

The Happiness Advantage

by Shawn Achor

A printable to-do list of the most effective habits from this book. Check one off each day you do it.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰¹ **Write three good things every evening for 21 days**

Each night before bed, write down three specific things that went well today and why. Not generic gratitude - specific moments. 'My colleague thanked me for the report' beats 'I'm grateful for my job.' After 21 days, your brain will start scanning for positives automatically. This is the single highest-ROI happiness intervention

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⁰² **Send a 2-minute praise email every morning**

Before opening your inbox, write one short message praising or thanking someone specific. A colleague, a friend, a mentor. Be concrete about what they did and why it mattered. This takes 120 seconds and Achor's research shows it measurably increases both your happiness and your social connection score.

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⁰³ **Apply the 20-Second Rule to one habit today**

Pick one habit you want to build and reduce its activation energy by 20 seconds. Sleep in gym clothes. Put your journal on your pillow. Move the guitar next to the couch. Then pick one bad habit and add 20 seconds of friction - move the remote, log out of social media, unplug the TV.

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⁰⁴ **Have one real conversation per day - no screens**

Achor's data shows social connection is the greatest predictor of long-term happiness. One genuine 15-minute conversation - in person or on a call, not text - where you ask real questions and actually listen. This is more predictive of happiness than income, job title, or even health.

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⁰⁵ **Meditate for just 5 minutes each morning**

Start with 5 minutes of focused breathing before checking your phone. Achor's research found that even brief daily meditation rewires the brain's baseline toward positivity and calm. Don't aim for emptiness - just practice noticing your thoughts without reacting. The skill transfers to everything else.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰⁶ **Draw your Zorro Circle for this week**

Write down everything stressing you out. Circle the one thing you can control right now. Ignore the rest for this week. Master that one domain. When you feel competent there, expand the circle. The feeling of control is the foundation of confidence - and confidence compounds.