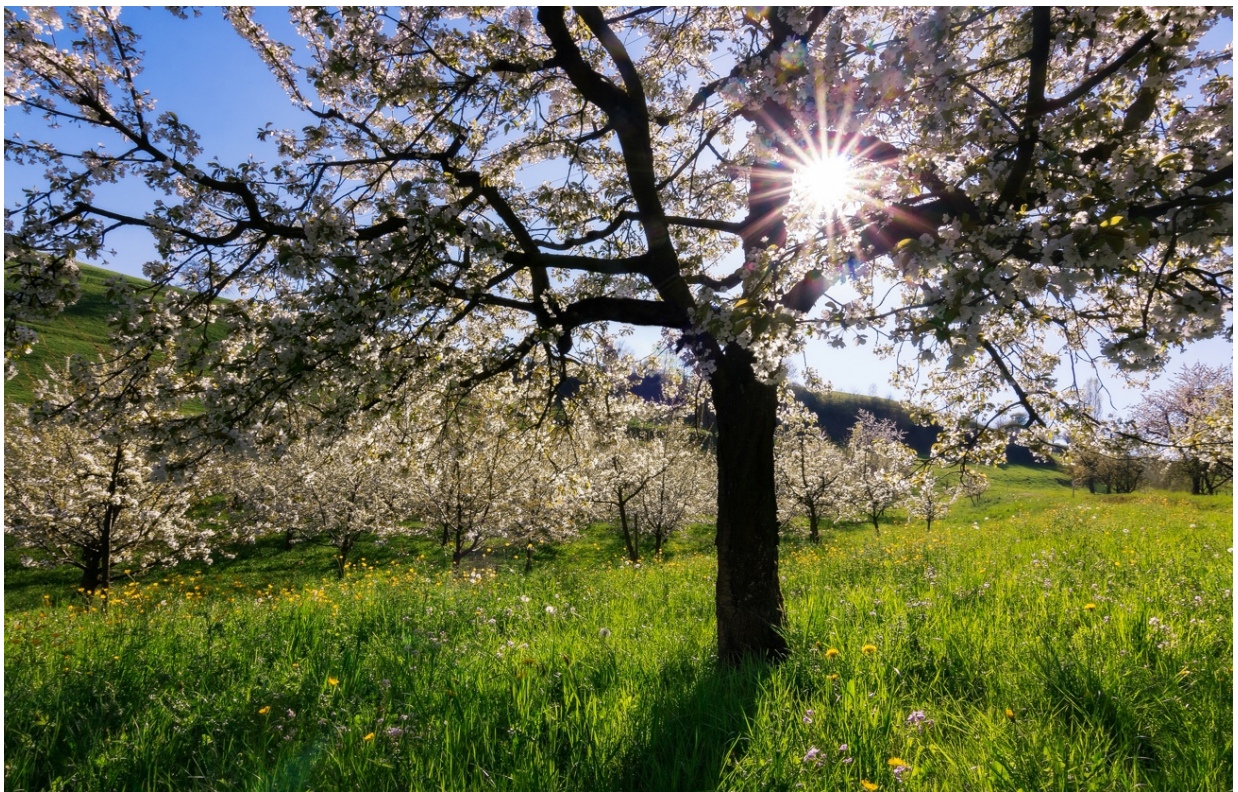


How to Be Truly Happy

What 80 Years of Harvard Research Reveals About Connection, Meaning & Emotional Wellbeing

A gentle, research-based guide for professionals who want more than just success.

By Dr Paulette Ogun



Introduction - The Big Insight

Decades of research from **Harvard's 80-year longitudinal study**, following people across their entire lives, shows something surprisingly simple:

Lasting happiness is built through connection and meaning — not success, money, or status alone.

People who lived the happiest, healthiest, and longest lives were not those with the most achievements, but those who:

- Had emotionally safe, supportive relationships.
- Felt seen, valued, and connected to others.
- Had meaningful interests or passions outside of daily responsibilities.

1. Why Relationships Matter So Much

Strong relationships protect both emotional and physical health.

It's not about having lots of friends.



What matters is:

- Feeling emotionally safe with others.
- Being able to be yourself.
- Knowing someone cares.

When relationships are cold, critical, or unsafe, happiness slowly fades — even when life looks “successful” from the outside.

2. Why Success Alone Isn't Enough

Research consistently shows that:

- Achievement without connection does not prevent loneliness.
- Wealth and status cannot replace emotional warmth.
- Productivity alone does not create fulfilment.

Humans are wired for connection, not constant performance.



3. The Role of Meaningful Interests & Passions

Happier people almost always have something meaningful in their lives beyond work and obligation.

This might include:

- Creative interests (art, music, writing).
- Movement or physical activity (dance, walking, cycling, fitness).
- Learning and personal growth.
- Helping others or volunteering.



Meaningful interests support:

- A sense of identity.
- Purpose and enjoyment.
- Emotional resilience during difficult times.

4. Everyday Ways to Feel More Connected

Connection does not need to be dramatic or overwhelming.

You can build it gently through:

- Joining hobby-based classes or groups.
- Being part of online communities with shared interests.
- Volunteering for a cause you care about.

Even small, regular interactions matter:

- Saying hello to the person at your local shop.
- Greeting people you see regularly.
- Brief, kind exchanges during daily routines

These moments help your nervous system feel safe and connected.

The Real Formula for Happiness

Lasting happiness grows from:

- Emotionally safe relationships.
- Feeling seen and valued.
- Meaningful interests or passions.
- Regular, positive human connection — even in small ways.



Lasting happiness is not about perfection. It is not about constant positivity.

Lasting happiness comes from **connection and meaning**.

If this Resonated With You...

If you recognised yourself in these pages:

- Accomplished yet quietly disconnected.
- Capable yet emotionally tired.
- Successful yet still longing for something deeper.

Please know:

- You are not lacking — you have been carrying a great deal.
- Lasting happiness is not about pushing yourself further. It is about restoring balance, protecting your energy, and reconnecting with what feels meaningful.
- Happiness can be rebuilt.
- Connection can be restored.
- Meaning can be rediscovered — at any stage of life.

Quick Checklist: Small Steps That Support Happiness

Use this as a gentle guide — not a to-do list.

Relationships & Connection

- ☐ I spend time with at least one person who feels emotionally safe.
- ☐ I allow myself to be real rather than perform.
- ☐ I notice which relationships nourish me.

Meaningful Interests

- ☐ I have at least one interest or hobby that feels meaningful.
- ☐ I make small space for enjoyment, creativity, or learning.
- ☐ I allow pleasure without guilt.

Building Connection Gently

- ☐ I engage in a hobby, group, or community of shared interest.
- ☐ I consider volunteering or helping in a way that feels right.
- ☐ I say hello or exchange kind words with people I see regularly.

Mindset

- ☐ I remember happiness is built slowly, not forced.
- ☐ I recognise that small connections matter.
- ☐ I remind myself there is nothing wrong with me — I am human.

If you find yourself ticking very few of these boxes, this is not to be seen as a personal failure. It may be a sign that your environment has not been emotionally safe, supportive, or nourishing.

A Deeper Reset Is Possible

If you are ready for more focused support, I offer:

The Thrive Beyond Toxicity Programme

A thoughtful reset toward clarity, steadiness, and a life or career that feels genuinely satisfying.

Inside, we work gently and practically on:

- Strengthening your sense of self after demanding or high-pressure environments.
- Setting clear, sustainable boundaries without unnecessary guilt.
- Restoring energy, focus, and emotional balance.
- Reconnecting with meaningful work and supportive relationships.
- Shaping a future that feels aligned, realistic, and sustainable.

♥ Your Next Step

You're warmly invited to book a **Thrive Beyond Toxicity Game Plan Call**.

It is a safe, thoughtful conversation to explore where you are — and what would help you move forward.

<https://wellbeingandachievementltd.setmore.com/services/92f93d71-a031-4c13-b74d-dc5de2834e6e>

Or you can contact Dr Paulette Ogun at:
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You do not have to navigate this alone.



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Helping Professionals & Entrepreneurs heal, recover from toxicity and stress, and thrive!