

# The Happiness Advantage Summary

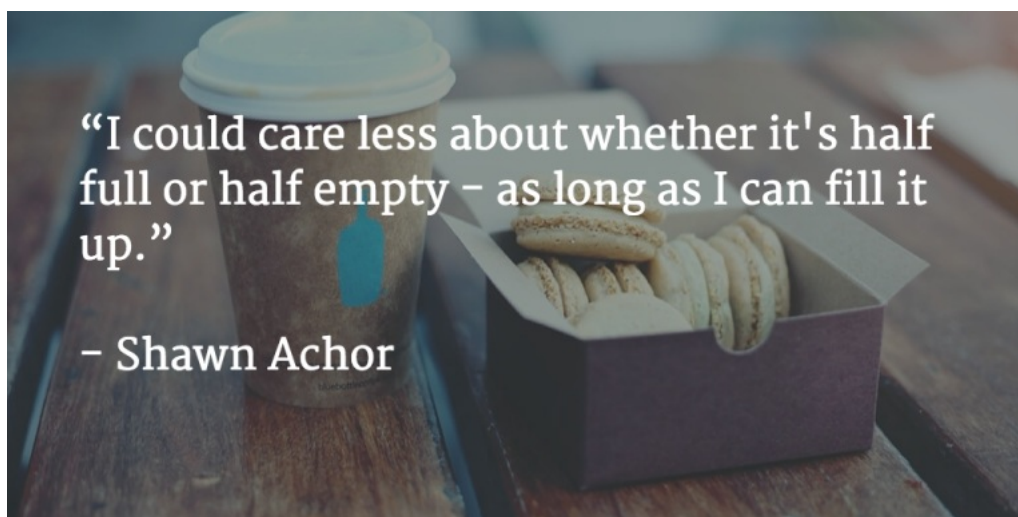
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 [fourminutebooks.com/the-happiness-advantage-summary](https://fourminutebooks.com/the-happiness-advantage-summary)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *The Happiness Advantage turns the tables on happiness, by proving it's a tool for success, instead of the result of it, and gives you 7 actionable principles you can use to increase both.*

**Read in:** 3 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Since it was the next suggested book after *Happiness*, and I told you yesterday that after reading that book you can go deeper into specific happiness tools and topics, *The Happiness Advantage* is a great next step.

Shawn Achor is one of the youngest happiness researchers out there, but his work in positive psychology spreads like wildfire. It's no coincidence he talks about the butterfly effect, he's living it – his TED talk is among the 20 most popular TED talks of all time.

Here are the 3 lessons I learned from reading the summary on Blinkist:

1. Happiness comes before success, not after it.
2. You can train yourself to be optimistic with "The Tetris Effect".
3. Fall up instead of down.

There are 7 principles in the book in total, but these 3 stood out most to me. Let's take a look.

## Lesson 1: Happy people become successful, not the other way around.

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This is the core message of the book. The book quotes a study done by Martin Seligman, the "father" of positive psychology, where the happiness of 272 employees was monitored over 18 months. Those who were happier before the study achieved more success later on.

If you think about it, it makes perfect sense. Instead of trying to become successful, so you can finally be happy in the distant future, **try to become happy right now, so you'll be successful later.**

Which sounds easier?

Making a million bucks, or increasing your serotonin levels a bit by watching a funny video, so you can score better on a math test later today, since serotonin also improves your memory?

Of course this is oversimplified, but being happy is really all about your mindset. You can't always influence what happens to you, but you can **change your attitude.**

For example, research has shown that just anticipating something you're looking forward to (like that funny video), can boost your endorphin levels by 27%.

## Lesson 2: Train your brain to spot positives with "The Tetris Effect".

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I had no clue about this. Really cool.

The Tetris effect is what happens when you spend hours on end doing one particular activity. Your brain becomes so engaged, that the environment of the activity spills over to the rest of your life.

For example, people who played several hours of Tetris per day started seeing the blocks before sleeping, and imagining cereal boxes in the grocery store fall into place.

Shawn Achor says this can be positive or negative. In the case of Tetris, people started optimizing their environment, and became more efficient.

Similarly, **you can train your brain to spot the positive things in your life**, in order to become more optimistic.

For example you can start a gratitude ritual, where you **write down 3 things you're grateful for each day.** I've done this for 3 years now and it puts a positive spin on your day, no matter what happened.

## Lesson 3: Fall up instead of down, by using failures as a stepping stone.

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After each failure, crisis or catastrophe, 3 possible things can happen:

1. Nothing changes.
2. You're caught in a downward spiral, and more bad things follow.
3. You come back stronger than ever before.

Obviously, you have to shoot for scenario number 3 as often as possible. Speaking of scenarios: Following a bad event, your brain always makes up alternative scenarios. These are called counterfactuals and this is where you get to take control.

**You have to choose to believe the alternative scenario, that will lead to you working harder, instead of less.**

Here's an example:

When Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team, he could have believed that *if only he was taller, he'd have been picked*.

But he can't influence his height, so that would not have made him work harder.

Instead, he believed that **if only he was better, he'd have been picked**. This led him to practice like a madman the next summer and the rest is history.

## The Happiness Advantage Review

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*The Happiness Advantage* was really cool. I didn't expect the major insight here, which was that **happiness must come before success**. The idea is radical and eliminates the common excuses along the lines of "I'll be happy if X happens".

Some of the principles felt like additional tips for Learned Optimism, while others draw on the benefits of better habits or your perceived reality.

As a video game nerd, I loved "The Tetris Effect", and falling up, Achor has a great way of using metaphors and images to make his point. A great follow-up read to falling up instead of down is *The Obstacle is The Way* by Ryan Holiday.

Very refreshing set of blinks, thumbs up!

## What else can you learn from the blinks?

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- Where traditional psychology goes wrong
- How much your perspective really affects your performance
- 2 tactics to help you believe you are in full control of your future
- Why being successful at habits requires a low activation energy, and what that is
- How big the impact of social relationships is on happiness
- What mirror neurons have to do with the ripple effect, and why sitcoms use a laugh track

## Who would I recommend The Happiness Advantage summary to?

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The 40 year old parents, who won't let their 12 year old be consumed by video games or another seemingly unimportant activity, the 64 year old, who's just about to retire, but still keeps complaining about how terrible politics are, and anyone who goes to bed already worrying about tomorrow's problems.

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