



Cadette Science of Happiness Badge Workshop

An At-Home Program

GSCCC Cadette Science of Happiness Badge Workshop (At-Home)



Step 1: Make yourself happier

Materials:

- Pencil/ pen
- Journal

When you think of what makes you happy, what do you think of? Money, clothes, living in a large home? These material items may make you happy for a little while, but science shows that they aren't what will keep you happy in the long run. Scientists have found that the three things that make people the happiest are pleasure, engagement, and meaning.

In this step you are going to choose one of the following to try for two weeks. These options are designed to help you really focus on pleasure, engagement, and meaning. Remember to keep a journal of what you do and how it affects you.

- Get into a state of “flow” – when you hit your flow, you are very engaged in what you are doing. This happens when you are very interested in what you are doing and time seems to just fly by. Try getting into a state of flow for at least a half an hour each day. Record your findings.
- Count three blessings – In a gratitude journal, record three things that went well each day and why you consider them blessings
- Stop and smell the roses – pay attention to the little things throughout your day that make you happy. It could be anything from a pretty sunset to good food that you eat. Record three to five things that make you happy each day.

You can even try a comparison. During the two weeks, try doing some things you find pleasurable such as eating a bowl of ice cream or watching a movie. Record how you feel after doing these things.

Compare how happy you are after doing a pleasurable activity with how happy you are after doing whichever option you picked above.

Step 2: Think differently for happiness

Materials:

- Pencil/ pen
- Journal

You don't always have control of what happens during your day, but you can change how you react to these events. Scientists say that staying positive can make you happier even if more bad things happen to you. Choose one of the below options and use it for two weeks each time something upsets you. Remember to record your findings.

- Focus on what's realistic – Sometimes worrying about a problem makes it seem much worse than it is. When you start to feel negative about something, write down three things: what you think the worst part could be, what you think the best part could be, and what you think will most likely happen. Remember to take a step back from the problem and think about these things realistically. Does this help you feel better about the situation? Record your findings.
- Try to use your strengths – Think about things you are good at. Maybe you are a good listener. Maybe you are good at math or have a great sense of humor. Make a list of all of your strengths (if you are having trouble thinking of them, ask your friends and family). Whenever you have to face something tough, focus on what you are good at and how you could use one of your strengths. For extra info, try out Authentic Happiness's VIA Strength Survey for Children (8-17) to see what science says your strengths are.
- Be happy for others – Scientists say that when you celebrate with someone, you'll be happier. When someone tells you some good news or something great in their lives, pay attention to what they say and try to be happy for them. It can be hard when you are busy or jealous but try to think about what they are feeling and ask more about what's happening or say some kind words. How do you feel? Are you more positive?

After trying at least one of these options, how do you feel? Record how you feel in your journal. If you tried more than one option, compare them in your journal. What worked better for you?

Step 3: Get happy through others

Materials:

- Pencil/ pen
- Journal

Now you are going to be looking at your relationships with others. One of the most common ways to find engagement and meaning is through our relationships with others. Caring about others and focusing on your relationships with them can also lead to happiness. Do one of the following activities at

least twice to see what works for you. If you find that the one you pick didn't work as well as you had thought, go back and try another.

- Make a gratitude visit – Thank someone in your life that has helped you in some way. This could be a teacher, friend, family member, coach, or anyone else you can think of. Visit them and tell them why you are thanking them and how they helped you. After you have done this, think about how you feel. What was hard to do? What was easy? How long did the effect last?
- Write a forgiveness letter – In a handwritten note, ask someone for forgiveness. Think of someone who you may have done something wrong to. This could be a teacher, friend, family member, coach, or anyone else you can think of. Send them the letter. How do you feel? What was hard to do? What was easy? How long did the feeling last? If you stop feeling bad about what you did in the past, science shows you will be happier.
- Make something meaningful – Make a collage, video, or painting that shows how much someone means to you. Tell them why you made it and what it means. Give your creation to them. How do you feel? What was hard to do? What was easy? How long did the feeling last?

Remember to record what happened and how you feel in your journal.

Step 4: Do a helpful happiness experiment

Materials:

- Pencil/ pen
- Journal

Psychology, the study of how people think, used to focus only on mental illnesses. Now scientists are also trying to see what keeps your brain healthy – just like exercising helps your body stay healthy, staying happy keeps your mind strong. You are going to create your own experiment to test the happiness of a group and act like a “positive psychologist” (someone who tests happiness). Choose one type of experiment listed below and try it out.

- Design your own five-question happiness survey – These surveys usually include statements that your test subjects would either agree or disagree with on a scale. Use what you have learned about happiness to make some statements for your survey. When you are finished with your survey, give it to a group of friends, family, or your troop and have them take it. Give them tips on how to be happier based on the way they answered their survey.
- Try quick polling – E-mail, texts, and IM are a great way to contact your subjects. Using one of these methods, ask 10 people you know (friends, family, other scouts) to rate their happiness at three different moments throughout the day. Use a scale from one to five with five being very happy and 1 being very unhappy. Also ask about what they are doing and who they are with during these moments. Make a chart of the responses. (Make sure to get an adult's assistance when using any of these methods).
- Focus on one friend – Talk to a friend or family member who seems sad. Ask them if you can try to help them feel happier based on what you have learned in this badge. Try suggesting an

activity to do together and/or try one of the tips for being happy. What helped them feel better?

Remember to record all of your results and share your findings with those who helped you so that everyone can be happier. Explain to your subjects what you were testing and why as well as sharing the results with them.

Step 5: Create a happiness action plan

Now that you have learned about how to be happier and what you have learned about yourself, put some of your practices into action. Remember to look back at your journal and use your notes to complete one of the following:

- Find a happiness helper – Share your discoveries with a friend or family member and make a list of 5 ways that person can help you stay happy. Do the same for your helper so you can keep each other happy. You could even create a Happiness Club where you do a happiness check-in at the beginning of your meetings or just find a few friends who want to support each other in finding happiness.
- Create an inspiration collage with the five top tips that help you stay happy – Hang it in your room or locker or anywhere else in will be helpful to you. Use this as a way to remind yourself how to be happy and stay happy.
- Create a Bliss box – Write the happiest moments from your journal on small pieces of paper and anything else that will make you smile. Put them all into your Bliss box. Store this somewhere you will remember and anytime you feel down, open it and read your happy moments. Keep adding things to your box as what makes you happy can change. You can even start a family or friend Bliss box to leave positive notes for others or reminders of fun activities you have done together. That way anyone can use the box when they are feeling down.

Fill this out when completed:

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