

HAPPY HABITS

ENERGIZE YOUR CAREER AND LIFE IN 4 MINUTES A DAY

InspiredWork™



VICKI MORRIS

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"Vicki Morris helps you chunk positive psychology habits into manageable sizes to help you create and sustain positive change."

- Shawn Achor,
happiness researcher and NYTimes bestselling
author of *The Happiness Advantage*

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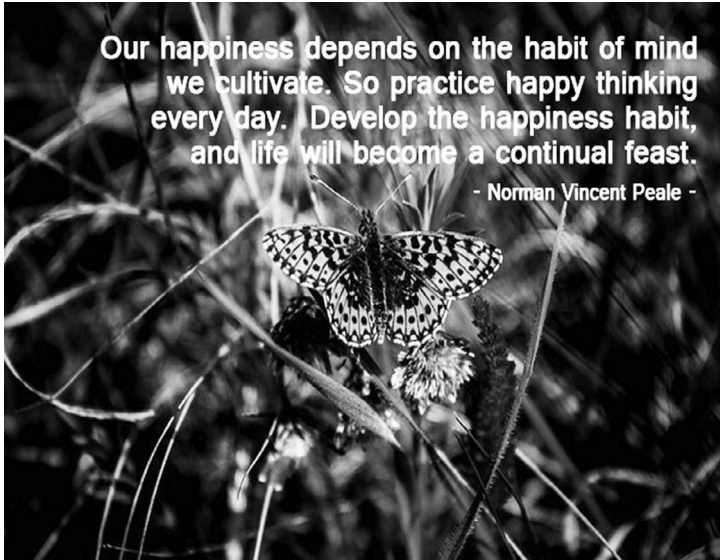
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING HAPPY HABITS What They Are and Who Needs Them



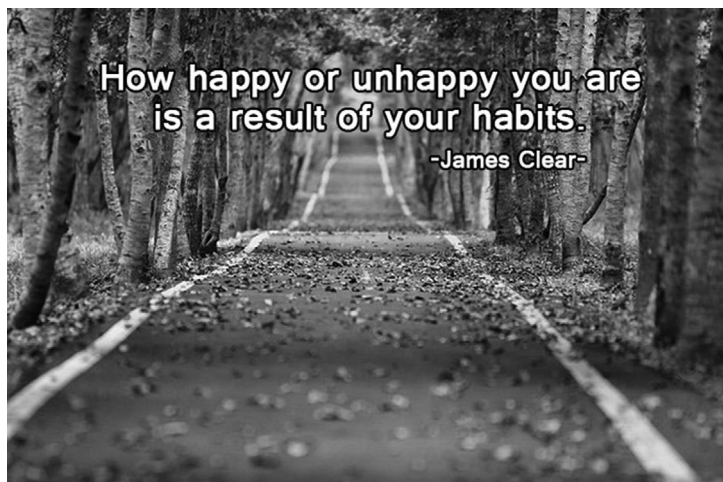
Are you unhappy with your work? Disappointed with the way your life is unfolding? Maybe you've been laid off and no longer feel confident. Or maybe you picked up this book because you'd like to experience more moments of happiness and peace every day.

This book is meant for anyone who wants to be happier in their career and life, especially professionals going through a job transition, career change or anyone at a crossroads, who could use a happiness boost—and let's face it, just about all of us could stand to be a little happier. In these

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pages, you will learn what I call Happy Habits—quick, daily practices that raise your energy and put you in a positive frame of mind. Surprising as it seems, these simple techniques have been proven to raise your happiness level if practiced routinely over a period of eight weeks.

I would like to share Happy Habits with as many people as possible because life is too short to be unhappy. Wouldn't it be great if everyone could truly enjoy their careers and find fulfillment in life? Imagine how much better the entire world would be, if we each adopted Happy Habits for just four minutes a day.



WHY HABITS?

We all know habits are things we do every day, without even thinking about them. But did you know that 40% of your day is run by habits—those learned behaviors you do on autopilot? And did you know habits are much easier

to change than genetic and other tendencies? Developing new habits is the best way to change your career and life for the better because you do them every day. As John C. Maxwell, author of *Failing Forward* says, “You’ll never change your life until you change something you do daily. The secret of your success is found in your daily routine.” For all of these practical reasons, this book teaches habits as the way to bring greater happiness into a person’s life and career.

WHAT ARE HAPPY HABITS?

Happy Habits are quick and easy practices you can do daily to raise your energy and achieve greater happiness in your career and in your life in general. This book includes forty one-minute Happy Habits that you can implement over the next eight weeks, using this book as a guide. Each week, you’ll learn three new techniques—I call them “mini-energizers”—that you will commit to doing every day, for a total of four minutes daily. By the end of the eight-week period, these techniques will have turned into habits, and your improved happiness level will be measurable. Later in the book, you will learn the science behind Happy Habits and how to create your own individual Happy Habits Plan. But now, I would like to share with you my personal experiences and why I wrote this book.

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

I wrote *Happy Habits* because I wanted to be happier, and when I managed to create a fast, easy, and practical way to

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be happier, I wanted to share it with everyone. Here is the story of what led me to write this book. I hope sharing it is helpful to you.

Although I was a happy child, I admit that over the course of my life and career I was deeply affected by a stream of setbacks and disappointments. It often felt like I would take one step forward and then life would send me one step back. This was particularly true with my career. Although I had successes as a marketing executive in the high tech industry, I also had to go through sixteen fulltime job and consulting transitions in twenty-five years.

Sometimes it seemed like I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. For example, I voluntarily left Sun Microsystems after five years of annual promotions and success to become a VP of marketing for a startup. But that was just at the beginning of the dot-com bust, and I quickly went through a series of ten companies that kept going under or downsizing. I became truly tired of hearing, “It’s nothing personal, but we are eliminating your consulting project/closing the office/selling the division/being acquired and shutting down.”

During all of these transitions, I learned not only how to find a job and even create a job, but I also learned that it is critical to raise your energy and maintain positive energy throughout the job search process in order to succeed. It’s quite simple. Managers (including CEOs) want to hire

happy, positive, can-do people. Through all of these experiences, I did pick up some really useful ways to raise energy. But honestly, I had not figured out a way to have work/life balance or permanently sustain feeling happy.

And then one day I got a wake-up call. It happened when someone I dearly love asked me, “Why are you always so negative? Why can’t you just be happy?” Their comment really hurt and I chewed on the hurt for some time before accepting that it was true. Somewhere along the way in life, I had become negative—a person who chronically complained and was trying to protect myself from life. In my mind, I was always trying to figure out how to make the future better. But in the here and now, I was disappointed.

With further reflection, I came to the realization that I was tired of feeling disappointed. Deep down, I knew it was time to press the “reset” button. Not only did I crave a career that would inspire my soul, but I wanted to be happier in general—in all parts of my life. I needed a way to fill my days with happiness and fulfillment, something I could do that would make my career and life consistently better.

As a result, I spent a great deal of time doing some soul searching. I read some renowned books on happiness, including Marci Shimoff’s *Happy for No Reason*, Shawn Achor’s *Before Happiness*, Chade-Meng Tan’s *Search Inside Yourself*, Rhonda Byrne’s *The Magic*, and Gretchen Rubin’s

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The Happiness Project. Then, I had the good fortune to attend a presentation by Stanford University's BJ Fogg, where he recommended implementing tiny, methodized habits to create happiness. His habit-creation methodology seemed promising, and combined with other happiness practices I'd learned, I hoped that this combination could really work. Who better to test it on than myself?

So, I got to it. I tested Dr. Fogg's habit-creation method with proven happiness practices—and things fell into place. The small, quick, little techniques seemed insignificant on the surface, but I soon found they unlocked a world of joy in my life. An unprecedented balance was struck in which I started my own company and found peace in the other areas of my life as well. Everything came together before my eyes, and I credit it to the techniques I embraced that allowed me to return to my natural state of happiness.

Now that I have my own career-transformation company, I feel compelled to share this knowledge with other job seekers and people pursuing career transitions. As a career-transformation coach and founder of InspiredWork™, I understand that raising your happiness level is the critical first step to finding or creating work you love. So this book is—first and foremost—written for anyone who is looking for a job or changing careers and needs inspiration and energy to make the transition and bounce back higher. If you're on the cusp of change (and even if you're not!), there are incredible opportunities waiting at your

fingertips to transform your career and life, allowing you to experience a new level of happiness.

Along the way, I realized that there is a great need in the business world for this book—and that this book is also for anyone who just wants to be happier. Ultimately, I created a fast, easy, and practical way to be happier (the Happy Habits Method™). It works because it combines proven happiness practices and a scientific habit-creation formula.

The best part about the Happy Habits Method is that happiness is not only your given right; it's your most natural state of being. Think about it: young children are naturally happy. They aren't consistently bogged down by external factors that inhibit their joy. That's because happiness is the truest state of being, and the state to which we're all meant to return. Creating habits that foster a sense of happiness instead of impeding it is the way to regain that natural state of bliss.

I believe joy is for everyone. Happiness should not be viewed as a privilege bestowed upon only a select few. Certainly, happiness is not guaranteed to any of us, but I believe that when people don't have it, it's only because they don't know how to choose it and how to make time for it. Happiness isn't just given. We have to reach out and take it. We have to make the time for it—and all it takes is just four minutes a day.

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Some people avoid taking the time to be happier because they believe that taking time for themselves is selfish. In my experience, pursuing happiness is not a selfish act. In fact, I believe happiness is *selfless*. When you're at your happiest, it rubs off on those around you, making everyone happier. In fact, new research from Harvard Medical School and the University of California-San Diego suggests that if you are happy, you can raise the happiness of those around you—for up to one year.¹ The same can be said for unhappiness. So while pursuing happiness may have the most immediate effects on the individual, it can also have an overwhelmingly positive effect on others as well. Happiness is not selfishness; it benefits everyone.

All you'll need to return to your natural happy state is four minutes of time each day practicing Happy Habits. Three of those minutes will be spent actually practicing your habits, while the extra minute will be spent recording your results. Keep it up for a period of eight weeks, and watch the magic happen. Boosted energy levels, a calmer demeanor, and a better overall mood will soon be yours.

While happiness is advantageous in just about any situation, it's especially important for job seekers. Whether you're on the path to an entirely new career or you're just looking to pick up a better job, you'll want to make a good impression on your prospective hiring manager when you two first meet. Regardless of what's on your resume, that face-to-face encounter with your potential boss is going to

create the most significant impression. And there's nothing that impresses a hiring manager more than good energy. If you're in between jobs, this is also an ideal time to focus on your happiness; Happy Habits will enhance your quality of life during your job search and seep into your work-life balance once you've landed your dream job. So, adopting Happy Habits during your transition is an ideal time to be happier and help you transform your career and life.

SUMMARY

- This book is for anyone who wants a happiness boost—especially if you are going through a career change, job transition, or are at a crossroads in life.
- Changing your daily habits to happier ones is one of the most effective ways to be happier.
- The goal of this book is to help you create Happy Habits—habits that raise your energy and help you feel happier in your career and life. Raising your happiness level is the critical first step in finding or creating work that you love.
- The Happy Habits Method combines proven happiness practices and a scientific habit-creation formula.
- Being happy is not selfish. On the contrary, happy people naturally spread happiness to others.