



before
happiness
companion
workbook

beforehappiness.com

Before Happiness Companion Workbook

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Mindset Matters	4
SECTION 1: CHOOSING REALITY.....	5
Positive Genius: Coffee Cup Experiment	6-7
MEME: Positive Genius.....	8
Angles & Dangles.....	9
The Power of Change.....	10
SECTION 2: MINDSET MAPPING	11
Meme: ReThinkStress.....	12
Create a Meaning Map.....	13-14
My Meaning Markers.....	15
Vantage Points: Scorecard Activity.....	16
Harness <i>The Happiness Advantage</i>	17-18
SECTION 3: ACCELERATING SUCCESS.....	19
Target Your Success.....	20
Meme: X-Spot.....	21
Time Your Success.....	22
Success Accelerants.....	23-24
Daily To-Do List.....	25
Achievements List.....	26
Goal-Oriented To-Do List	27
Success Patterns.....	28
SECTION 4: POSITIVE SIGNALS.....	29
Meme: Is it Noise?.....	30
Noise or Signal? What's Left.....	31
Meme: Cancel the Noise.....	32
Meme: Overcome Negative Thinking.....	33
SECTION 5: SHARING HAPPINESS.....	34
Meme: The Power Lead.....	35
Upward Spiral.....	36
Franchise a Rule.....	37
Share The Ripple Effect.....	38
Conclusion.....	39

Introduction

We created this companion workbook as way to put the ideas in Shawn Achor's best-selling 2013 book *Before Happiness* into action in your own life.

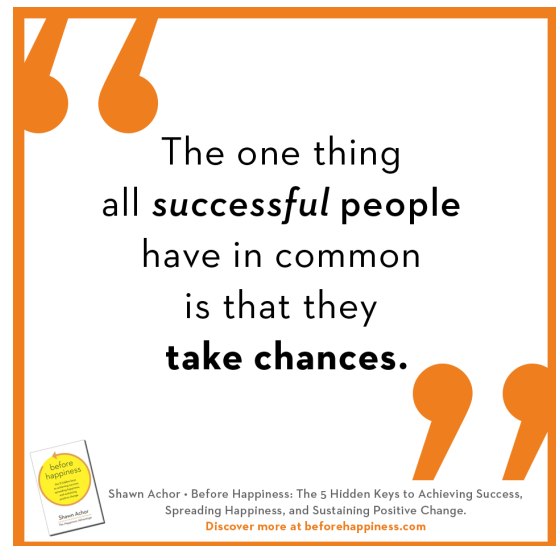
“Before we can be happy or successful, we need to develop the ability to see that positive change is possible. Only once we learn to see the world through a more positive lens can we summon all our motivation, emotion, and intelligence to achieve our personal and professional goals.”

This workbook will help you apply Shawn's five actionable, proven strategies to change your lens to focus on the positive and change your perceptions of what is possible. We hope you enjoy this workbook and welcome your feedback in our **Happiness Archive** at goodthinkinc.com/get-involved.

Throughout this workbook you will find “memes” or graphics for your use.

Save these graphics to your computer (on a mac: ctrl+click/on a pc: right click) and share with others:

- Create a screen saver with these and some of your favorite photos
- Decorate your cubicle
- Share on social media and tag @shawnachor on twitter; @Shawn Achor on facebook ; @goodthinkinc on pinterest



Mindset Matters

This is a classic optical illusion where both a young and an old woman are drawn, but it is almost impossible to see them both at the same time. We present this image as a starting metaphor for the mindset changes that Shawn discusses in *Before Happiness*—you have the power to believe in a reality where happiness is not only possible, but achievable.

- Which woman do you see first?
- How can you change your viewpoint so that you can see the other woman? (try holding one eye shut, moving the paper closer or further from your face, etc.)



<http://www.braingle.com/wii/brainteasers/teaser.php?id=26745;op=0;comm=1>

1

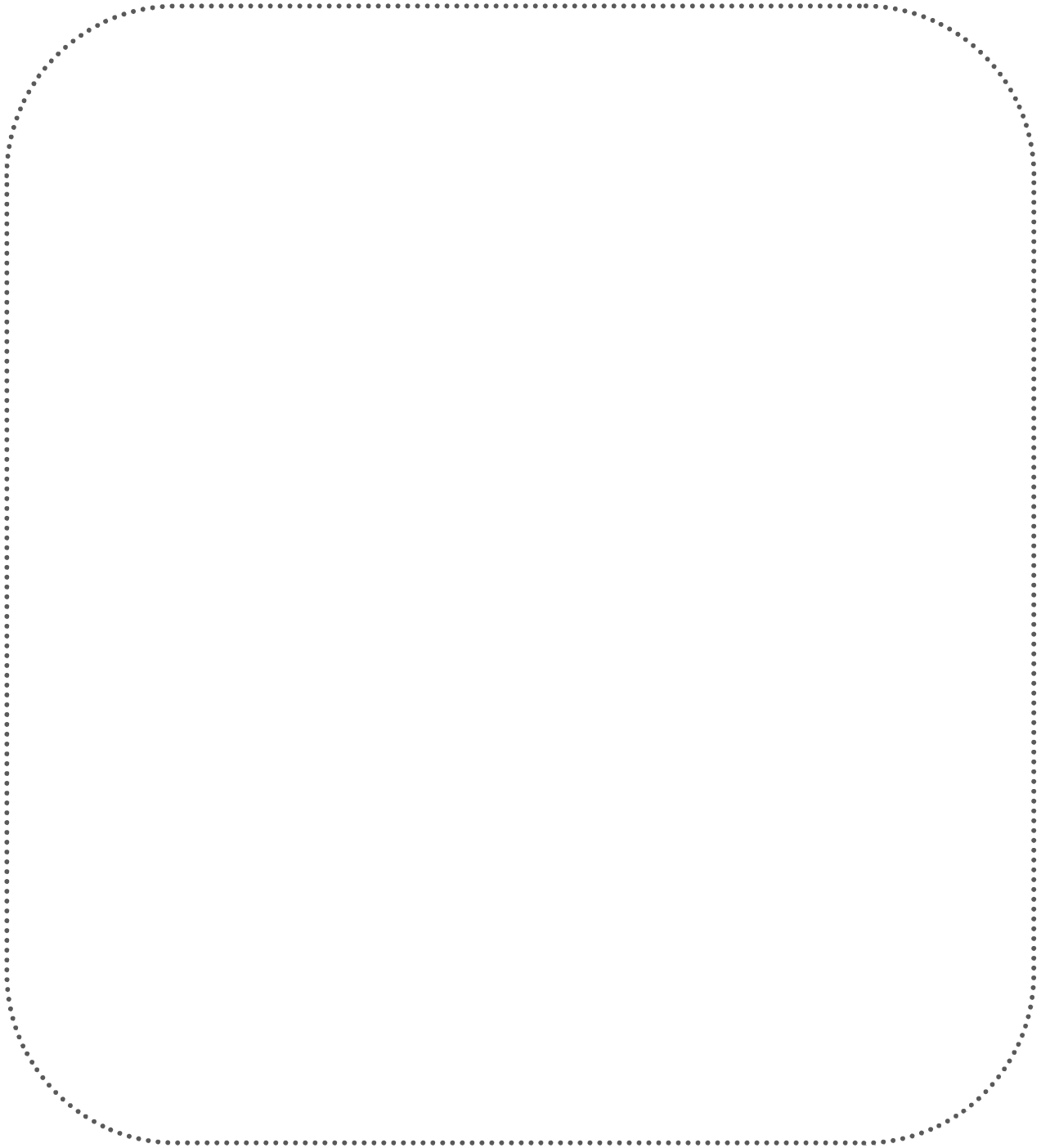


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Read **pages xiii-63**
in *Before Happiness* and
then work on the following
activities about
choosing reality.

Positive Genius Coffee Cup Challenge

Quick draw activity: without thinking about it draw a coffee cup in the box below.



Then turn the page to see why we asked you to draw a coffee cup.

Positive Genius Coffee Cup Challenge—Part 2

The majority of the time we conduct this activity at talks and trainings, all the cups are drawn with a viewpoint from the side. How does your cup compare to these that were drawn at a recent talk?

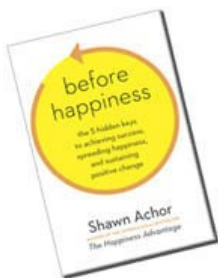


Yet, if you harness your **positive genius** you can imagine and find alternative viewpoints. Why not see the mug from a top-down perspective?

“So before we can be happy and successful, we need to create a positive reality that allows us to see the possibility for both... The consistent ability to create this kind of reality is called **positive genius**, and it turns out to be the greatest precursor of success, performance, and even happiness.” -Shawn Achor, *Before Happiness*

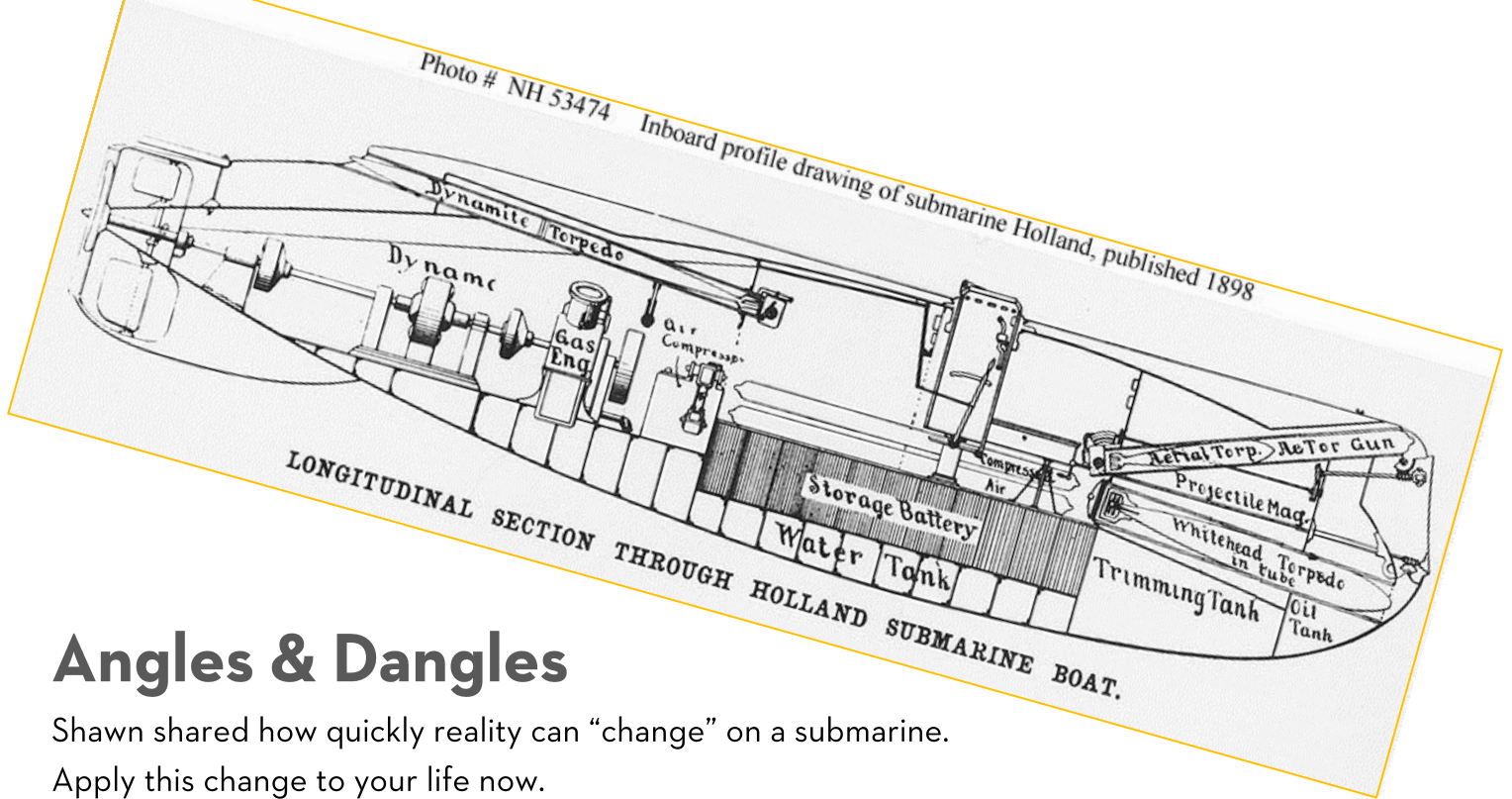
Screen Saver Memes For Sharing

Positive Genius is
the ability to
continually architect
successful,
positive realities
based on true facts.



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Angles & Dangles

Shawn shared how quickly reality can “change” on a submarine.

Apply this change to your life now.

1. Quickly jot down details about a current “reality” that is troubling you:

Who

What

Why

Where

When

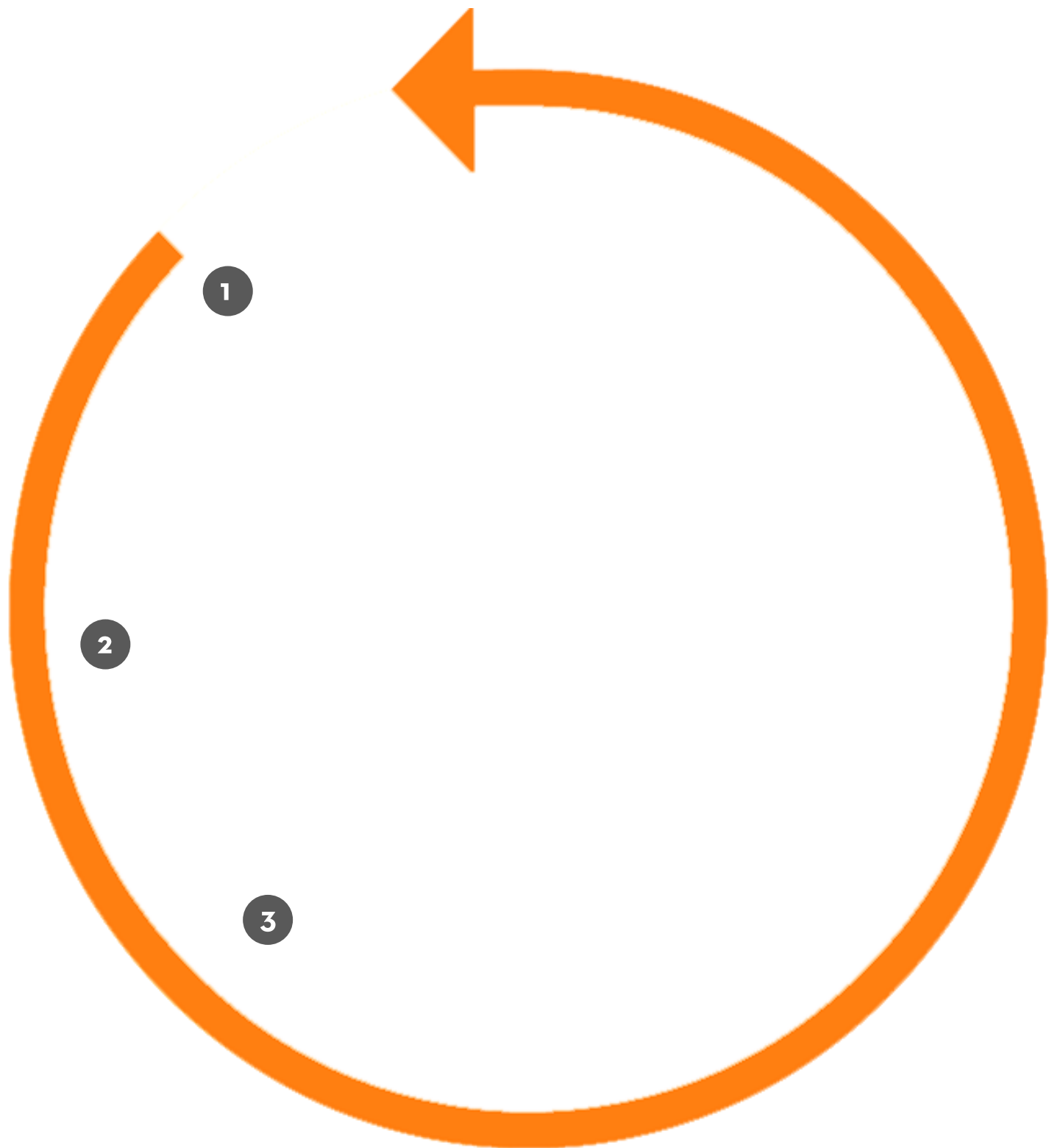
How

2. Now, think about how you can add an additional vantage point to your situation to see some additional details that will “change” your reality and create a new reality (for example: if you’ve lost your keys and can’t see them from your seat, can you look in another window?).

Hint: if you’re having trouble thinking of other vantage points, seek a diverse voice with whom you can discuss your issue.

The Power of Change

Write down the three **greatest moments of change** in your life that have brought you to being the person you like being today. Then post this reminder in a visible place (near your desk or a bathroom mirror) to remind yourself that **you live in a reality where your behavior matters** and that **you are capable of long-term positive growth**.



2



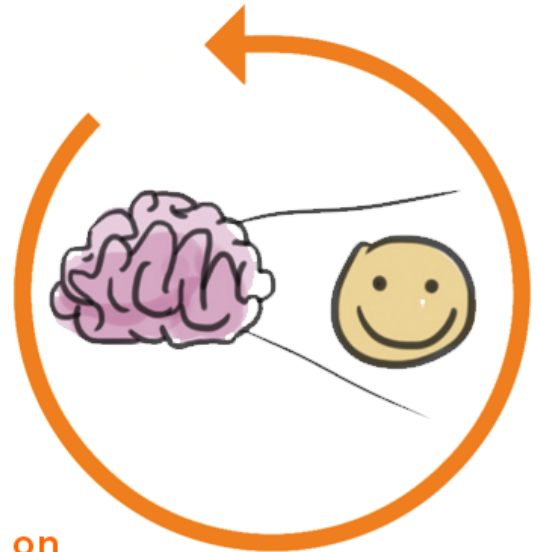
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Read **pages 64-106**
in *Before Happiness* and
then work on the following
activities about
mindset mapping.

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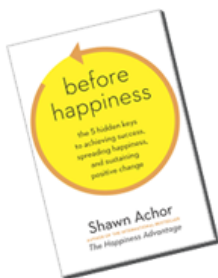
ReThinkStress stop fighting stress

Traditionally we are told **stress is terrible**, and then we spend time stressing about how to **NOT** stress about stress, which just makes us...**more stressed**. Yet new research from GoodThink's Shawn Achor, Ali Crum and a team from Yale shows that when managed correctly, stress can be enhancing to our lives.



- Stress hormones boost performance on cognitive tasks and memory
- Stress allows us to harness our natural power of mental toughness, heightened awareness and sense of meaning
- Stress creates deeper social bonds and strengthens priorities

The lesson: Stop fighting stress. Instead ReThinkStress. While stress is inevitable, its negative effects are not.



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Want more? Check out ReThinkStress.com – GoodThink's 7 day eCourse that explores the ReThinkStress study.

Create a Meaning Map

If you don't have a good map of reality, there is no chance of a successful mission. And all too often, we map *escape routes* before we even begin to look for paths to success. Therefore this meaning map exercise works to help you map your current values and discover the meaning in your life along with a path to success. **Take a few minutes to answer these questions then draw a map of your world - your entire reality in the box below.**



- Where do you go on a daily or weekly basis (work, home, the gym, church, etc.)?
- What do you do, both personally and professionally (meetings, networking events, kids' soccer games, and so on)?
- Who do you see (you spouse, your boss, your yoga instructor, your friend down the street)?



My World

Create a Meaning Map Continued

What does your map mean?

- Places and people that loom largest on your map are likely those that hold the most meaning.
- It's inevitable that your map will be missing some things. What seems like an obvious omission when you look at it now?
- It's also inevitable that you are overemphasizing other things. What was given more space on your map that it has in reality? **Try folding your map to see a new vantage point.**
- What does your map tell you? Are you mapping a path to success or an escape route? Like a world map on which Europe is always on top, a mental map that always points to escape limits the opportunities and possibilities and resources you can perceive.

Now, redraw your map with care to ensure the most meaningful things in your life are shown.

My World—take 2

...and don't forget to keep updating your map!

My Meaning Markers

Write down a list of at least 10 meaning markers from your life—be specific and look in all areas of your life (for example: don't write not “money” or “family,” but something more specific like “find time to read more” or “go on adventures with my family”).



1

6

2

7

3

8

4

9

5

10



Add Vantage Points: Score Card Activity

Our mindset can change how we look at everything, including dreaded tasks. If you have a task that you dread (perhaps like washing dishes), challenge yourself to a game with a group of friends (or play on your own!)...try it as a social media post.

How to play: In thirty seconds, brainstorm all the words and phrases you can think of to describe the task. When done, assign +3 points to the positives (washing dishes makes my partner happy!) on the list and -1 to the negatives (my hands get wrinkly when I was dishes). Tally your score and see who can get the highest score.

The Task at Hand:

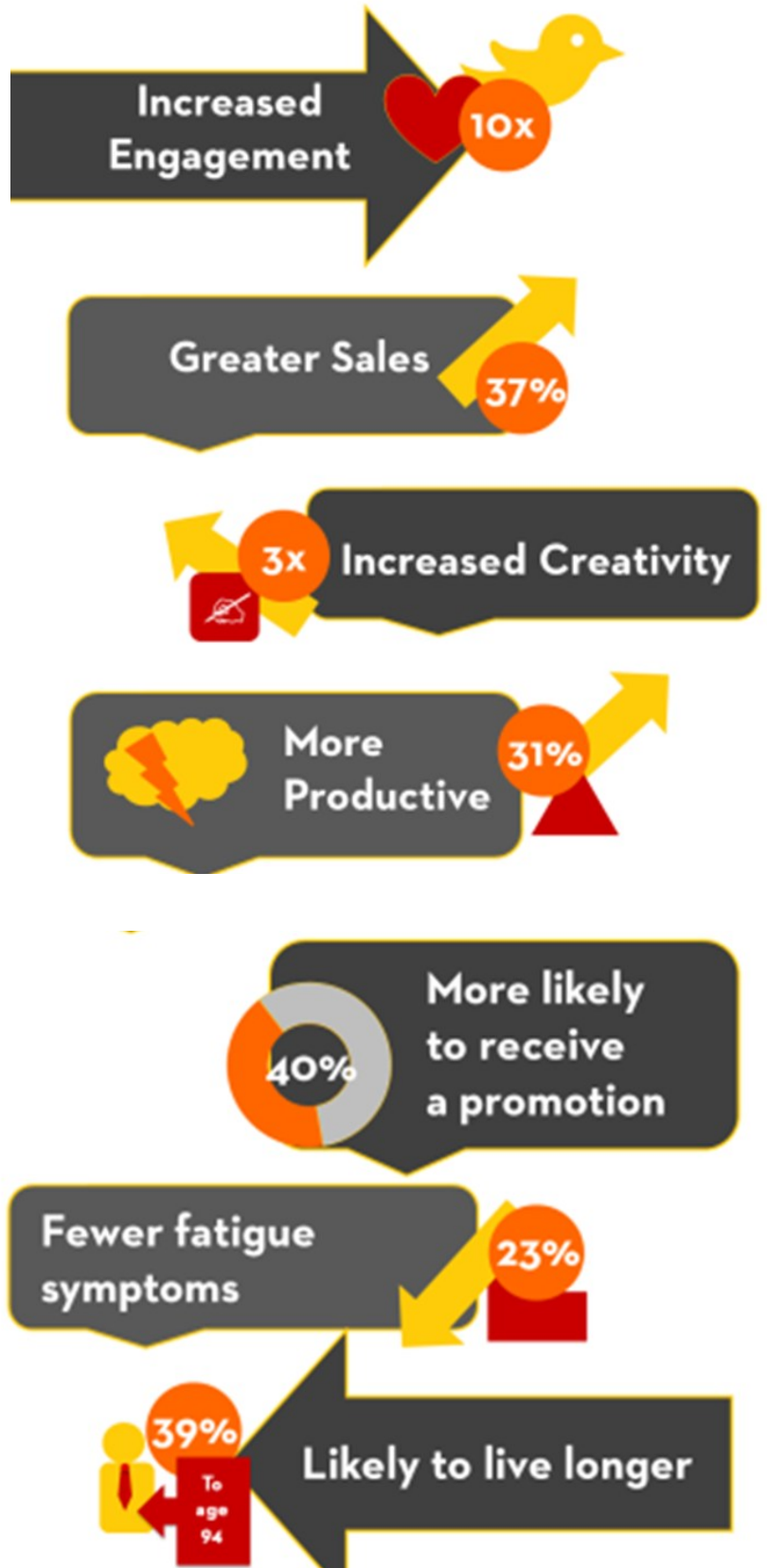
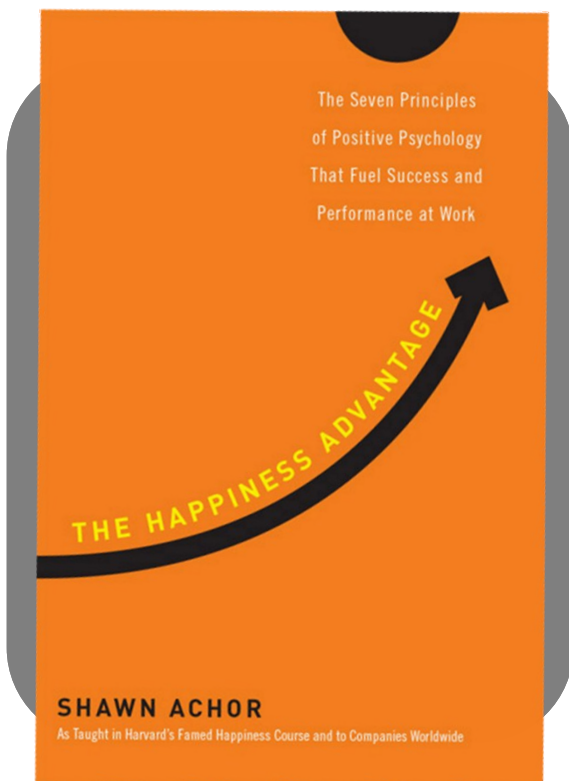
Write as many words or phrases to describe the task as you can in 30 seconds:

Handwriting practice area with multiple horizontal lines for writing.

{then score by giving positive words: +3 and negative words: -1}

Harness The Happiness Advantage

Shawn has traveled the globe to help people learn to practice a daily habit of gratitude and increase happiness. Watch his [TED talk](#) and read *The Happiness Advantage* to learn more about the science behind these techniques and learn even more ways to help improve your happiness....and therefore your success. **We know that happiness leads to quantifiable success!**




21 days Happiness Hygiene 

Today I'm grateful for

- 1 
- 2 
- 3 

 Thankful eMail(s)

 \$\$\$ Spend money... *on others*

Spread your smile 

3

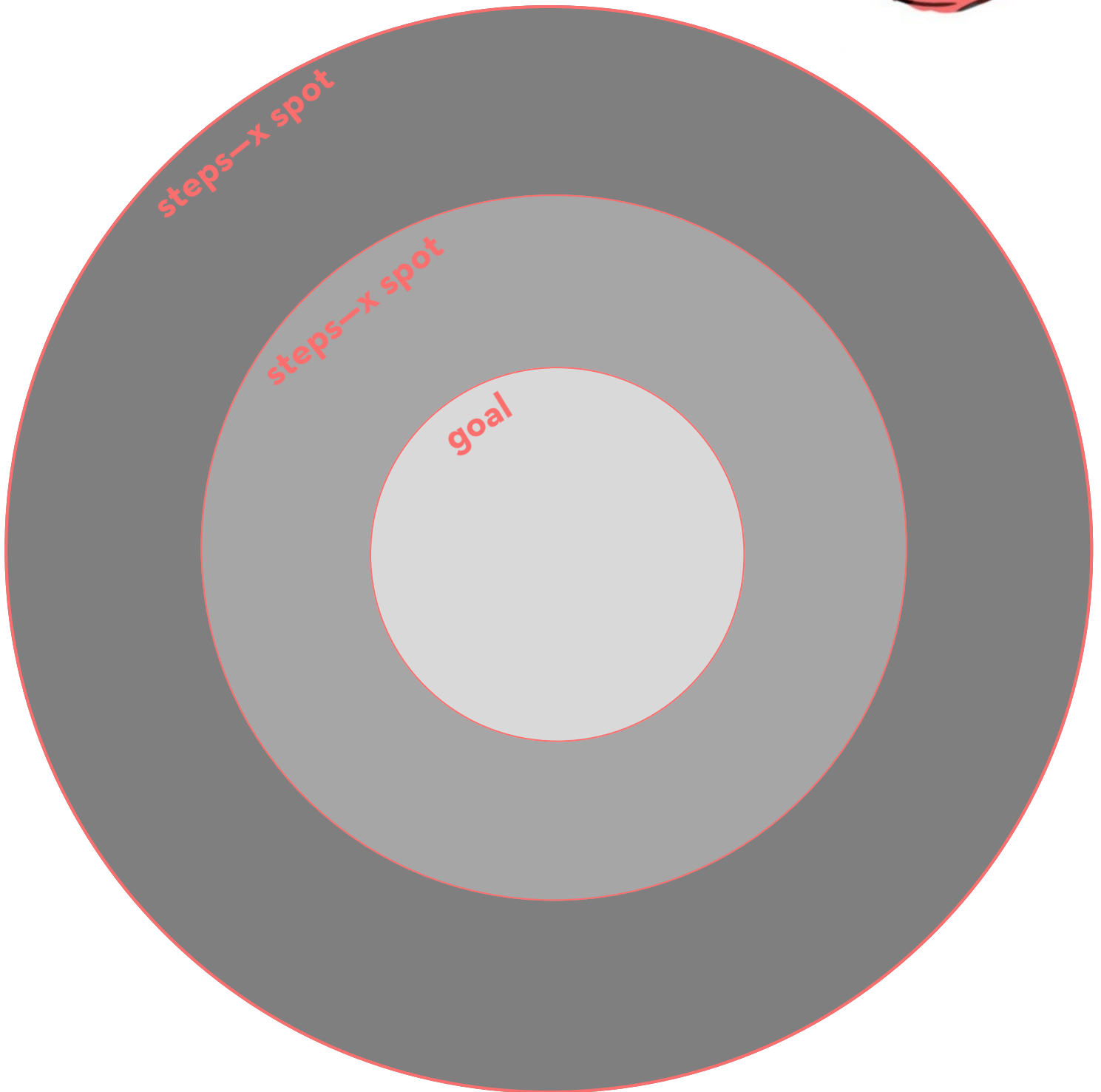
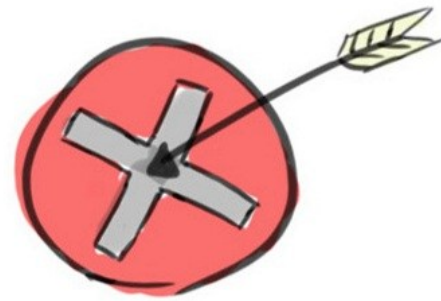


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Read **pages 107-145**
in *Before Happiness* and
then work on the following
activities about
accelerating success.

Target Your Success

Shawn explains that having clear, actionable, and attainable goals help us succeed. So to target your success, **write your goal in the center “target” with the steps to achieve your goal in the surrounding circles.**



Make your goal “realistic, meaningful, and possible.”

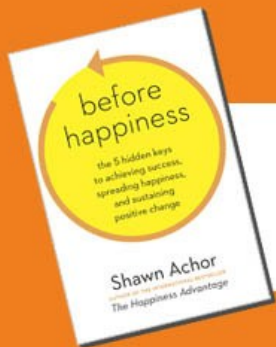
Screen Saver Memes For Sharing

“

The X Spot:

The brain
accelerates
the closer
we perceive
success.

”



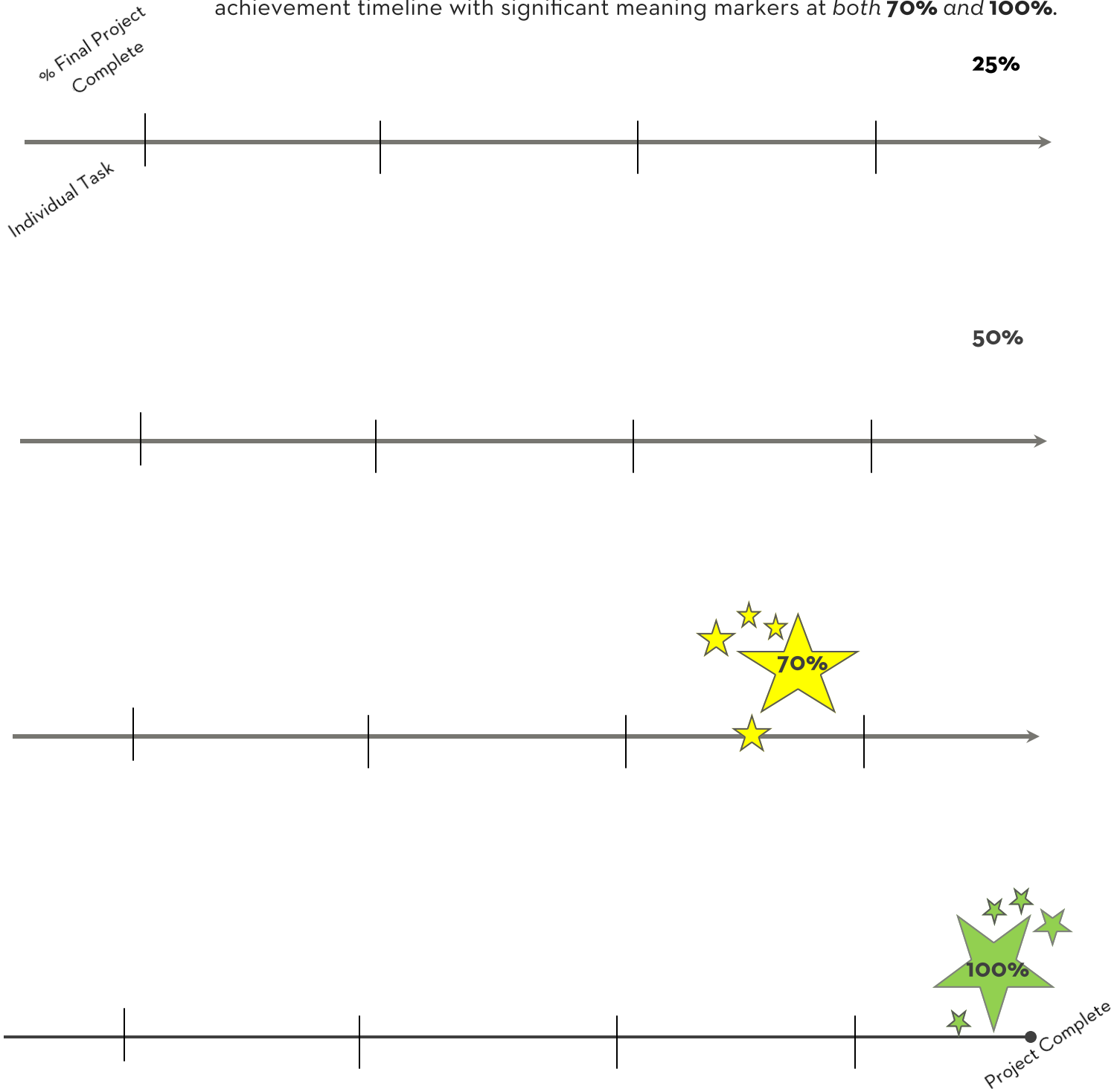
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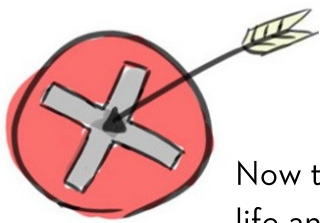


Time Your Success with Multiple X-Spots

Another way to improve your chances of success is to time your success. When your brain perceives you're closer to your goal, it will accelerate your actions. Use this phenomenon to your advantage and structure your goal achievement timeline with significant meaning markers at *both 70% and 100%*.



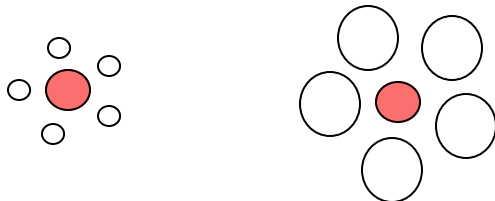
Success Accelerants



The x-spot, when proximity to a target speeds progress, is key to success. Science shows that we only have to change our perception of a finish line to help ourselves harness the power of success accelerants.

Now that you have mapped out your goals based on what is meaningful in your life and remembered your past successes, work through these questions to find ways to help you achieve your goals sooner.

What size is your target? Remember, that if we have a larger target, we think we have a better chance of hitting it and have more success. In this Ebbinghaus illusion, you can see how our brains are easily tricked about target size:



Which target is larger?

Which is easier? (they are the same size, but the first target looks easier)

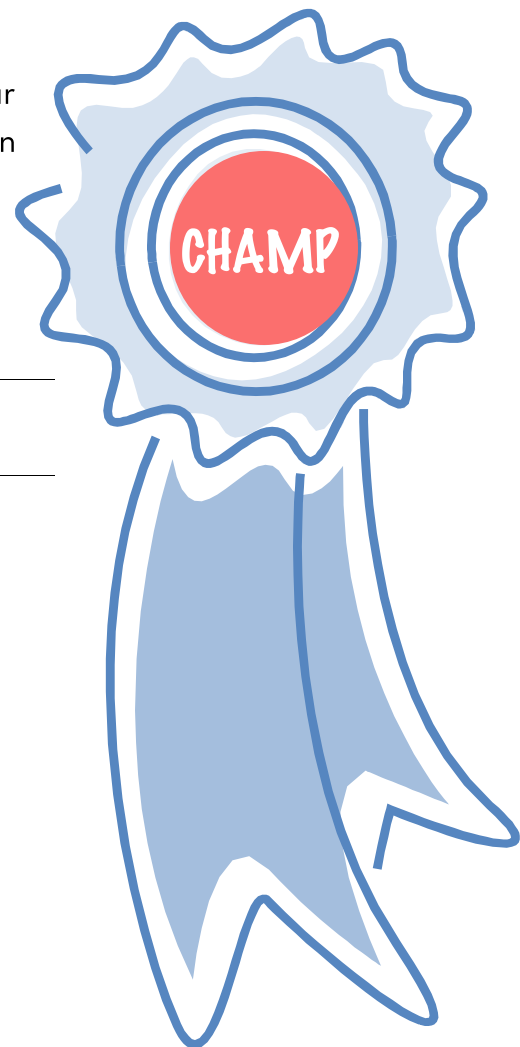
So, to create the “small circles” around your target, let’s revisit your **championship moments**. I accomplished challenges this like this in the past, for example:

I am equipped with the mental skills, like _____

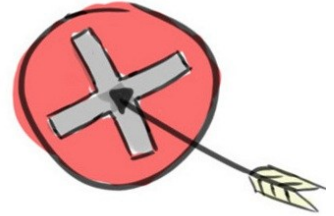
and _____

that will allow me to reach my goal successfully.

My current resources that will allow me to succeed include:



Success Accelerants Continued



Another accelerant is to reduce **thrust**, the amount of energy needed to hit the target by avoiding mental fatigue in your daily life.

First, I will routinize these three unimportant tasks during the day so I don't have to think about doing them (*example: coffee break, breakfast choice, workout time*):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Next, I will commit to do my most important work first thing in my work day, this work includes:



Then, I will create a to-do list with my work broken into objective, actionable units (and I will remember to put some items on the list I've already done that day, *example: start to do list*). Look for the To-Do list Template as part of this tool-kit.



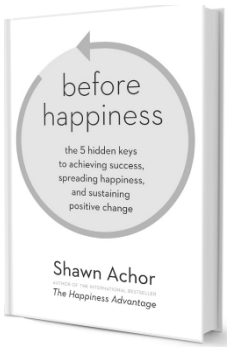
Throughout the day I will try to avoid keeping track of time. In addition, I will attempt to perceive time like an 80-year old person, that is thinking that 10 minutes only seemed like five minutes. I will hide clocks on workout equipment and office screens and be aware of my mental status.



Finally, I will remember that "where you look the waves will take you." I will post my goals on my mirror, computer screen, or somewhere else where I can be reminded of them throughout the day.



A TO DO LIST IS KEY TO HARNESSING SUCCESS

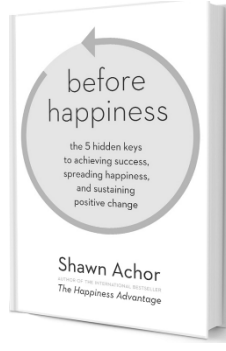


- Write down three things you have ALREADY successfully accomplished yesterday or today to show your brain that your behavior matters.
- Include three things you will do anyway, then check those off to highlight moving toward the finish.
- Break the task into discrete units to make a project seem less daunting.
- Structure tasks to believe you have at least a 70% chance of achieving them.

to do list

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to do list

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~~to do list~~ -> accomplishment list



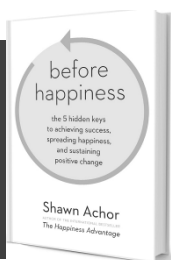
A traditional daily to-do list is useful, but a bi-monthly **accomplishment list** and big picture review is important for success. **Believing your behavior matters is key to happiness and success—therefore it is important to be aware of your past achievements.**

MY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE LAST 2-3 MONTHS INCLUDE:

THINGS I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH:

(include 2-3 things you can check off for today)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



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and sustaining positive change at

beforehappiness.com

TARGET GOAL reminder:

date / /

CHAMPION MOMENTS

"real lasting change is incremental
and positive growth builds on positive growth"
list some of your champion moments

OVERCOME WORRY

write the potential outcomes of your
dilemma (good and bad) then add
the % likelihood it will happen

TASK LIST

write the steps needed to reach your goal—start with
three things that you have already done to get motivated!

what

when

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

WHY SHOULD I DO THIS?

cancel the noise so you are able to focus on the positive signal—
write five positive aspects of achieving your specific goal:



Success in Life is Based on Patterns

To help you feel confident when working on future goals, it is important to remember past successes. Write down two success stories in your personal or professional life you would like to franchise and repeat:

story 1

story 2

Compare the stories to discern your positive success formula. **My positive success formula is:**

Brainstorm ways that you can replicate these successes on a current project/goal.

1

2

3

4



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Read **pages 146-181**
in *Before Happiness* and
then work on the following
activities about
listening to positive signals.

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Is It Noise?

“Just because information is loud, doesn’t make it valuable.”

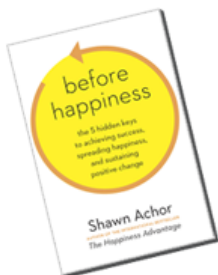
Unusable. If your behavior will not be altered by the information or if the information won’t spur a behavior change.

Untimely. If you are not going to use that information imminently, and it could change by the time you do use it.

Hypothetical. If it is based on what someone believes “could be” instead of “what is.”

Distracting.

It distracts you from your goals.



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[Discover more at beforehappiness.com](http://beforehappiness.com)



Noise or Signal?

Shawn devotes a whole chapter to help us learn the difference between noise and signal. Try this activity to see what you are currently hearing. In each circle, write down a specific thought that is stopping you from accomplishing your goal. **Include the inner critic from your head!**

Eight dotted circles arranged in two rows of four, intended for writing thoughts.

Now, draw a line through the circles/thoughts that are **just noise** (Shawn defines noise as items that are distracting, **unusable**, **hypothetical**, and/or **untimely**). **What's left?**

How can you problem-solve the actual signals that remain in opposition to your goal?

I will address (signal) _____ by _____

Screen Saver Memes For Sharing



Cancel The Noise

Noise makes it hard to focus, so try these tips from *Before Happiness*:

1. Turn radio off for first 5 minutes in a car
2. Mute TV and internet commercials
3. Turn off the car radio while talking to people
4. Remove news media links from your bookmark tool bars
5. Limit watching of prediction news
6. Do not read articles on tragedies you cannot or will not affect with your behavior
7. When working, listen to music without lyrics



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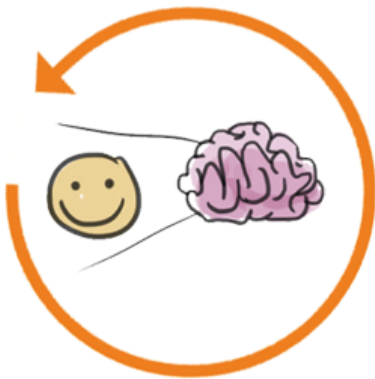
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Overcome Negative Thinking

Whether in the form of, fear, anxiety, self-doubt, pessimism, or worry, negative thinking is the most dangerous type of noise around, because it not only impairs our ability to hear the positive signals, it undermines all our other efforts at creating positive change.

Deal with negative thinking:



Wave #1:

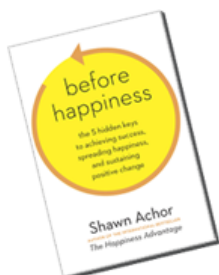
I will keep my worry in *proportion* to the *likelihood* of the event.

Wave # 2:

I will not *ruin* 10,000 days to be *right* a handful.

Wave: #3:

I will *not* equate *worrying* with being *loving* or *responsible*.



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5



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Read **pages 182-232**
in *Before Happiness* and
then work on the following
activities about
sharing happiness.

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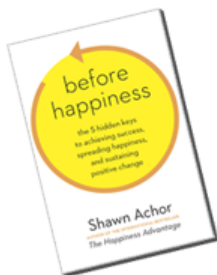


The Power Lead start with the positive

Use the power lead to turn your conversations positive and sustain positive change in your life.

Simply be the first to speak, and start conversations with a positive topic, before someone can start the social script with gossip, complaints, or negativity.

-**Michelle Gielan**, former CBS Anchor,
Founder Institute of Applied Positive Research,
GoodThinkInc Partner



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[Discover more at beforehappiness.com](http://beforehappiness.com)

Want more? Learn about Michelle Gielan's work at
BroadcastingHappiness.com.

The Power Lead: Starting an Upward Spiral

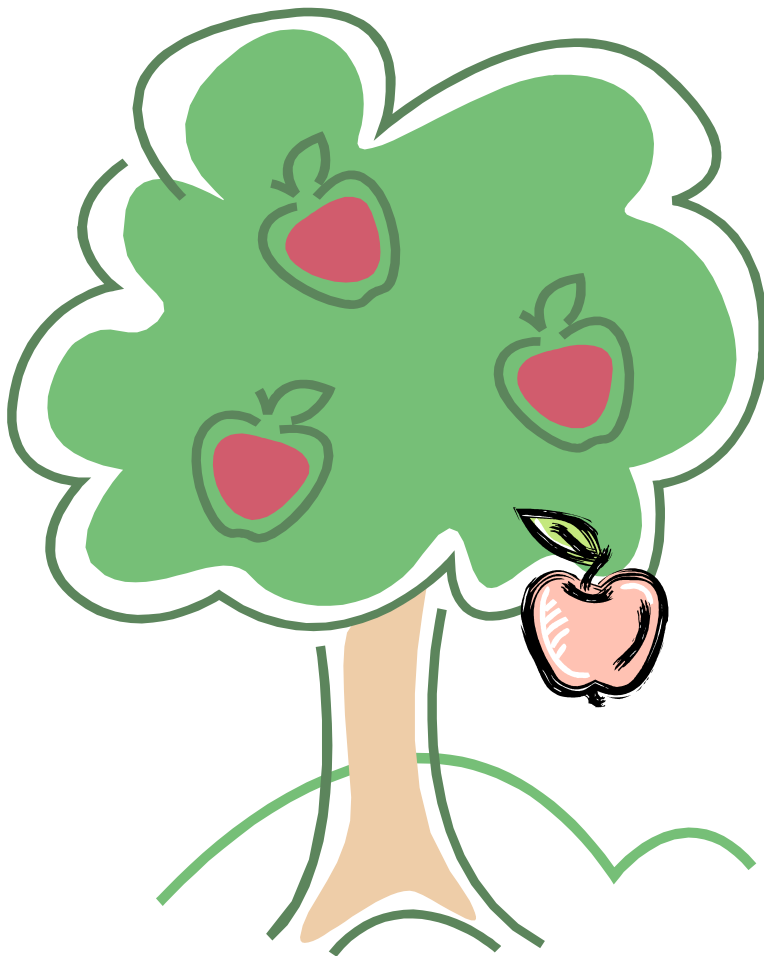
Shawn introduces Michelle Gielan's concept of **The Power Lead**: starting a conversation on a positive note to sustain positive change in your life. Think of a co-worker, friend, or family member with whom you have a strained interaction because of past interactions. Maybe you forgot their name? Maybe you always say hello but never stop to talk? Maybe you are stuck talking only about surface issues? **Brainstorm ways that you can change the social script with how you interact and then try it out!**

Who- I will try the power lead with: _____

Why: _____

When: _____

How: _____



Raise Social Happiness

If you want to influence those around you to practice happiness, remember to look for the low hanging fruit when trying to share your social influence.

Start with “**easy converts**” to raise the numbers of people practicing happiness hygiene in your world.

**“raising numbers
builds influence”**

Reminder: we know that social influence is defined by S + I + N:

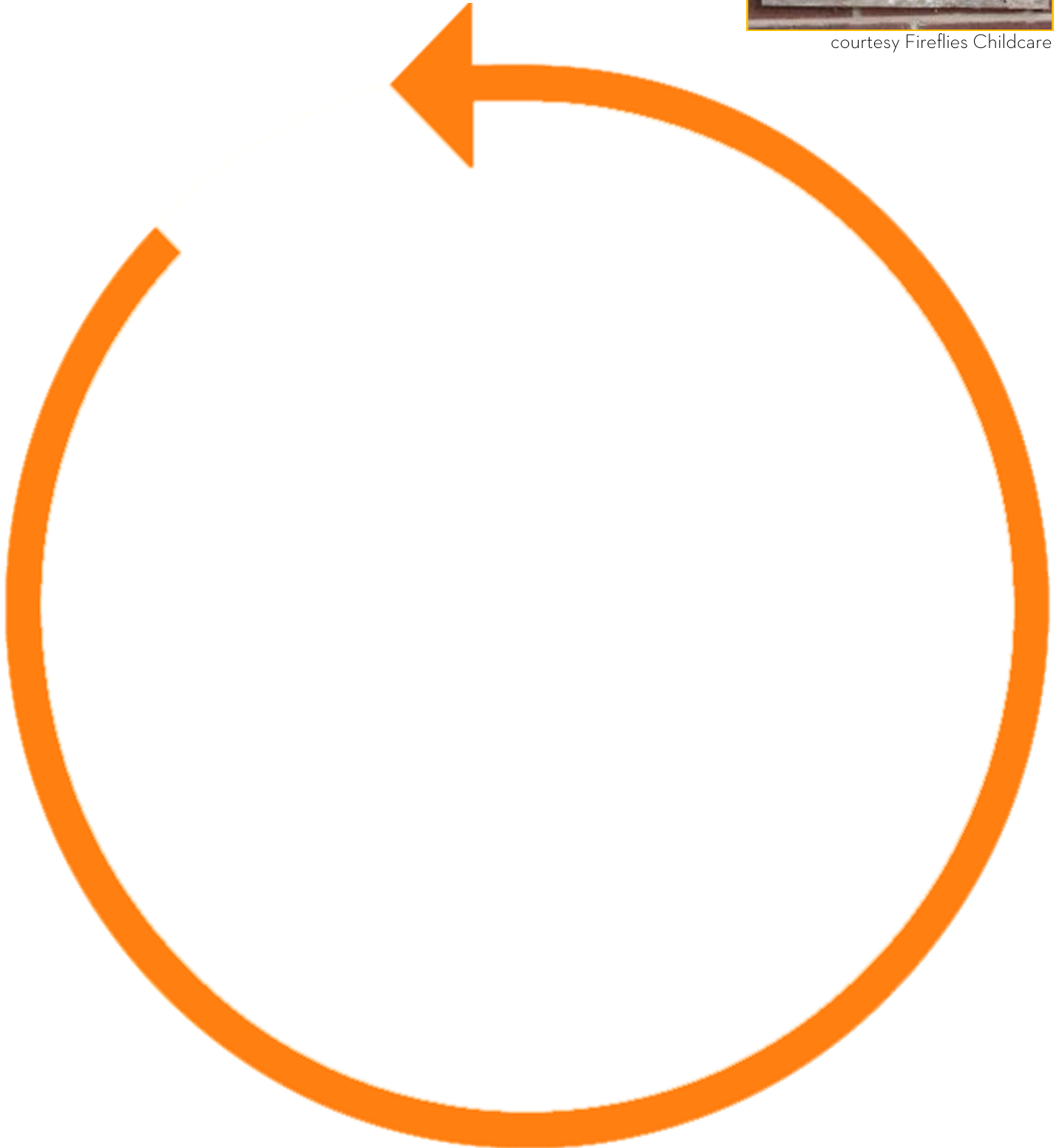
- S** strength of the message
- I** immediacy of the message
- N** number of people delivering the message

Create a Happiness Franchise

Discover simple, emotional, and **positive patterns** you can replicate and franchise to others around you. Write your rule in the circle below and share it with others in your workplace or household. Use *this sign from a San Antonio daycare as inspiration.*



courtesy Fireflies Childcare



Sharing The Ripple Effect

Shawn speaks of inception and sharing your positivity and belief that happiness is possible in both *Before Happiness* and *The Happiness Advantage*. Take time to think through how you can **franchise your happiness** with your team, family, and friends.



How will you **show** (not **tell**) those around you about your belief in the power of a positive mindset?

1

2

3

4

5

Then, craft an **elevator pitch** to share your ideas with those who ask.

goal

**personal
experience
to share**

why you care

follow up

Practice it! What do you get across in 30 seconds?

Conclusion

We hope that you enjoyed working through this companion workbook and have found Shawn's ideas and exercises to be helpful ways to improve your life. GoodThink was founded on the belief that "research is useless unless it is lived" and therefore we welcome your feedback on the use of this workbook. Please share your comments with us in the **Happiness Archive** at goodthinkinc.com/get-involved.



More Memes

Find more memes for sharing from *Before Happiness*, *The Happiness Advantage*, *Ripple's Effect* (and future publications) at goodthinkinc.com/memes.

