



# Joyful Mind, Joyful Life™

First Steps on your Journey  
Toward Happiness

by

*Dr. Diane Abdo*

Are you ready to learn the difference between surviving, sustaining, and thriving in life? Happiness is one of the most powerful and most accessible life-enriching states of being. **We are designed to fully thrive through the experience of Happiness.**

Joy is created by and driven by:

**Mind/Body Communication**  
**Mindset**  
**Choice**

Joy is always waiting for you. Your unique path toward **Happiness**, or “Joy”, is yours to design...consciously and purposely.

This book will help you learn how to set your mind to it!



How are you doing on the “Joy” factor in your life?

Get out a pen and paper so you can take the following Happiness Quiz. Answer each of the following questions to take a quick peek into your relationship with Happiness.

## Happiness Quiz

Answer either yes or no for each question.

Respond with your deepest truth to reap the most benefit from this exercise.

1. Do you feel you are Happy?
2. Is Happiness elusive?
3. Is Happiness something that happens as a result of events or something others say or do?
4. Do your strong and negative emotions stay with you longer than you wish?
5. Do the things that are not as you wish them to be pre-occupy your mind?
6. Is it challenging for you to calm down after an unpleasant experience?
7. Is the physical tension of worry, anxiety or stress a regular part of your day?
8. Is Happiness only possible if all issues are resolved in your life?
9. Is Happiness given?
10. Is Happiness earned?
11. Can Happiness exist if you also have other upsetting or negative emotions?
12. Do you feel that Happiness is within your grasp?
13. Do you have a vision for Happiness in your life?
14. Do you have the elements of that vision in your mind?

Whew, that was a thought-provoking experience! Please take a moment to congratulate yourself for seeing it through and for embarking on this journey toward realizing more Joy in your life.

Thoughtfully review your answers to the above questions. Begin to notice why you answered each question and how it relates to your relationship with happiness.

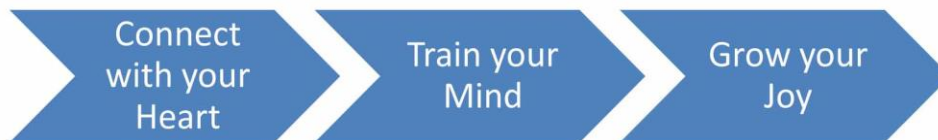
The following information will help you more deeply understand some principles of Happiness and how they may apply to your relationship with it.



## 1.) Happiness is a Mind/Body Experience

The concept of Happiness tells us that we must train our mindset and be attuned to our physiological state to consistently maintain a balance of physiological and emotional peace.

Simplified, the principle is:



The mind and the body are interwoven systems designed to help you navigate through life. Both the mind and the body are involved in how you recognize, respond to, and manage stress. Stress can negatively affect most aspects of your functioning, including your energy, your attitude, your beliefs and your sense of hopefulness.

When stressed for prolonged periods of time, and with inadequate  **coping skills** , you may become physically and emotionally depleted. In this state, you may become vulnerable to losing your sense of optimism or even your connection to the possibility of Happiness.

A balanced and effective method to buffer from the negative emotional and physiological effects of prolonged stress is the development of a thinking system that I refer to as the “Happiness Mindset”.

The **Mind/Body Relationship** is always present, always active and always available for Joy. You direct its impact on your life by purposeful heart-centered choices of thought, emotion, belief and action. To be good “directors” in the movie of your life, you must appreciate and develop the skill of listening to your physiological, emotional, and cognitive messages. You must be attuned to the language our mind/body system uses to speak to us.





## 2). Building Your Listening Skills

Your body is talking to you. Are you listening?

The body plays a major role in the Mind/Body relationship. The body provides you many signals and indicators, of a physical nature, that help you recognize how you are feeling or what a situation means to you.

Some signals indicate a state of discomfort or stress, such as: racing thoughts, a fast heartbeat, increased blood pressure, muscle tension, difficulty with concentration or focusing, and a heightened sense of fear, to mention just a few. Sometimes, a warning sensation will be vague, such as when we have a general sense of eeriness that is of a physical nature.

**Body signals** can also indicate a positive emotional state. These signals may include:

- A general feeling of ease and enjoyment
- Clear focusing ability
- A sense of positive instead of fearful anticipation
- Relaxed muscles
- Regulated heartbeat
- Sense of inner peace and even joy

The mind and body work together to let you know when you are in a state of distress or peacefulness or any state between the two.

In developing your Happiness ability, listen to the guidance of internal senses, emotions, and physical being. With this information, proactively identify issues of difficulty and develop strategies, as well as perspectives, for dealing with them.

The mind is the tool you were given to till the soil of your inner life. Use it consciously to grow in awareness of inner peace.



### 3). Stress: The Growth Opportunity

Often, at the peak of frustration, you may feel a sense of powerlessness to address the negative situation you are facing. The more focus on what is upsetting you, the worse the situation seems to become. Not uncommonly, in this frame of mind, you may increasingly view other people and events in a more negative way, thereby exposing yourself to more stress and distortions of perceptions.

When facing challenging situations, recognize the **physiological signs of stress** and how they feel. You can then use these physical signs to prompt you to engage in de-stressing activities and attitudes that help create feelings of calmness and internal balance. This state of calmness allows you to think more clearly and to, therefore, face challenges with greater creativity and greater ease.

As crazy as it may sound to you, this scenario is the perfect opportunity to practice a **Happiness Mindset**. Stress is the opportunity to teach inner peace and the unique path toward it. The objective here is to recognize and see the magic in the difficulty you are facing. From that perspective, guide your thoughts, and their related emotions, to a more meaningful understanding of your difficulty and the ways it can benefit you. You can feel generally better about the situation looking at it as a teaching moment. Your energy can also be spent toward progress, instead of toward resisting something you resent.

Along the lines of the concept of stress as an opportunity, I would like to mention a perspective that I often practice and encourage others to consider.

#### The Principal of the Perfection of Imperfection

Please think of a situation that was important to you that didn't go as planned. Perhaps a relationship that you valued ended unexpectedly, or a college course was cancelled and you had to take a course in which you had no real interest, or you lost a job that you thought was ideal for you and upon which you relied. Whatever the

situation, once you disengage your thoughts and feelings from the unwanted aspect of the life event, think about the way the twists and turns caused you to grow or stretch in a way you didn't know you needed to or even could. Think about the new connections or relationships or learning opportunities that you might not have encountered had your life not changed directions. Think about what you learned about yourself and about life.

Those imperfect situations may not have been painless. But, because of them, you had the chance to learn much about yourself. And, hopefully, you used that learning to deepen your philosophy and mindset about your life today.



#### 4). Breaking the Habit of Negative Stress and Unhappiness

The stress of anger, frustration, sadness, and other painful emotions can and may be a habit. You can actually “addict” to the sensations and illusions of beliefs that co-exist with, or result from, the stress response.

Habits are choices. You can injure your life with them, but you are not a victim of them.

Discovering which sensations, thoughts, emotions, philosophies, and beliefs maintain your negative habits and unhappiness is an enlightening and empowering process. Identifying what your habits represent and provide you (emotionally and physiologically) along with processing their meaning, can be of great value.

*Within ourselves, we have the power to reshape our lives by reshaping our minds.  
Within ourselves, we hold the resources needed to stretch, grow and reshape the meaning, purpose, and design of our lives.*

Dr. Diane Abdo

Here is some more great news!

The science of neuropsychology claims that you do not need to undo old habits before building new habits. Rather, it is more effective to replace old unhealthy habits with new positive habits (of thinking and behavior).

Doesn't that just feel so much better?

So, which patterns do you need to break to cultivate more Happiness?





## 5). The Power of Choice

You can experience Joy whenever you decide to, no matter what the obstacle or trial in front of you. Happiness is a choice that is facilitated by the practice of **positive mental habits**. The effectiveness of your Happiness Mindset relies upon the decision to develop it consciously and purposely.

Until you focus your intention, attention, and action in the direction of your desired goals, lack of clarity holds your goals in limbo. Thought-management is a purposeful act.

Thought-management (or “**Mind Control** Freakiness”-as I prefer to call it) not only lays the foundation for Happiness, it is also an active form of stress reduction. Interestingly, the ability to manage the physical and emotional disruption of stress is central to developing a Happiness Mindset.

The relationship between the mind and the body is interwoven and interdependent. With conscious and focused intention, we can navigate the waves of emotion and stress, along with their physiological correlates, toward your True North: Joy.



## 6. Guidelines for Achieving a Joyful Mindset

*If you think it, you will feel it.  
Choose your thoughts carefully.*

**Diane Abdo**

- **Acknowledge** that true Happiness is an internal process that cannot be given to you. You have the power to choose it.
- **Create** your mindset gently. It involves a non-forceful process of noticing the energy of your thoughts and choosing those that provide positive and soothing feelings.
- **Evaluate** instead of judging yourself and others. Judgmentalism carries faulting and blaming energy. Evaluating gathers data then determines the goodness of fit of the data.
- **Observe** your Happiness Mindset patterns. You will be better able to choose which thoughts to assign to your observations and you will be clearer in your focus.
- **Practice** feeling the energy of your thoughts and feelings as you go through each day. These energies are an important part of your guidance system.
- **Strive** to make NOW the Happiest moment of your life.



## Summary:

I hope you have begun to understand your own path toward Happiness. Looking within yourself, to evaluate how you relate to strong emotions, stress, and Joy is an important step in personal awareness and effectiveness.

Concepts addressed thus far are:

1. Happiness is a Mind/Body Experience
2. Building Your Listening Skills
3. Stress: The Growth Opportunity
4. Breaking the Habit of Negative Stress and Unhappiness
5. The Power of Choice
6. Guidelines for Achieving a Joyful Mindset



Begin actualizing your Happiness today:

Realize that, at its core, Happiness is a Mind/Body phenomenon and that you must consciously design your Happiness mentality. Your Happiness Mindset will help you create balance and a state of homeostasis. These are two very important aspects of living Joyfully.

Strengthen your ability to sense your bodily reactions to strong emotions and thoughts and to controlling these reactions with healthy thought- and stress- management skills.

View stress as an opportunity for growth by purposely seeing the magic in your difficulties. Choosing to see the perfection of imperfection allows us to shift our perspectives in a valuable way.

Accept that thoughts and feelings can be habits that are within our power to change for the better. We do not have to become victims of our own negative ways.

Embrace the empowerment of control of our beliefs, perspectives, views and reactions. Becoming a “Mind-Control Freak” is healthy!

Engage in the process of creating your Happiness Mindset by observing yourself with open-hearted curiosity and positive intention. This is central to building your foundation of inner, then outer, Joy.

Take the time to honestly evaluate your own tendencies and patterns in your unique dance with Joy. Learn to use your Mind to till your inner soil and Grow Happiness!

Are you interested in exploring more on your path toward joy? The expanded version of this e-book: Joyful Mind, Joyful Life™: Guidance on Your Journey Toward Happiness, is available on Amazon. Please watch for the Heart of Happiness™ online course, a downloadable 4-part program, complete with exercises and strategies designed to help you discover your unique path to joy.

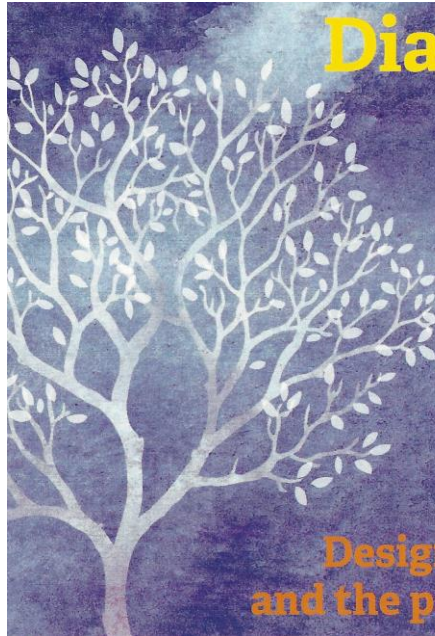
Please visit [www.DrDianeAbdo.com](http://www.DrDianeAbdo.com) for information about upcoming publications, classes, and services.

This eBook contains information that is intended to help the readers be better informed about my theories of living a more happy and joyous life. Always consult your professional mental health therapist for your individual needs.

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**Finding Your Joy  
Personal Awareness  
Stress Management  
Relationship Enhancement  
Communication Skills  
Growth Through Life's Challenges**

**Design the life you desire  
and the path toward that vision.**

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*Diane Abdo, Psy.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in Boca Raton, Florida since 1985. Dr. Abdo has been committed to serving those in need by facilitating the development of psychological awareness as a foundation for one's journey through life. Her passion is to help you develop a healthy relationship with your life.*



### Workshops, Classes, and Presentations by Dr. Abdo

The Heart of Happiness	Stress Management in Daily Living
Personal Empowerment	Awareness as a Power Tool
Growth through Transition	Understanding Each Other
Communication for an Effective Life	Your Relationship with your Relationship (Connecting the Dots)
Body Language as a Communication Tool	Your Relationship with Money

*Dr. Abdo has also provided various Stress Management and Team Skills workshops to several local businesses and organizations.*