

HAPPINESS IN LIFE

November 2023 edition





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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to ITD World Vietnam's November 2023 issue – in which we explore the profound theme of "Happiness in Life."

In a world that often seems hectic and full of challenges, the pursuit of happiness has become a universal desire. With that in mind, we've assembled a collection of articles designed to inspire and guide you toward an earned life filled with joy and contentment.

Here's a glimpse of what you can expect in this edition:

- **Overview of Happiness in Life:** First, we start by delving into the essence of happiness - not as just a fleeting emotion, but a vital aspect of our existence, a state of being that can be cultivated and nurtured over time.
- **The Happiness Paradox:** Inspired by the wisdom of Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, world #1 executive coach, this feature is meant to provide readers with new perspectives on the pursuit of happiness. As stated by Dr. Goldsmith, despite our wish for happiness and meaning in life, there's a paradoxical catch that thwarts us at every turn.
- **Finding Happiness in the Workplace:** With this feature, we will go over how to create a harmonious and satisfying work environment, where your professional life aligns with your quest for happiness.

We hope that the November 2023 issue will serve as your guiding star on the path to a new life brimming with joy and contentment.

May you embark on this journey of self-discovery and well-being with an open heart and a sense of purpose!

Our best wishes,

ITD World Vietnam team

01

Overview of Happiness in Life



Overview of Happiness in Life

In the hustle and bustle of modern life, we often find ourselves chasing various goals and desires. Yet, amid the chaos, there's a common thread that connects us all: the pursuit of happiness. It is a profound and universal aspiration, a state of being that we all seek to experience. For centuries, the quest for happiness in life has been a central theme throughout human history. But what does it mean, and how can we attain lasting joy that transcends fleeting moments of pleasure?

What is Happiness in Life?

Happiness in life is a complex and multifaceted concept that transcends a one-size-fits-all definition. At its core, the concept can be broadly described as a state of well-being – characterized by the presence of positive emotions like joy, love, and satisfaction. It's the warm glow of contentment, the exhilaration of achievement, and the peaceful satisfaction that makes life worth living.

What's truly remarkable is that the experience can manifest itself in a myriad of ways:

- For some, happiness is deeply intertwined with their relationships – the love and connection they share with their family and friends.
- For others, it may be closely tied to work – in other words, they derive satisfaction and fulfillment from their career achievements and professional pursuits.
- Additionally, many find profound contentment in pursuing their passions/hobbies – or embarking on a journey of self-improvement.

Overview of Happiness in Life

Happiness is not a one-size-fits-all emotion. Instead of being a monolithic state, it is a kaleidoscope of feelings that one may experience in various forms – including joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love. Each of these emotional experiences contributes to the intricate tapestry of happiness, enriching our lives in unique ways.

Importance of Happiness in Life

“The purpose of our lives is to be happy.”

Dalai Lama

Research has consistently shown that happiness is not just a fleeting emotion – it is a powerful force that has the potential to significantly impact our lives in numerous ways.

Improved health & and longevity: Studies have revealed that happy individuals often possess stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure, a reduced risk of heart disease, and a greater likelihood of living longer. This may be attributed, in part, to the fact that they tend to

prioritize self-care, adopting healthy habits such as maintaining a nutritious diet, regular exercise, and sufficient sleep.

Enhanced productivity & and performance: Research also demonstrates that happy people are generally more creative, motivated, focused, and efficient compared to their unhappy counterparts. They also excel in decision-making, problem-solving, and stress management, making them more effective and resilient in both their personal and professional lives.

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Better relationships & and social connections: Happiness has a magnetic effect on our social interactions – it makes us more approachable, generous, cooperative, and compassionate. Being happy allows us to forge deeper and more meaningful relationships, which results in a wider circle of friends, greater social support, and a higher frequency of positive interactions.

Increased productivity & and success: The influence of happiness also extends to the professional realm. Happy people are more likely to achieve success in their careers and other areas of life. In addition, their heightened sense of well-being fosters creativity and innovation, allowing them to excel in various endeavors.

Improved quality of life: As a catalyst for personal growth, happiness has been proven to provide a boost to our self-

esteem, nurture optimism, and fortify resilience. As such, in the face of life's challenges, we are better equipped to remain steadfast and maintain a positive outlook.

Contribute to the community: The significance of happiness isn't confined to one single person; rather, it has a ripple effect on the wider community. Happy people are more inclined to give back and volunteer. Their contagious joy and gratitude result in a positive, harmonious atmosphere that inspires others to follow suit.



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Types of Happiness in Life

Hedonic: This type of happiness is closely associated with pleasure and enjoyment, often rooted in the here and now. Hedonic happiness is triggered by experiences that bring immediate gratification, such as spending time with loved ones, savoring delicious food, or engaging in enjoyable activities (e.g. watching a funny movie, going on a vacation, or relishing a relaxing day at the spa). It's about living in the moment and reveling in the simple pleasures life has to offer.

Eudaimonic: Eudaimonic happiness takes a more profound and enduring perspective, in that it is intrinsically linked to meaning and purpose in life. It is often experienced when one works towards their goals, contributes to the well-being of others, engages in meaningful projects, makes a positive impact on the world, or aligns their actions with their deeply held values. As such, this type of happiness isn't just about feeling good; it's about feeling fulfilled and

in sync with one's authentic self.

Social: Happiness isn't solely an individual endeavor; it thrives when we spend quality time with loved ones, feel supported by our community, make new friends, and cultivate meaningful relationships. Social happiness underscores the vital role of human connections in improving one's well-being – that our joy depends on the bonds we share with others and the strength of our social networks.

Spiritual: A more transcendental form of happiness, spiritual happiness is linked to our connection with something greater than ourselves. This connection can manifest through religious beliefs, spiritual practices (e.g. meditation, prayer), witnessing acts of kindness that touch the soul, or simply by experiencing awe and wonder at the world around us.

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What Makes Humans Happy?

Psychologists have delved into this intricate web of contributors to better understand what makes humans happy. Over the years, such work has revealed several important determinants:

Subjective well-being

Subjective well-being encapsulates how people evaluate their own lives, both cognitively and emotionally. It consists of three core components: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. People with high subjective well-being generally report a higher degree of overall satisfaction with their lives, frequently experience positive emotions, and possess a sense of purpose.

Social relationships

Human beings are inherently social creatures; hence, our connections with others

contribute significantly to our happiness. People with strong and supportive bonds with family, friends, partners, and colleagues tend to report higher levels of contentment than those who experience loneliness or isolation. These relationships offer love, belonging, acceptance, and support – all of which are essential for our emotional well-being.

Temperament & Adaptation

These are two intrinsic factors related to our personality and emotional responses.

Temperament encompasses the genetic component of our personality, which has been revealed to influence our mood, emotions, and outlook. Some people are naturally predisposed to be more optimistic, positive, and content than others.

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Adaptation, on the other hand, is the process of adjusting to disruptions in life circumstances, such as changes in income, marriage, divorce, or health. While these events may pose a temporary impact, research shows that over time, we tend to return to our baseline level of happiness.

Money

The relationship between wealth and happiness is both complex and paradoxical. While money does provide us with basic needs, security, comfort, and opportunities, it is also a potential source of stress, envy, greed, and dissatisfaction.

Various studies have demonstrated that money can increase happiness up to a certain point, but beyond that threshold, the marginal benefits diminish or even reverse. The way we spend our money also

matters, as using it for others or investing in experiences tends to bring greater contentment than pursuing material possessions.

Society & Culture

The broader societal and cultural context within which we live exerts a significant influence on our values, beliefs, and expectations. A supportive and inclusive society may contribute to fostering social trust, freedom, equality, and generosity, which enhance well-being. Conversely, oppressive or corrupt environments are correlated to diminished happiness.

It is worth noting that the definition, measurement, and expression of happiness vary across cultures and countries. In other words, societal norms and cultural values play a significant role in shaping people's understanding of happiness.

Overview of Happiness in Life

Key Ingredients of Happiness in Life



Physical health: Physical well-being has been proven to be closely linked to happiness in life. When we take care of our bodies through regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient rest, we also boost our own confidence and overall satisfaction. A healthy body provides the foundation upon which one may build a joyful life.



Purpose: Finding meaning and purpose in life is a fundamental element of happiness. Setting achievable goals – whether they are related to our careers, personal growth, or education – gives us a sense of direction – a reason to strive, grow, and engage with life in a meaningful way.



Gratitude: Gratitude is a powerful reminder of the abundance that surrounds us. By taking the time to acknowledge and appreciate the good things in life, we shift the focus from what we lack to what we have – which is crucial to boosting our mood and promoting contentment.



Relationships: Our connections with others, whether with family, friends, or loved ones, are among the most profound sources of happiness. They enrich our lives by bringing joy, laughter, and companionship, and reminding us that we are not alone on our own journey.

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Key Ingredients of Happiness in Life



Resilience: Life is filled with challenges – as such, our response to difficult times is a pivotal factor in our happiness. Resilience, the ability to bounce back from setbacks, plays a crucial role in shaping our well-being. This involves focusing on what we can control, practicing self-compassion, and learning from our experiences. Mindfulness, self-compassion, and problem-solving skills are all valuable tools in navigating life's ups and downs.



Job satisfaction: A significant portion of our lives is dedicated to work; hence, finding satisfaction in our careers is essential for overall happiness. Identifying our passions and aligning our work with our values is essential to fostering a profound sense of fulfillment. Additionally, achieving work-life balance is also crucial in maintaining happiness and well-being.



Positive thinking: Our thoughts shape our perceptions and experiences. Engaging in simple acts of kindness, daily expressions of gratitude, and taking time for self-care all contribute to elevating our mood and contribute to a positive outlook on life. Positivity not only enhances our own happiness – it also has a significant impact on those around us.

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How to Be Happy in Life

Achieving happiness in life is a worthy endeavor that requires a proactive approach, a positive mindset, and a commitment to self-care. Here are some key strategies to help you navigate the path:

Smile more often

The simple act of smiling has been proven to have a profound impact on one's happiness. Specifically, it triggers the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with mood and pleasure. As such, it not only makes you feel happier – but also poses a positive effect on your health, relationships, and self-esteem.

Focus on the positive

It's natural to encounter challenges and negative aspects of life, but making a conscious effort to focus on the good things is crucial to enhancing one's happiness. Positive thinking, characterized by an optimistic outlook and an expectation of favorable outcomes, is essential

to your self-esteem, resilience, and overall well-being.

To foster such a mindset, you may consider engaging in activities like meditation, savoring, and goal-setting – to become more appreciative and engaged in your life.

Live in the present moment

Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That's why it is called the PRESENT.

The present moment is all you truly have; as such, it just makes sense that we should aim to concentrate on it. Let go of living in the past or worrying about the future – instead, focus on what is happening right now.

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Learn to forgive

“The present you didn’t make a blunder. That was the PAST YOU.”

Marshall Goldsmith

Holding onto grudges and resentment is a heavy burden that makes it extremely challenging for one to find true happiness in life. Instead of burying yourself in negative emotions, you should learn to look forward and let go of past mistakes – including your past flaws and those committed by people around you.

Practice self-compassion by speaking to yourself in the same caring and understanding manner you would use with a friend. Treat yourself with the same kindness and empathy you would offer to others.

Cultivate gratitude

Gratitude is a powerful positive

emotion that involves appreciating and being thankful for what you have. It is a crucial contributor to happiness, health, and relationships – by making you more aware, optimistic, and generous.

Consider keeping a gratitude journal, where you list the things you’re grateful for, and review it during moments of negativity.

Set realistic goals

A sense of direction and significance is a potent source of happiness in life. As such, we recommend that you do your best to pursue your passions, fulfill your potential, or contribute to a cause greater than yourself.

At the same time, make sure to challenge yourself with goals that are both realistic and achievable. Additionally, remember to celebrate your successes along the way, no matter how trivial they may seem.

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Spend time in nature

Nature has been proven to have a remarkable impact on mental health – in that it helps reduce stress and anxiety, while at the same time enhancing one's emotions. As a result, regular exposure to nature via outdoor activities (e.g: jogging, biking, traveling, etc.) is a must for those seeking to attain long-lasting happiness in life.

Connect with your loved ones

“Loneliness kills. It’s as powerful as smoking or alcoholism.”

Robert Waldinger

Strong social connections are essential for happiness. Make time for the people you care about, nurture your relationships, and express appreciation for the support and companionship they provide.

Do things you enjoy

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Life is too short to spend all your time on activities you don't enjoy. Therefore, make sure to prioritize and schedule time for activities that bring you true joy and fulfillment. For example, you might decide to wake up 30 minutes early each day to read a book or meditate. Or, you might block off one evening each week to go out with your friends.

Limit your life options

“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood – And sorry I could not travel both.”

Robert Frost

When it comes to choosing your life, don't overwhelm yourself with an abundance of choices. Rather, think about what you're TRULY passionate about – as well as what you're good at. Ask yourself:

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- What are my core values?
- What kind of lifestyle do I want to have?
- Is salary/work-life balance, etc. important to me?
- etc.

Once you've made a decision, take action. Don't procrastinate. Start making plans to move forward with your chosen path. Do not let yourself succumb to inertia, which is a popular factor that hinders the pursuit of happiness for many of us.

Help others

"If you want happiness for a lifetime – help someone else."

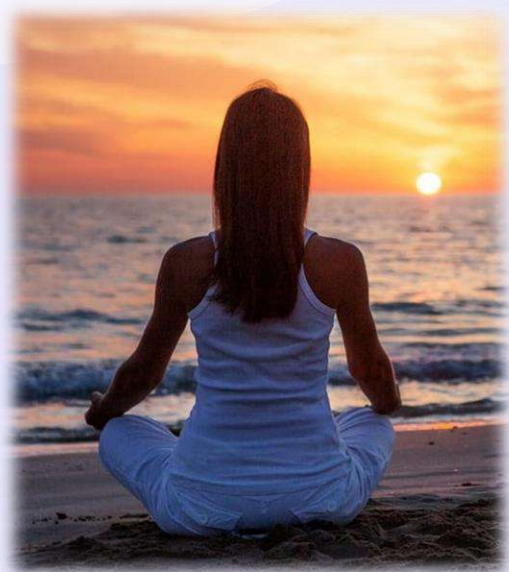
Chinese Proverb

Embracing the community has been proven to be a powerful source of happiness. Engaging with a cause you're passionate about – and contributing your time to make a positive impact on

the world – can significantly increase your own sense of joy. For instance, you may consider volunteering at a local soup kitchen, serving hot meals to people in need.

Practice self-care

Physical well-being is closely tied to happiness, as exercise and adequate sleep can reduce stress, enhance mood, and boost your overall physical and mental health. As such, prioritize self-care by regularly exercising, eating healthily, and getting enough sleep.



02

The Happiness Paradox

Credit: Dr. Marshall Goldsmith



The Happiness Paradox

The Secret to Lasting Happiness

It's our attachment to the goal that keeps most of us from achieving long-term, lasting change. By focusing on our effort, rather than goals, we are free to appreciate the process of change and make it last!

The Great Western Disease is "I'll be happy when..." This is our belief that happiness is a static and finite goal, within our grasp when we get that promotion, buy that house, or find that mate, or whatever. It's inculcated in us by the most popular storyline in contemporary life: There is a person. The person spends money on a product or service. The person is eternally happy...



This is called a TV commercial. The average American spends 140,000 hours watching TV commercials. Some brainwashing is inevitable. Is it any wonder that we become so attached to any change we make that we think it will change us forever?

We set a goal and mistakenly believe that in achieving that goal we will be changed forever, happy at last. But this just isn't so.

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And, it gets worse. It's our attachment to the goal that keeps most of us from achieving long-term, lasting change. It's the difference between, say, getting in shape and staying in shape—hitting our physical conditioning goals and maintaining them. Even if we get there, we cannot stay there without commitment and discipline. We have to keep going to the gym.

Whether it's flat abs or a new reputation, most of us want to see results now, not later. We see the gap between the effort required today and the reward we'll reap in an undetermined future—and lose our enthusiasm for change. We crave instant gratification and chafe at the prospect of prolonged trying.

By focusing on effort, rather than goals, we distract ourselves from our obsession with results (because that's not what we're measuring). In turn, we are free to appreciate the process of change and our role in making it happen. We're no longer frustrated by the

languid pace of visible progress—because we're looking in another direction.

So, as you journey through your day and you find that you would like to attempt to change your life or your behavior in one way or another, there are three things to remember:

1. Change doesn't happen overnight.
2. Success is the sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out.
3. If we make the effort, we will get better. If we don't, we won't.

Commitment. Motivation. Self-discipline. Self-control. Patience. These are powerful allies when we try to change our ways – and even more powerful in keeping them changed.

Make it a habit to earn it every day.

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Why People Are Not Happy

Our default response in life is not meaning or happiness. It's **INERTIA.**

A positive spirit that starts inside and radiates outside focuses on two ingredients: happiness and meaning.

Yet, as much as we all claim to want happiness and meaning in our lives, there's a paradoxical catch that thwarts us at every turn:

Our default response in life is NOT to experience happiness.
Our default response in life is NOT to experience meaning.
Our default response in life is **to experience inertia.**

In other words, our everyday process — the thing we do more often than anything else — is to **continue to do what we're already doing.**

If you've ever come to the end of

a TV show and then passively continue watching the next show on the same channel, you know the power of inertia. You only have to press a button on the remote to change the channel. **Yet many of us can't do that.**

Often, inertia is so powerful that we can't even hit the remote to turn off the TV, even when we no longer want to watch it.

Take a moment to let that sink in, and weigh that statement against your life.

Once you appreciate the paradox, you become aware of its paralyzing effect on every aspect of your life, not just the mindless routines of eating or watching TV, but things that matter — such as the level of happiness and meaning in your life — and you become more thoughtful about turning things around.

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Breaking the cycle of inertia doesn't mean exerting heroic willpower. All that's required is the use of a simple discipline.

Some 20 years ago, Dr. Goldsmith was preparing a leadership development session for a Fortune 100 company when one of the company's senior managers asked me:

"Does anyone who goes to these leadership sessions ever really change?"

His candid answer was, *"I don't know."*

Dr. Goldsmith admitted that although he had been conducting these sessions for years with dozens of companies, he had never followed up with his clients to see if they actually took the sessions to heart later and became more effective leaders. The question made him begin going back to many of his clients and assembling data.

Very few people achieve positive, lasting change without ongoing follow-up.

Unless they know at the end of

the day, week, or month that someone is going to measure if they're doing what they promised to, most people fall prey to inertia. They continue doing what they are doing, and as a result, they don't become more effective.

On the other hand, if they know someone, like their coach, their co-workers, or their manager, is watching or evaluating them with follow-up questions, they're more likely to change.

What if we didn't have to rely on a manager or executive coach to do follow-up that initiated real positive change? What if we could be that change agent for ourselves?

Try this experiment. As you go through your day, evaluate every activity at work or home on a 1 to 10 scale, 10 being the highest score, on two simple questions:

- How much long-term benefit or meaning did I experience from this activity?
- How much short-term satisfaction or happiness did I experience in this activity?

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There is no right answer or acceptable range of scoring. No one can answer the questions for you. It's your experience of happiness and meaning. Don't think it to death.

If you do this, you may end up

with much more than a score. If you journey through life knowing all of your activities will be evaluated on these two questions, you tend to experience more happiness and meaning in each activity - and you will have a happier and more meaningful life.

Don't Choose Inertia for Your Earned Life

It's so difficult for us to decide which way will bring us success or happiness.

When we were in grade school, many of us read or learned by heart the Robert Frost poem, "The Road Not Taken," which begins: "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,/And sorry I could not travel both."

How many of us have wished we could do both? To take both ways and save ourselves the anguish of actually deciding to act upon the barriers holding us back in our choices and actions, frustrating our will to live our own life, are

formidable and numerous. It is possible to change your life — and many more people are doing it than ever before. It's easier today to create your own life than it has ever been.

As many people are aware, in the last few years, with the pandemic upending many areas of society, and changing profoundly how people work, there has been a great upheaval — the Great Resignation, in a way, that has led to millions of Americans leaving unfulfilling, underpaid jobs to find something new.

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They are demanding better working conditions, better recognition of their talents, higher pay, and more. Somehow, along with the pandemic came **a new freedom to choose your life.**

This is a good sign. Whether it lasts is another thing. The number of choices we have, mainly due to technology, may present a problem.

One of Peter Drucker's final insights before he died at age ninety-five in 2005 indicated as much: In his article, "Managing Knowledge Means Managing Oneself," he wrote that in a few hundred years, when the history of our time will be written from a long-term perspective, likely, the most important event historians will see is not technology, not the Internet, not e-commerce. It is an unprecedented **change in the human condition.**

For the first time, literally, substantial and rapidly growing numbers of people have choices.

For the first time, they will have to manage themselves.

And society is unprepared for it.

Freedom and mobility create what the American psychologist Barry Schwartz famously described as "the paradox of choice." That is, we do better with fewer choices, not more.

Faced with thirty-nine flavors of ice cream, we often make a disappointing choice. It's much easier to pick between two options—say, vanilla or mint chocolate chip—and be satisfied.

Anyone who relies on streaming services for entertainment realizes this too: an abundance of choices can lead to not knowing what to choose, or settling for something you might not like.

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In creating your own life in a complex, rapidly advancing world, not only is it hard to sift through the myriad choices, but even when we know what we want, we don't always know how to follow our dreams.

Inertia is the most resolute and determinative opponent of change. (Think again of someone deciding what to watch on Netflix and simply clicking on whatever comes up, too paralyzed by choice to put much thought into the choice and let inertia take over.)

It is an active event in which we are persisting in the state we're already in rather than switching to something else. This is not mere semantics. It's a different point of view, characterizing even our most sloth-like passivity as the active choice to persist in the status quo (i.e., no choice is a choice too; it's choosing to say, "I'll pass").

On the other hand, the moment we shift into a new gear and choose to engage in something different, we cease to persist as inertia's patsy. Being inertia's victim or escaping its malign gravitational pull is a choice that's solely ours to make. When people discover that they have a choice, they are usually empowered to change.

Another intriguing characteristic of inertia is how well it provides us with **a glimpse of our short-term future**. It is more accurate than any algorithm or forecasting model. Inertia is the reason I can stipulate the following rule about your immediate future: The most reliable predictor of what you'll be doing five minutes from now is what you're doing now. If you're taking a nap cleaning your home or shopping online, there's a high probability that you'll be doing the same thing five minutes from now.

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This short-term principle also applies in the long term. The most reliable predictor of who you'll be five years from now is who you are now. If you don't know a foreign language now or how to make bread from scratch, you probably won't know in five years either. If you're not talking to your estranged father now, chances are you won't be talking to him five years from now. And so on for most of the details that describe your life today.

Appreciating our agency over inertia's impact can teach us how to shape it into a positive force. When we develop productive

(rather than destructive) habits or routines—for example, exercising first thing in the morning, eating the same nutritious breakfast, taking the same hyper-efficient route to work each day—inertia is our friend, keeping us grounded and committed and consistent. These are the features that make inertia a major force affecting every aspect of an earned life. But even when we gain dominion over inertia, there remain a few other targeted forces that also block us from living our own lives. I'll examine these in the next few posts.

Factors that Determine Our Future

How do we measure whether we have lived an earned life?

Can your life be determined by the so-called “soft” values, ones that cannot actually be measured but that are perhaps a surer measure of fulfillment than money

or career?

It's great for an actor to win an Oscar. It might mean a better opportunity for negotiating more interesting roles or a higher salary for the next picture.

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But apart from the recognition of your peers, how does an actor who has achieved the Hollywood industry's highest achievement feel about the award? Is it the end or a step in a life of fulfillment?

Is it the career, or the life that comes with the career? Is life built only of playing roles, or of using the opportunities that come with that to do something more personally meaningful?

These are important questions to pose because happiness is fleeting, but fulfillment is a sense of having done something significant and lasting in your life — an earned life.

An earned life can certainly mean finding a fulfilling career. That's what most of us want in our lives! It is difficult for many of us to choose and commit to what will be our life's work.

"We tremble before making our choice in life," wrote Isak Dinesen

(pen name for Danish authoress, Karen Blixen; famous for *Out of Africa* and *Babette's Feast*), "and having made it again, tremble in fear of having chosen wrong."

For many people, however, committing to a career path does not constitute an agonizing dilemma. That's because living an earned life to them is not a function of what they do to earn a living. The values and skills to which they aspire have little to do with professional validation or material accumulation.

For some people, their explicit life mission is "to serve." The more they can help others, the more purpose and meaning they find in their lives. In serving others, they are literally accumulating purpose and meaning, a form of wealth more appealing to them than the conventional trophies of money, status, power, and fame.

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For some, their highest aspiration is spiritual or moral enlightenment—creating a feeling of contentment about their relationship to the world, regardless of material gain (or, more likely, precisely because of its absence). The fewer material holdings they rely on, the more enlightenment they have earned.

A lot of people, especially in midlife and beyond, can gauge their fulfillment by surveying the scene at a large family gathering in the company of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, feeling joy and validation at how many decent, productive citizens they have guided into the world. They earn their lives by trying to be responsible patriarchs and matriarchs, a job that comes with lifetime tenure, yet has to be earned every day at every age.

These are but a few of the virtues and soft values (“soft” because

they cannot be objectively measured) that we hope to perfect in ourselves over time as we strive for fulfillment. They highlight a distinction that sounds obvious only after the first time you hear it: **Deciding what you do each day is not the same as who you want to be right now and is also not the same as who you want to become.**

Now, looking back at yourself, let's think:

“Have I lived an earned life?

If so, was the earned part shaped by what we did all day, or who I wanted to be, or who I wanted to become? Or was it a measure of how successfully I finally integrated these three dimensions in my life, so that I could bask in a warm sense of fulfillment and say to myself, “Mission accomplished”?”

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In many ways, deciding who we want to become is like adopting an ideology or credo for our life, a single premise that we rely on to interpret our past and determine our present and future.

We can do this by relying on three independent variables —

Action, Ambition, and Aspiration — that govern any progress we make toward living the life we seek for ourselves.

Deciding what we want to do each day is not the same as who we want to become.



03

Happiness in the Workplace

*Credit: Daan van Rossum
- Founder & CEO, FlexOS*



Happiness in the Workplace

Workplace happiness is the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's (work) life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile.

In the workplace, happiness is closely linked to staff motivation, self-discovery, spirituality, and deriving purpose from tasks, according to researcher Nesreen Awada.

Best-selling happiness author Tracy Brower explained in an interview with me that there are four key components to happiness at work:

- Dedication: feeling committed

- Immersion: work when time flies
- Energy: how can I get energized from my work and how am I motivated to put energy into my work
- Mattering: the work I do matters and has meaning

As you can see, a lot of this happens 'now.'

Best-selling author Shawn Achor challenges the conventional belief that we should be working towards future happiness.

Instead, he says, we should practice being happy in our work now, to create even more success in the future.

Factors that Determine Our Future

While it may seem like an art to achieve a worthwhile (work) life, it turns out there's a lot of science to living happier.

Years ago, Yale Professor Laurie Santos' shared what makes us

happy and how to live a happier life, all based on research. One big concept she highlighted is that we are all terrible at knowing what makes us happy.

Happiness in the Workplace

Miswanting

Suppose you ask people what will make them happier. In that case, the answer is usually something like a promotion or a higher salary, and beyond work: buying new things, getting married, or looking better.

The research repeatedly shows that these things don't make us happy.

We're so bad at predicting what will make us happy because we overestimate the happiness some of these "achievements" will make us. (Spoiler: they can make us happy, but only briefly.)

In short, we don't know what we want – a scientific concept called miswanting.

Happiness: It's relative

Let's look at money as a potential source of happiness.

Each year in the United States, people spend over 70 billion dollars on lottery tickets, more than on books, music, movie tickets, sports tickets, and video games combined.

However, lottery winners are not happier than others. When they first hear the news, they're so glad, but they feel the same after a while. (The opposite is true: accident victims were not as unhappy as expected and

bounced back from devastation.)

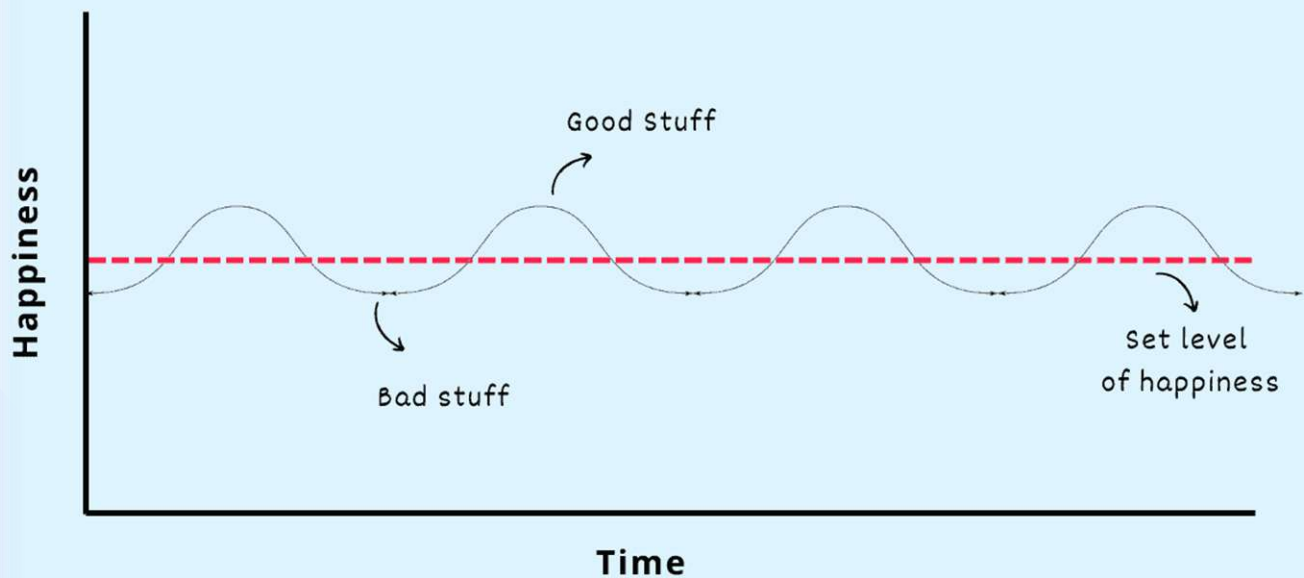
The same happens when you get a promotion or a higher salary. You feel a sense of pride about this accomplishment and happiness ... for a while. But after a month or so, your new title and salary are 'normal,' and you return to your base level of happiness.

We don't keep getting happier with more money, status, or anything else we typically work toward because happiness is relative.

Happiness in the Workplace

The Hedonic Treadmill

The above is known as a concept called the hedonic treadmill.



Source: *flexos.work*

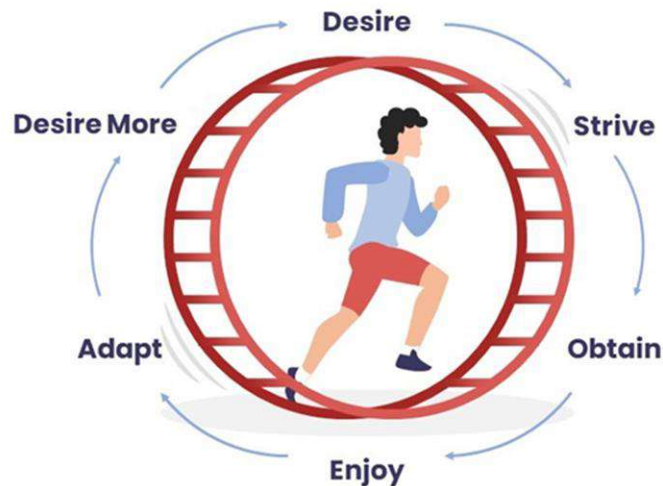
Hedonism is the term for something that feels good – but that might be fleeting. And like when we're on an actual treadmill, where you can keep running without an end in sight, if we keep running towards a promotion or salary raise (hedonic delights), we may forget to enjoy the current moment.

Additionally, if we think that that goal makes us happy, we'll be miserable once we reach that goal. One month after that promotion, we may say: "Is that it"? And we run towards the next one.

Happiness in the Workplace

Hedonic Adaptation Or Hedonic Treadmill

Template



Source: *flexos.work*

We typically know these things don't truly make us happy, but even if we are conscious of our tendency to want more, we often keep going for it. This is called the knowing-doing gap: just because you know something

doesn't always mean you'll put it into practice.

We must embrace that there is no way to happiness (at work); happiness is the way.

8 Ways to Achieve Workplace Happiness

1. Have a Purpose

"Purpose" means having a highly valued, overarching goal you seek to pursue over the long term.

Professors Amy Wrzesniewski (Yale) and Jane Dutton (University of Michigan) found that having meaning and purpose in work makes you like your job more and improves your well-being.

Happiness in the Workplace

And if that wasn't enough, it may also please you to know that having a purpose makes you more agreeable, social, healthier, and happier.

Setting a work goal may seem easy, but it's more complicated.

While simple and short-term goals are feasible, pursuing dreams like a new job title or a higher salary might not necessarily bring genuine happiness, as Shawn Achor explained.

Achieving a substantial, long-term goal that motivates and drives you at work can be challenging. To find such a goal, I suggest you work on your Ikigai.

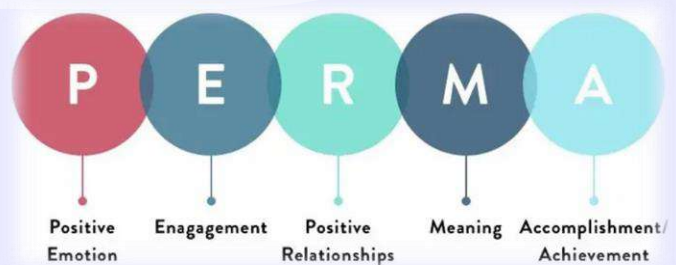
Ikigai is a Japanese concept that refers to the reason for being. It's the intersection of four key elements:

- What you love.
- What you are good at.
- What the world needs.
- What you can be paid for.

Finding your Ikigai can bring a sense of fulfillment and happiness, as it aligns your passions and skills with what the world values. You can find detailed instructions on how to find your Ikigai [here](#).

2. Set Achievable Intrinsic Goals

The "A" in Martin Seligman's PERMA, the most well-known model for happiness, stands for Achievement.



(Source: flexos.work)

A sense of accomplishment comes from working toward and reaching goals, mastering an endeavor, and having the self-motivation to finish your goals. Accomplishing goals contributes to happiness because you can look proudly at your life.

Happiness in the Workplace

Besides having a big (work) life goal, setting more immediately achievable goals and feeling a sense of accomplishment is essential.

Whether completing a course on a subject you want to improve on, creating more connections at work, hitting a target, completing a project on time, or helping a colleague, small victories can make a big difference in how you feel about your job.

According to Locke and Latham's 2002 study, goal setting impacts your motivation and positive emotions. It's important to remember to set goals that align with your values and career aspirations, as well as goals that give intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic ones like money, titles, and promotions.

This way, you can work towards something meaningful and rewarding, further contributing to your happiness and satisfaction in the workplace.

Don't forget to party afterward!

Celebrating your accomplishments is an essential step.

It helps reinforce the positive emotions associated with the achievement and gives your brain a clear signal that you have achieved something significant.

Celebration can motivate you to continue pursuing your goals and set even bigger ones in the future.

3. Find a Friend at Work

Positive relationships in the workplace can help you enjoy work more and contribute to better well-being.

Recent Gallup data support this notion, showing that having a best friend at work is critical for job satisfaction and has become even more so in light of the pandemic.

Happiness in the Workplace

Having a work friend provides benefits such as making work more enjoyable, providing emotional support, and improving job performance by allowing for better communication and collaboration.

The idea of a best friend at work aligns with a finding of the most extended study about happiness, the Harvard Study of Adult Development. People with warm relationships and who feel most connected to others even live longer. And those who feel most connected to their work friends also feel more engaged.

As MIT reported, loneliness (including work-from-home loneliness) is a more significant issue than ever. When we feel isolated, our body goes into fight or flight mode, creating more stress and inflammation.

This is why we so heavily advocate for building relationships at work, even if it's by asking a few simple icebreaker questions

before a meeting.

4. Don't Compare Yourself to Others

"Comparison is the thief of joy."

This quote, attributed to Theodore Roosevelt, is a cliché for a reason – it's true!

When you constantly compare yourself to others, you may feel like you do not measure up, which can be discouraging and disheartening. This can lead to feelings of inadequacy, frustration, and sadness.

Additionally, when you're focusing on what others have that you don't, you're missing out on the good things in your own life. You might feel like you'll never be good enough or will never achieve the same level of success as others.

Even the most successful people, like CEOs, can feel lonely and unhappy.

Happiness in the Workplace

5. Take Control

Having a sense of control and autonomy at work increases happiness and reduces stress.

People who can do more of what they are passionate about and have control over their work environment are significantly happier than those who do not.

In practice, this could mean deciding when and where to work (hello hybrid and remote!), setting your priorities, or having some control over your projects.

Feeling like you have control over your work life can help you feel more engaged and fulfilled, increasing happiness and reducing stress levels.

This doesn't mean having complete control over every aspect of your work life. It means having some control over the key elements that impact your work experience and feeling like you have a say in how things are done.

One defining trait of happy individuals is that they see things as being in their control. Take control and reassess situations that you think you can't change. It turns out that often, you actually can.

This sense of control makes you feel empowered and motivated, contributing to overall happiness and well-being at work.

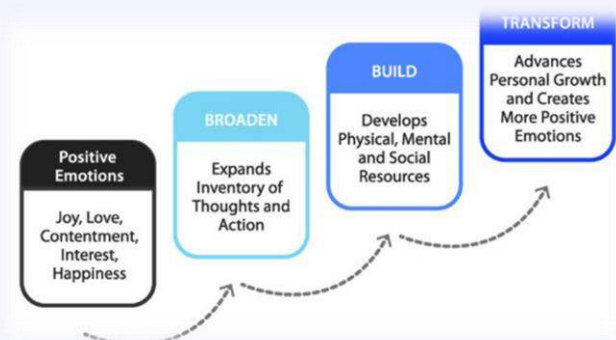
6. Practice Positive Emotions

Practicing positive emotions in the workplace has major perks. Focusing on the good in our (work) lives can boost your happiness, increase motivation, and even strengthen your relationships with coworkers.

You can practice your positive emotions by:

- Expressing gratitude
- Fostering hope
- Smiling more

Happiness in the Workplace



(Source: flexos.work)

This theory states that positive emotions have a broad effect, leading you to approach new challenges with a sense of curiosity and creativity, and a build effect, strengthening personal resources such as psychological resilience, physical health, and social connections.

The next time you feel stressed or down, try focusing on what makes you happy and positive. It could be a project you're excited about or a coworker who always makes you laugh. Whatever it is, please give it some attention and let those positive emotions flow.

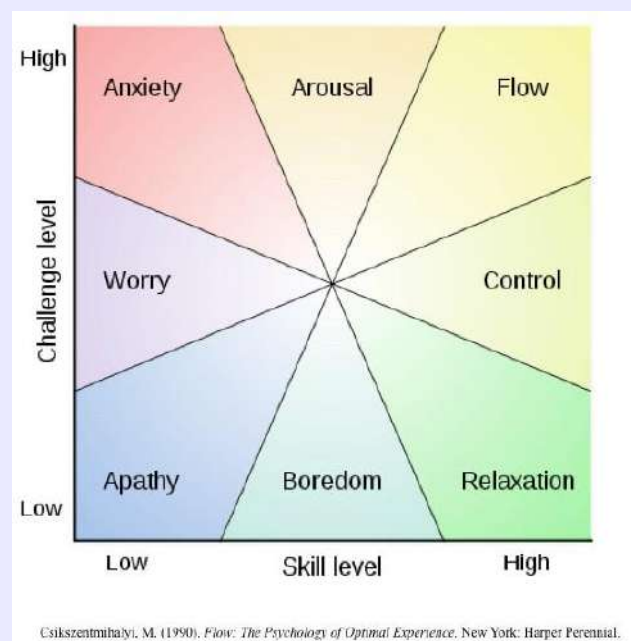
7. Find Moments of Flow

When was the last time you were so absorbed in your work that the time flew by? This is a concept called Flow, and it's imperative to

feel happier.

Flow, coined by the researcher Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and in the “E” (for Engagement) in the PERMA model, happens when you hit the perfect combination of challenge and skills.

In Flow, our unique strengths are fully utilized and stretched, but not so much that we become overwhelmed or frustrated. This combination of challenge and skill creates a sense of mastery and accomplishment that can be incredibly satisfying.



(Source: flexos.work)

Happiness in the Workplace

To get into “Flow State,” create more blocks of time (multiple hours) to get more absorbed in your work slowly. Ensure you won’t get interrupted by anything or anyone during this time by completely switching off notifications or even WiFi.

It's also important to find activities you are passionate about and good at to enter a flow state more easily. By creating the conditions for flow, you can experience greater happiness and satisfaction in your work and life.

8. Draw the Line

Having a healthy work-life balance is essential for overall well-being and job satisfaction.

Research from the World Health Organization has shown that people who struggle to balance work and personal life tend to experience burnout and stress, negatively impacting their health and happiness.

Especially in hybrid work, well-

being can greatly suffer as work is always on with fewer boundaries between life and work.

As a result, 52% of employees felt their workload had increased, while 36% experienced a decline in mental health. 2023 research from Microsoft shows that constant communication makes us feel extremely overwhelmed.

Managing your workload and prioritizing self-care activities is crucial to combat these adverse effects. Set boundaries between work and personal life, and make time for activities that promote physical and mental well-being, like exercise, mindfulness, and connecting with loved ones.

Make sure to alarm your employer when things get too much. Enough is enough; nothing is more important than your physical and mental well-being.

Happiness in the Workplace

PLUS: Optimism, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Sleep

A lot of elements of being happier are connected.

Recently, the PERMA model added a PLUS to acknowledge that taking good care of ourselves is important in living and working happier. These include:



Optimism (training your happiness muscle)



Nutrition (eating well makes you feel better)



Physical activity
(similarly, this can improve your mental health)



Sleep (helps you take on the bad stuff better)

The background features a stylized landscape with a city skyline silhouette on the left and right, rolling hills in shades of green and yellow in the foreground, and a large, light blue circular shape in the center. The sky is light blue with several white, fluffy clouds. A large purple circle is positioned at the top center, containing the number 04.

04

Global Leadership Team Conference (GLTC) 2023 Recap

Global Leadership Team Conference (GLTC) 2023 Recap

ITD World's Global Leadership Team Conference (GLTC) 2023 was a major gathering for leaders and executives seeking triumph in today's ever-evolving business world. Designed to provide attendees with insights into how to craft inventive strategies within the contemporary global business

sphere, the event welcomed 4 of the world's foremost thought leaders – renowned for their accomplishments and innovations – who graciously came to share their expertise and top-notch practices to about 150 leaders from various organizations.

Highlights from GLTC 2023 event

The Global Leadership Team Conference (GLTC) 2023 was replete with remarkable highlights that left attendees inspired and equipped with invaluable insights. One standout feature was the keynote addresses delivered by the four distinguished thought leaders. Their presentations delved into cutting-edge strategies, trends, and best practices that resonated with the rapidly changing business

landscape. From disruptive thinking to leadership branding and fulfillment in life, our speakers captivated the audience with their visionary perspectives, offering a roadmap for success in an ever-evolving global business environment.

Another highlight of the GLTC 2023 event was the engaging panel discussions and interactive workshops.

Global Leadership Team Conference (GLTC) 2023 Recap

These sessions facilitated in-depth conversations and knowledge-sharing among participants. Attendees had the opportunity to actively participate, ask questions, and engage in meaningful dialogues with the experts, fostering a collaborative and dynamic learning environment. Not to mention, the networking opportunities at the event were instrumental in fostering new connections and partnerships, allowing leaders and executives to exchange ideas and best practices.

The well-curated agenda, filled with enriching content and practical takeaways, made GLTC 2023 truly a standout event for all those striving for success in today's business world!



Global Leadership Team Conference (GLTC) 2023 Recap



Global Leadership Team Conference (GLTC) 2023 Recap



Winner of the Marshall Goldsmith Coaching Culture Excellence Award

One notable occurrence at the Global Leadership Team Conference (GLTC) 2023 was the issue of the Marshall Goldsmith Coaching Culture Excellent Award. This time – surpassing all other candidates, AEON Vietnam has emerged triumphant and become Vietnam's first winner of the prestigious award.

We at ITD World would like to send our heartiest congratulations to the team at AEON for their remarkable efforts!



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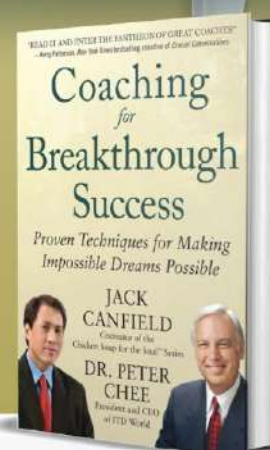
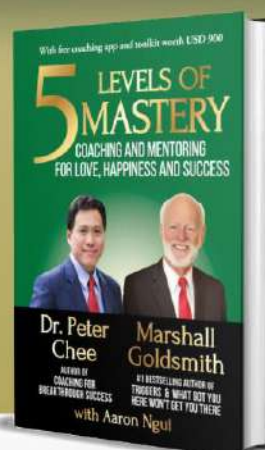
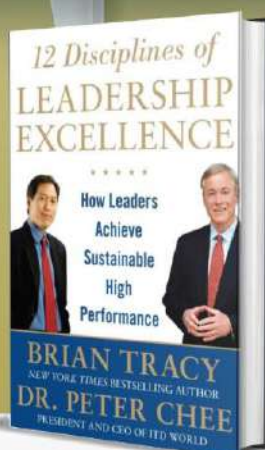
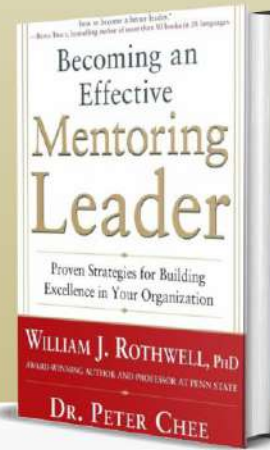
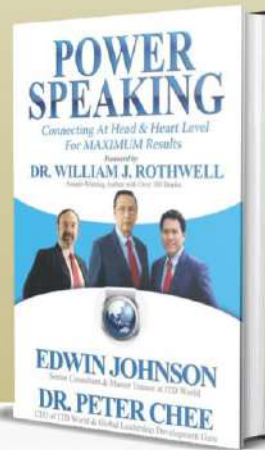
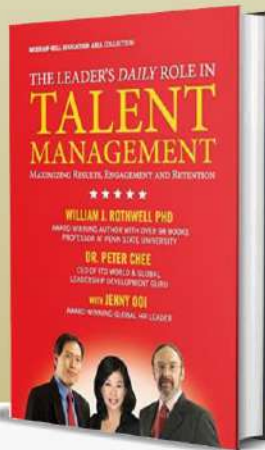
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