

Angelika Rau

Happiness Is a Choice

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Happiness Is a Choice

And It Feels Good

Edition Forsbach

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For Frieda and Theo

Edition Forsbach

Bücher mit Herz

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Foreword

“Even a happy life cannot be imagined without a measure of darkness. Happiness would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness.”

(C. G. Jung, Swiss psychiatrist, 1875–1961)

Positive thoughts and emotions are the foundation of a happy life, a deep sense of well-being, and a fulfilling quality of life.

Like every woman, you probably wish to feel truly at ease in your life – to experience gratitude, to appreciate the good things life brings, and to enjoy lasting emotional well-being.

How can you achieve this? Happiness is a choice.

A fulfilling life with emotional well-being begins with that choice, whether it is made consciously or unconsciously. It also means being willing to let go of ways of thinking that no longer serve you and to replace them with constructive thoughts and actions.

Once you make that decision, your actions will naturally begin to reflect it. You may be surprised by how simple it can be to feel calm, balanced, and genuinely happy.

By the time you finish this book, you will know how to create a happy and fulfilling life for yourself – one that is, to a great extent, independent of external circumstances.



Introduction

Dear Reader,

although many books have already been written about happiness and well-being, it was a matter of the heart for me to write this one. I believe there can never be too many books on this subject.

Every book has its own unique perspective, and each one offers something valuable to take away. I have experienced this time and again over the years. My hope is that you will feel the same and that this book will inspire and support you in creating a positive and fulfilling life.

Before I buy a book myself, I usually ask two questions: *What qualifies the author to write this book?* and *What can I gain from reading it?*

Perhaps you ask yourself the same questions, so let me answer them right away.

The first answer is simple: this is a subject that is deeply personal to me. I care about joy, gratitude, optimism, hope, and the many ways we can create a happy life.

Everything I share in this book is something I try to live myself. With all my heart, I can say that I have a good life. I feel grateful, and I am happy.

As for the second question: by the time you finish this book, you will know how to create a happy life for yourself – one that is, to a great extent, independent of external circumstances. In other words, you have everything to gain.

The first step is simply to make that decision.



There was a time in my life when I immersed myself in the subject of happiness and read everything I could find. Then, one day, I realised that I no longer felt the need to read about it. I had made an interesting discovery: I was already happy.

I believe I have always had a naturally positive outlook on life – perhaps it is simply part of my DNA, if such a thing is possible. But once I became aware of how profoundly my thoughts, my attitudes, and my expectations influence my life and everything I set out to achieve, life itself began to feel like a wonderful adventure.

Like everyone else, I have experienced loss and grief. Life changed completely, and nothing was the way it had once been. My family had once been complete, and my life had felt different.

Even today, there are moments when I feel sad and tears come to my eyes. But I have learned to accept what is and to live with it in peace. I am doing well. And over the years, new little members of our family have arrived, bringing endless joy and enriching my life in the most wonderful way.

Now I have one request.

Throughout this book you will find questions inviting you to reflect on your own life. I encourage you to keep a separate notebook where you can write down your thoughts and your answers. Since this book is designed as a workbook, doing so will help you gain the greatest benefit from it.

I also recommend keeping a happiness journal – or perhaps a success journal. Use it to record the moments of happiness, gratitude, and success you have experienced throughout your life.



*Happiness is also
becoming aware of the freedom of your own thoughts.*



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Happiness – A Powerful Word



Happiness – A Powerful Word

What is happiness, really?

When I was young, my idea of happiness was pure exhilaration – feeling on top of the world, ideally every single day. Those are life's peak moments.

But this book is not about constant euphoria or endless sunshine. It is about feeling at ease in your own life. It is about learning to cope with situations you never wished for and being grateful for all the good things you already have.

So what do happiness, well-being, and quality of life really mean? There is no universal answer. Only you can answer that question – because the answer is unique to you.

What Does Happiness Mean to You?

I asked a number of women this question. Here are their answers:

“Knowing that my family is healthy, that we get along well, and that everyone is doing well. Seeing my grown-up children happy with their partners.” (Petra, 61, near Bad Dürkheim)

“Good health, good friends, and being financially secure enough to enjoy a comfortable life.” (Monika, 65, near Lake Starnberg)

“Being at peace with myself, independent of others, and not needing anything else. Not comparing myself with other people and being content with who I am.” (Anna, 66, near Ludwigshafen)

“Having had loving parents who gave me strength and prepared me well for life.” (Karina, 62, near Heidelberg)

“Having a warm, comfortable home, enough food and drink, and being able to afford it.” (Sylvia, 67, near Speyer)

“Being responsible only for myself.” (Martina, 60, near Neustadt an der Weinstraße)

“Knowing that my family is healthy, enjoying life together, and getting along well.” (Susan, 50, near Speyer)

“Health, peace, and freedom.” (Ina, 62, near Munich)

“Life itself.” (Christina, 55, near Frankfurt)

For me personally, happiness means a deep sense of well-being and a quality of life that allows me to feel truly at ease:

- good health,
- peace and freedom,
- being able to develop my talents,
- learning new things,
- self-determination and a sense of personal empowerment,
- feeling safe and secure,
- spending time with people who are important to me,
- affection,
- travelling,
- music,
- being in nature,
- a comfortable home,
- feeling grateful for all the good things in my life,
- being by the sea,
- and feeling truly at home in my own life.



Three Important Questions for You

Rate your answers on a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 represents the best possible result:

How satisfied are you with your quality of life (your material circumstances)?

0 _____ 5 _____ 10

How comfortable and content do you feel in your own life (your overall sense of well-being)?

0 _____ 5 _____ 10

How happy are you?

0 _____ 5 _____ 10

You now have three numbers.
These are your Magic Three.

Write them down and calculate the average.
This is your personal Happiness Number!

Example:

$$8 + 6 + 7 = 21$$

$$21 : 3 = 7$$

Your personal Happiness Number is 7.

Which area of your life would you most like to improve or change?

.....
.....
.....
.....

How would you like to feel once you have achieved your goal?

.....
.....

How do you hope your life will change? What do you expect to gain?

.....
.....

What can you do to make it happen? What will be your first steps?

.....
.....

By when would you like to achieve your goal?

.....
.....

How important is it for you to achieve this goal? (Rate it on a scale from 0 to 10)

0 _____ 5 _____ 10

Write down your action plan.

.....
.....
.....
.....

If you need support along the way, think about who could help you.
You may even wish to work with a mentor or coach.





*The present moment is usually good.
Recognise it, enjoy it, and cherish it.*

A Moment of Happiness

Here I would like to share one of my own moments of happiness with you – some reflections from my island journal.

The first day on the island of Sylt, one of my favourite places for more than thirty years. That first glimpse of the sea ... the fresh scent of the sea air ... the endless horizon ... the feeling of infinite space ... joy, gratitude, and happiness.

The vast, endless sea. I saw it for the first time as a child, and it was the beginning of a lifelong love.

Since then, I have seen it countless times, yet it never ceases to fascinate me: the rhythm of the waves rolling endlessly onto the shore, again and again, as if for all eternity.

It is still early in the morning. A few people are out jogging, while the bravest have already ventured into the water for a swim. As for me, it would be far too cold.

Whether I walk along the beach or simply sit and watch the sea, I feel wonderfully calm and at peace. I often look down at the sand, searching for shells, and I still delight in every one I find, just like a child. To me, they are little treasures – gifts from the sea. Some I keep, others I give away.

I have brought a few painting materials with me; I do not need much. Blue is the most important colour to me. It represents clarity and tranquillity – qualities I value deeply. It is also the colour of the sky and the sea. Blue ... turquoise ... emerald green ... in all their beautiful shades, especially when combined with white – I simply find them irresistible.

The sea amazes me not only because of its beauty. When I imagine the abundance of life hidden beneath its surface, deep below the water, I cannot help but feel a sense of wonder.

It reminds me of the relationship between the conscious and the subconscious mind – and of the thought that the most important things in life cannot be seen with our eyes.

Sometimes I find myself wondering who might be standing on the opposite shore, beyond the horizon.

My colourful sketch is finished. I walk back home across the sand, looking forward to breakfast.

Tomorrow I will come back.

