

Workout 2 ▪ Writing a Recipe for Happiness

Prompt, Exercise & Practice for *Happiness*

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"He who lives well is blessed and happy." —Socrates

"Long is the path that leads to happiness through words alone. But the path that leads to happiness through the practice of daily deeds is short." —Crates of Thebes

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In Workout 2, we'll write a recipe (or formula) for happiness. The big question, then, is what, exactly, adds up to happiness.*

If you've done Happiness Workout 1, "Doing Intentional Activity," you already know that "doing intentional activity" is essential, as well as practice. But what else?

In thinking about our answer to this question, we would do well to keep in mind a few points. The first comes from the Stoic philosopher Epictetus: "People want things that produce happiness, but they search for

them in the wrong place." Stated positively, we must look for the ingredients of happiness in the right place. The second point is from the poet Dionysus Chalcus (the Bronze), reminding us that there is nothing "better, . . . from beginning to end, . . . than that which a man longs for most" (to reformulate his point). Yet we must keep in mind Isocrates' response to this basic truth that "happiness equals the satisfaction of desire." For Isocrates, "happiness is not merely the ability to do whatever we want." Rather, as Menedemus puts it, "It is a much greater good to long for what is proper."

*You'll find some ideas from the ancient Greeks below or in the reading "Happiness Formulas," which is in the Cave Library (under Happiness). It is chapter 2 of the Cave's *Happiness: What the Ancient Greeks Thought and Said about Happiness*.

PROMPT ▪ HAPPINESS INGREDIENTS ▪ With the above points in mind, what ingredients make for happiness? In answering the question, first consider **general** ingredients for "all or most people." Choose five and describe each. Then identify **specific** "you" ingredients for *you*. Again, choose five and describe each. For quotations offering ideas from the ancient Greeks from the Cave's *Happiness*, see below.

General "all or most people" ingredients for happiness ▪ Name and describe five things or activities (things most people can do and practice) that will generally make most people happy (or happier). These are your five general "all or most people" ingredients.

Ingredient 1: _____

Ingredient 2: _____

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Ingredient 3: _____

Ingredient 4: _____

Ingredient 5: _____

Specific “you” ingredients for happiness ▪ Name five things or activities (things you can do and practice) that will make you happy (or happier). These are your five specific “you” ingredients.

Ingredient 1: _____

Ingredient 2: _____

Ingredient 3: _____

Ingredient 4: _____

Ingredient 5: _____

“He who lives well is blessed and happy.” —Socrates

Quotations Offering Ideas for Your Happiness Recipe

The following are quotations offering ingredients (or elements) from Chapter 2, "Happiness Formulas," from the Cave's *Happiness: What the Ancient Greeks Thought and Said about Happiness*

"Lord Zeus, may Telemachus be happy among men, and may everything happen as he desires in his heart." —Homer (the hero Odysseus is praying for his son, Telemachus)

"Happiness as a whole is made up of particular pleasures." —Diogenes Laertius (stating the Cyrenaic philosopher Aristippus' position)

"My dear heart is always warmed whenever I listen to the aulos sounding its charming voice. I'm happy drinking well and singing along with the aulos. And I'm happy holding the pleasant-sounding lyre in my hands." —Theognis of Megara

"Pleasure and pain are two streams released by nature to flow. Whoever draws the right amount from them, at the right place and time, is happy." —Plato (the Athenian is speaking)

"I do not see how someone will live a happy life if he really must measure it by an excess of pleasure." —Teles the Cynic

"Riches mixed together with success bring the highest happiness." —Sappho of Lesbos

"Of all the means that are procured by wisdom to ensure blessed happiness throughout the whole of life, by far the most important is the acquisition of friendship." —Epicurus

"Happy is the man who beholds the mysteries at Eleusis before going beneath the earth. He knows the end of life and its god-given beginning." —Pindar

"If a man believes that his good and his interest is found only in those things that are free from hindrance and in his own power, he will be free, flowing well with a good life, happy. . . . But if he believes that his good and his interest are found in externals and in things that are not in the power of his will, then he will necessarily be hindered, impeded, and a slave to those who have power over the things that he wonders at and fears." —Epictetus

"Happiness comes from a healthy mind and heart." —Aeschylus (the chorus is speaking)

"We Cynics say that the good and excellent man, and no other man, is called happy."
—Crates of Thebes

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EXERCISE • HAPPINESS RECIPE • Now that you’ve identified five general “all or most people” ingredients and five specific “you” ingredients, **chose three** from each list and **add them together** for a combined happiness recipe.

MY HAPPINESS RECIPE

General “all or most people” ingredients

Ingredient 1: _____

Ingredient 2: _____

Ingredient 3: _____

Specific “you” ingredients

Ingredient 1: _____

Ingredient 2: _____

Ingredient 3: _____

PRACTICE • ADD, STIR, COOK • You now have a happiness recipe. But you’re not finished. If you’ve ever cooked anything, you know that finding the recipe is the easy part. At least *easier* than what follows.

Now you have to add the ingredients together, stir and cook them (as it were).

Which is to say you have to **practice**.

Why? Because, as the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus put it, we have to “practice those things that produce happiness.” Why? Because, as another ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle said, “Happiness is an activity.”

Happiness is something we *do*. It’s not something we merely talk or think about.

So let’s get to it. *Practice. Practice. Practice.*

As always, **evaluate** how things are going (use the space below).

Ask yourself if you are happier after you’ve enacted your happiness recipe for some time. Focus on how you are doing (acting) instead of how you are feeling. It is the *doing* that is happiness (or so believed many ancient Greeks). What is going well? What requires modification? What do you need to add or subtract?

Practice - Practice - Practice

Evaluation

3 ACTION POINTS

- **Ponder** what makes for happiness. **Consider** general ingredients for “all or most people” and specific “you” ingredients for you. **Describe** each ingredient.
- **Write** a happiness recipe adding the general “all or most people” ingredients to the specific “you” ingredients. The result will be “My Happiness Recipe.”
- **Practice** your happiness recipe, knowing that “we must practice those things that produce happiness” since “happiness is an activity.” **Evaluate** how your practice is going.

Extra Space for Answers and Journaling

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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