

# A Listening Ear



We are fortunate enough to be living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a unique time in the history of mankind in which happiness is deemed as necessary to life as food, water and shelter. But if you had lived in 3000 BC, or during England's Middle Ages, or even in the Puritanical colonies, the hunt for food, the ability to fight disease, and the freedom to worship would have superseded the loftiness of finding happiness.

Fast-forward to the present-day United States: food is plentiful, we live long and healthy lives, and we covet our hard-fought liberty. Yet a 2013 Harris poll reported only one-third of Americans say they are very happy. And despite being one of the healthiest and wealthiest nations in the world, America ranks between 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> when it comes to being a happy country (Forbes, 2013; The Washington Post, 2013).

The pursuit of happiness is a phrase so ingrained in us from the time of our forefathers that we tend to internalize the notion that happiness is a goal to be reached. But if we believe that happiness is a thing to be sought after and pursued, it implies that the object is out there somewhere external to us. Perhaps more importantly, if we have to seek it, there is a possibility we may never find it! The angst of living with this possibility is an underlying reason that many people come to therapy.

These last 3 decades have seen a tremendous shift in perspective on happiness, not in the sense of how we define it, but in how we understand how to achieve it. Most of the current articles and books on the subject of happiness use language and techniques rooted in recent neuroscientific research.

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## Staff Spotlight

*Linda Schiavone, M.S., N.C.C*

Linda Schiavone received her Master of Science degree in Pastoral Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Neumann University and is a National Certified Counselor. Linda's areas of focus are in integrating an individual's spirituality into counseling and in com-

passionate care of the whole person. She also holds a Master of Science degree in pharmacology from Drexel University and promotes the potential for better management of many psychological disorders through the combination of prescribed medication and psychotherapy.

### Services:

*Individual Counseling*

*Women*

*Adolescents*

*Men*

*Couples Counseling*

*Groups*

*Drug & Alcohol*

*Evaluations*

*Anger Management*

*Evaluations*

*10- week Program*

**Depression**

**Anxiety**

**Relationship Issues**

**Effective Communication**

**Separation/ Divorce**

**Peer Relationships**

**Parenting Concerns**

**Academic**

**Underachievement**

**Grief and Loss**

**Identity Development**

**Self Esteem**

**Adjustment**

**Trauma**

**Coping Skills**

**Family Conflict**

**Career Counseling**

*Still a place to be heard after over 40 years! Daemion Counseling Center is a grass-roots, community-based mental health counseling center operating continuously since 1970 to serve individuals (ages 14 and older), couples, and families in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. We offer evidence-based practices for clinical mental health counseling, Drug and Alcohol Evaluations, and an individualized Anger Management program. Our professional staff works closely with each individual to develop and achieve client-initiated goals.*

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Yes – there have been thousands of studies on happiness! And they demonstrate unequivocally that happiness is cultivated through daily practice. It is uncovered through proven techniques. It is mastered by building habits. This shift in and perspective is critical. Reputable studies have confirmed and replicated that intentional daily activities can actually change the brain's neural pathways (also known as neuroplasticity).

In other words, happiness can actually be generated, increased and sustained through learning and practicing a proven set of skills on a daily basis. Experts in this field of study promote 9 habits, when intentionally practiced and cultivated, have both natural antidepressant effects and the ability to promote and maintain happiness.

So, what are you waiting for?

## Health and Happiness

### Fast Fact:

**Genes and upbringing influence about 50% of the variation in our personal happiness. However, our circumstances (income and environment) affect only about 10 percent.**

**The remaining 40% is accounted for by our outlook and activities, including our relationships, friendships and jobs, our engagement in the community and our involvement in sports and hobbies.**

<http://www.familyhealthguide.co.uk/20-amazing-facts-about-happiness.html>

### Connection Call:

*Would you like a list of Happiness resources?*

**Give us a call at 610-647-1431 or email us at [staff@daemioncounseling.org](mailto:staff@daemioncounseling.org)!**

### 9 Daily Habits That Increase and Sustain Happiness

1. **Mindfulness** – focus nonjudgmental awareness on the present moment
2. **Gratitude** – count your blessings
3. **Self-compassion** – treat yourself kindly
4. **Altruism** – do good and give back
5. **Vulnerability** – have courage to be your authentic self
6. **Growth** – challenge yourself to move toward mastery in some area
7. **Meaning** – work with purpose
8. **Joy** – play with purpose
9. **Belonging** – learn to be connected even when alone

### Daemion Counseling Center

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***We accept the following insurance: Amerihealth, Health Partners Essential, Highmark Blue Shield, Independence Blue Cross (FEP), Keystone Health Plan East, Keystone Health Plan East Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP), KIDZPartners (CHIP members), Personal Choice.***