Welcome to Spotlight. I’m Liz Waid. And I’m Adam Navis. Spotlight uses a special English method of broadcasting. It is easier for people to understand, no matter where in the world they live. What is happiness? Are you happy? What makes you happy? For thousands of years people all over the world have discussed these questions and expressed different opinions. We begin today’s programme with some of their thoughts. Aristotle was a great thinker who lived in Greece over 2,000 years ago. He said, Voice 3 ‘Happiness depends on ourselves.’ Thucydides also lived in Greece at about the same time. He was a military man who studied history. He said, Voice 3 ‘The secret of happiness is freedom. And the secret of freedom is courage. William Gladstone was the prime minister of the United Kingdom in the 19th century. He said, Voice 3 ‘Be happy with what you have and are. Be open-handed with both, and you will not have to hunt for happiness.’ Charles Spurgeon also lived in the United Kingdom at about the same time. He was a religious speaker. And he said, Voice 3 ‘It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy, that makes happiness.’ Today’s Spotlight is on happiness. People all around the world think that happiness is important. In 2012 the United Nations even passed a resolution about happiness. All 193 member states agreed to the resolution. They recognised happiness as a global human goal. And they decided to make the 20th of March the International Day of Happiness. On the 20th of March 2015 the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, wrote a special message. In it he said, Voice 7 ‘I wish everyone around the world a very happy International Day of Happiness! The search for happiness is a serious business. Happiness for the whole human family is one of the main goals of the United Nations. Peace, plenty, lives of respect for all - this is what we seek. We want all men, women and children to enjoy all their human rights. We want all countries to know the joy of peace. We want both people and planet to be blessed with lasting development, and to be free of the terrible effects of climate change. Let us give thanks for what makes us happy. And let us give our efforts to filling our world with happiness.’ But what makes people happy? Many people think that happiness depends on being rich and beautiful. But scientists and experts have studied happiness. They know this is not correct. Good and bad things happen to everyone. Many scientists and experts believe that happiness is something we can choose. They believe that happiness is not always about what happens to you. They believe that much happiness is about how you choose to react. You can choose to react to events in your life in a positive way. Dr. Amit Sood is an expert at the Mayo Clinic in the United States. He said, Voice 8 ‘Happiness is a habit or custom. Some of us are born happy. But most others have to choose it. We often, however, do not understand we have that choice. We also do not know how to exercise that choice. As a result we push happiness away. Do not let that not happen to you.’ So how can we choose to be happy? What do we need to do? Experts have a lot of different advice. But they agree that gratitude or being thankful is very important. You will learn to be happy or happier by being thankful. Dr Robert Emmons is a leading expert on gratitude. He suggests many ways to become more thankful. One method he suggests is keeping a gratitude journal or book. Every day, write down things for which you are thankful. These things may be about you, events or people. He also suggests that you use the language of thankful people. You can use words like gifts, givers, blessings, blessed. What things are people most grateful for? BUPA is a health organisation in the United Kingdom. BUPA did some research about the things that make people feel happy. They found that many small and simple things make people feel good. For example, sleeping in a clean, fresh bed. Another example: many people enjoy feeling the sun on their faces. Other people feel good when someone is kind to them. Other people like laughing so hard it hurts or smelling freshly made bread. Some people find that music makes them feel happy. Pharrell Williams writes and performs music. He said that that music brought him happiness. He even wrote a song called ‘Happy’. [excerpt of the song "Happy"] It is a very joyful song. People around the world have enjoyed watching it. They have watched the song more than 750 million times on YouTube. And many people have even made their own versions of it. Williams told the BBC why he wrote the song. Voice 9 ‘The purpose of the song was to make everyone remember that you have a basic freedom to find happiness.’ Even the United Nations knows that music can make people happy. And in 2015 the United Nations celebrated the International Day of Happiness with music. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, asked people all over the world to share a song that makes them happy. Many famous people shared songs that represented happiness and made them smile. They helped to create the world’s happiest playlist. The actor Michael Douglas chose the song ‘Zip a Dee Doo Dah’. The singer James Blunt chose the song ‘We are Young’. Pharrell Williams attended the United Nations event that launched the playlist. He told everyone that protecting our planet is necessary for human happiness. He also urged everyone to find out what makes them happy, Voice 9 ‘It can be something as detailed as a long term goal. Or it could be something as simple as the way I feel when my son smiles. You should know that happiness is your right. It is a reaction to something, or someone, or a time.’ Are you happy? What makes you happy? What are you thankful for? Does a particular song make you happy? Tell us about it. You can leave a comment on our website. You can also comment on Facebook at facebook.com/spotlightradio. Be happy! The writer of this programme was Katy Blake. The producer was Michio Ozaki. The voices you heard were from the United Kingdom and the United States. All quotes were adapted for this programme and voiced by Spotlight. You can listen to this programme again, and read it, on the internet at www.radioenglish.net. This programme is called, ‘Be Happy’. We hope you can join us again for the next Spotlight program. Goodbye.