

The Happiness Factor

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Research cited in books such as *Learned Optimism* by Martin Seligman, *The 100 Simple Secrets of Happy People* by David Niven and reports in Psychology Today, Time and even Readers Digest inform us about the components that enable us to live happily productive lives: Here are some of the research findings:

- Genetics, meaning our disposition and temperament, play a role. But we still have lost of leverage--50% or more to create our own happiness.
- The ability to earn enough to feed and clothe ourselves and have a home is important. Being rich is optional to happiness.
- The gap between what we *want* and what we *have* influences our happiness. It's best to want what we have.
- Choosing enhancing stimulants helps. Research out of University of Louisville showed that people were more openly talkative after watching an optimistic film.
- Social skills help with happiness, often more than high intelligence.
- In a study by Ed Diener at University of Illinois it was concluded that friendship and social support is crucial.
- Married people are generally happier. Or is it that happy people attract one another?
- Harold G. Koenig, Duke University Medical Centre says, "Religious belief can be a very powerful way of coping with adversity."
- A Stanford University found older people happier. Maybe by then we've wisened up with one of the biggest happy factors, gratitude.

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