple.
28. Beware of the person who has nothing to lose.
29. Don't burn bridges. You'll be surprised how many times you have to cross the same river.
30. Live your life so that your epitaph could read, No Regrets

31. Be bold and courageous. When you look back on life, you'll regret the things you didn't do more than the ones you did.
32. Never waste an opportunity to tell someone you love them.
33. Remember no one makes it alone. Have a grateful heart and be quick to acknowledge those who helped you.
34. Take charge of your attitude. Don't let someone else choose it for you.
35. Visit friends and relatives when they are in hospital; you need only stay a few minutes.
36. Begin each day with some of your favourite music.
37. Once in a while, take the scenic route.
38. Send a lot of Valentine cards. Sign them, 'Someone who thinks you're terrific.'
39. Answer the phone with enthusiasm and energy in your voice.
40. Keep a note pad and pencil on your bed-side table. Million-dollar ideas sometimes strike at 3 a.m.
41. Show respect for everyone who works for a living, regardless of how trivial their job.
42. Send your loved ones flowers. Think of a reason later.
43. Make someone's day by paying the toll for the person in the car behind you.
44. Become someone's hero.
45. Marry only for love.
46. Count your blessings.
47. Compliment the meal when you're a guest in someone's home.
48. Wave at the children on a school bus.
49. Remember that 80 per cent of the success in any job is based on your ability to deal with people.
50. Don't expect life to be fair...
51. My personal one: at the end of each day write down, as many as possible, what you are thankful for, doesn't matter how small or big it is – you'll discover your life is full of happiness...

**Given below is an extract I picked up from the net... life story of Mo Gawdat and his formula for happiness...**

How do you rediscover [happiness](#) when a tragic event has happened in your life?

It's a question that would probably be met with the suggestion of therapy, or allowing for the passage of time.

However, one man says he has come up with a mathematical solution. Mo Gawdat was miserable for several years in his twenties and thirties despite his high-flying job, income and happy family unit. Determined to turn this around Gawdat, an engineer by trade who is now an executive at Google, formulated an equation for happiness.

A couple of years later, he put this to the test when his 21-year-old son Ali died unexpectedly in what should have been a routine operation.

He has now shared the secrets to his formula for being happy – no matter what life throws at you – in his new book *Solve For Happy*.

“My theory was I was born happy and the more I engaged in life the more unhappy I became,” he told *The Independent*. “I was very unhappy, I was complaining about everything and I was constantly trying to control the world down to a tee,” he says. “I bought cars, spent money and tried to fill the gap in my soul in any way and it was just not working.”

A trader in the stock market in Dubai where he made a “ton of money” and became the owner of a “huge house and a big car”, whatever Gawdat bought was never enough. He later became an engineer, he was also married to his college sweetheart Nibet (from whom he has since divorced but calls her his best friend in the world) and with two adult children, still he was miserable.

Deciding to read his way out of the mental rut he was in, this did not work despite the fact he was an avid reader. As an engineer, Gawdat prefers to be pragmatic in his approach to finding solutions so he found it difficult to relate to wellness and self-care manuals.

From this epiphany moment, Gawdat says it took him roughly seven and a half years before he formulated his solution. The first step was to define the problem and figure out what happiness was.

He firstly listed “data points” of absolutely everything in life – no matter how big or small – that makes him happy and then attempted to find a common trend between them, this could range from a good cup of coffee to your children smiling to your boss being nice to you at work.

“The one thing that is common across all those moments, put simply, is that we are happy when life seems to be going our way,” he explains.

Then came the equation: Happiness is equal to or greater than the events of your life minus your expectation of how life should be.

Despite acknowledging your happy list, the reason we are then often unhappy is because we are trained to look at the events of our life in a way that is not truthful leading Gawdat to determine the '675 model'.

The model states that there are six illusions that blur our view of the real world: thought (believing you are your thoughts), self (believing you are your body, emotions, beliefs, name, achievements, family or possessions), knowledge, time (thinking too much about the past or future), control and fear.

Next, there are seven blind spots that make us miss the truth when we look at life: filtering, assuming, hunting, memories, labels, emotion and exaggerating. When we factor this into the equation, this is often how we see life events therefore blurring what those events actually mean.

“Fixing the six and the seven gets you to remove the reasons for your unhappiness,” he explains. “When you do that long enough, you start to realise it is silly because life mostly meets our expectations.”

Finally, there are five truths which we must accept: that now, change, love and death are all real as is the last truth: grand design, the belief that nothing is random and life generally follows patterns, laws, rules or science.

By considering the five truths, even if life events are harsh, they are not unexpected because they are simply the truths of life.

“When you focus on these five truths, you feel happy most of the time,” Gawdat says.

Death was the fifth truth Gawdat added to his equation after losing Ali when he experienced a turning point in processing his death.

Due to the circumstances of Ali’s death, senior officials in Dubai that Gawdat knew asked if he would mind them requesting an autopsy.

“Nibet said in her own very wise way, as always, ‘Will it bring Ali back?’” This question came four hours later [after Ali’s death] and we were completely anchored in reality. The question made it so clear that Ali is gone and never coming back, even if we close our doors down and cry for the rest of our lives Ali is still never coming back.

“That realisation is truly at the core of every happy person you have ever come across. That, sometimes, life is harsh but in those times there is nothing you can do to reverse the harshness. The only value that your incessant value brings is it makes you suffer.”

Gawdat says there is a difference between pain and suffering (and “losing a child is incredibly painful”). Pain is what protects you from further suffering and is the “body’s mechanism to keep us alive”. Suffering, on the other hand, is not useful, instead, it is a cycle where a thought just causes further suffering by feelings of guilt. It is not useful thinking. Pain should be enough of a motivation to change and improve your happiness rather than the endless cycle of suffering, Gawdat says.

“The minute I feel the pain of Ali’s death, which I feel every time I miss him, I think what can I do about it? How can I make the world slightly better even though Ali is not in it?”

Gawdat says everyone can take on this approach, however, acknowledges for people with depression and mental health problems it is definitely not that simple.

“Depression and mental health problems are beyond my skill set. We have to acknowledge that mental health is very real. I don’t think of it as a defect: It is just a different wiring. If you take a piece of code written for your iPhone and put it on your Android it will not work.”

For everyone else, part of the problem with achieving happiness comes down to the fact we spend too much time hung up on the future so we almost create unhappiness for ourselves.

“If you have the brain power to worry about the future, by definition that means nothing is bad now and that everything is okay. Most of the cycles that make us sad are focused on the past and the future.”

One thing to bear in mind when following Gawdat’s formula is that you have to want to become happier: “If you’re cool with being unhappy there is nothing I can do for you. You have to make the choice.”

It might be difficult at first but in Gawdat’s optimistic manner he explains it becomes easier likening it to going to the gym for the first time in a bid to get fitter. After the muscle pain of the first few days, you become used to it and soon enough it might just become part of your daily routine.

**Thank you**

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If you found it useful do sent me a note to [ajav@ajavgomes.com](mailto:ajav@ajavgomes.com)